



PAS Student Handbook

Revised September 2017

Academic and Administrative Policies and Procedures

Each student is responsible for knowing current academic and administrative policies and procedures that apply to enrollment in their degree program. The University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) reserves the right to amend or add to these policies and scholastic regulations at any time during an individual student's enrollment period provided that such changes or additions are intended to improve the quality of education and are introduced in a fair and deliberate manner. Students in the Physical Assistant Studies (PAS) program are subject to UNTHSC institutional and PAS program policies while on or off campus during PAS student activities. All policies of the UNTHSC, School of Health Professions (SHP), and PAS programs will be in effect. For a complete listing, see Policy 07.126 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

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UNTHSC Physician Assistant Studies Program

Welcome! The Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) program at University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) is housed in the School of Health Professions (SHP), which includes graduate physician assistant and physical therapy programs. The vision, mission, and goals for the PAS program are as follows.

SHP Vision. To be the team of choice for education, discovery, and health care.

PAS Program Mission. To create solutions for a healthier community by preparing graduates with knowledge and skills needed for physician assistant practice, emphasizing primary care and meeting the healthcare needs of underserved populations.

PAS Program Goals. The following are the teaching goals of the PAS program.

- Educate PAs through academic and clinical training to provide patient care services with appropriate supervision of a licensed physician.
- Provide a course of professional study that provides graduates with appropriate knowledge of physical and mental health and disease and the skills to accurately and reliably perform the range of health care procedures and duties customarily ascribed to the PA profession.
- Foster development of the intellectual, ethical, and professional attitudes and behaviors that generate trust and respect from the patient population served by the PA.
- Prepare PAs with the knowledge, technical capabilities, and judgment necessary to perform in a professional capacity.
- Prepare PAs to serve in expanded roles, which meet developing needs in society's health care environment.
- Prepare PAs through curriculum, clinical experiences, and role modeling to provide medical services to underserved patient populations where the supervising physician may be physically located at the practice site or at a site remote from the PA.
- Provide instruction that emphasizes the role of the PA in health maintenance and preventive medicine while also taking into consideration the social, economic, and ethical aspects of health care delivery.
- Provide didactic and clinical experiences that prepare the PA for dealing with cultural diversity in the patient population.
- Provide educational experiences that promote understanding of the interdependence of health professionals and foster an interdisciplinary team approach to the delivery of health care.
- Prepare PAs with the knowledge and skills needed to perform clinical research activities and projects.
- Prepare PAs with the knowledge and skills needed to be life-long learners and design educational activities appropriate for patients, clinical students, and colleagues.
- Provide educational experiences that stimulate active learning in the science and art of medicine and that foster a desire for lifelong learning as a practicing professional.

UNTHSC Student Code of Conduct

Overview. UNTHSC has adopted policies to govern student behavior that are educational in nature and designed to help students understand expectations and accept responsibility for their own actions. PAS students are expected to read, understand, and comply with Student Code of Conduct and Discipline ("the Code").

Student Code of Conduct and Discipline. The policies governing student behavior have been formulated into a Student Code of Conduct and Discipline ("the Code") that can be located at <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/student-policy-handbook/the-code/>. *Enrollment at UNTHSC is considered implicit acceptance of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and all other policies applicable to students.* The Code covers the definitions and consequences of misconduct that includes but is not limited to the following.

- Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage
- Forgery, alteration, falsification or misuse of any official UNTHSC document, record, or instrument of identification
- Obstructing or disrupting teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures or other UNTHSC activities whether occurring on- or off campus
- Physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion and/or other conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of the student, faculty, staff, or others
- Illegal use, possession, sale, manufacture, distribution or effective control of chemical precursors, controlled substances, controlled substance analogues, dangerous or illegal drugs
- Public intoxication; driving under the influence; driving while intoxicated; use, possession or distribution of alcoholic beverages, except as expressly permitted by law and UNTHSC policy
- Engaging in acts of sexual violence, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct
- Unauthorized access or use of, misuse of, or disrupting or attacking UNTHSC computing resources, systems or data
- Violations of International, Federal, State or Local Laws (whether convicted or not) or UNTHSC policy
- Unauthorized use or possession of ammunition, firearms, explosives or other objects that are dangerous or flammable or that could cause damage by fire or explosion to persons or property. Firearms are prohibited anywhere on university premises except as specifically authorized by law.

Social Media and Professionalism Policy. Social media has created unique opportunities for interaction, communication, and networking. The purpose of this policy is to provide students with guidelines and regulations for appropriate social media use in order to uphold confidentiality and privacy laws and agreements. PAS students are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct & Discipline and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when using social media by not revealing patient/client/research subject information, private content, or proprietary information regarding patients/clients/research subjects of the institution. For more information, see Policy 07.115 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Consequences for PAS Program Students. Note that violations of the Code are grounds for dismissal from the PAS program. In addition, PAS students who commit "minor" violations of the Code are not eligible for PAS honors and awards. Furthermore, when preparing materials for state licensure, PAS graduates must disclose to the Texas Medical Board any and all Code violations during their PA education including but not limited to professionalism sanctions, drug/alcohol offenses, or warnings/sanctions from any department within UNTHSC. Any disclosures or nondisclosures may delay, inhibit, or limit PA licensure.

PAS Program Student Health and Technical Standards

Americans with Disabilities Act. The UNTHSC is committed to providing equal educational access for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. To provide equality of access for students with disabilities, accommodations and auxiliary aids and services will be provided to the extent necessary to comply with state and federal law. For more information, see Policy 07.105 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

PAS Program Student Health and Technical Standards. All students enrolled in the School of Health Professions must meet certain health and technical standards in order to fully participate in the curriculum. Reasonable accommodations will be made as required by law; however, the candidate must be able to meet all technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations. For more information, see Policy 15.410 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

- A candidate for the PAS program degree must have abilities and skills in five areas outlined below.
 1. **Observation:** Observation requires the functional use of vision and somatic sensations. The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experience lessons in the basic sciences including, but not limited to, physiological and pharmacological demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation is enhanced by functional use of the sense of smell.
 2. **Communication:** A candidate should be able to speak, hear and observe in order to elicit information, describe changes in moods, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team.
 3. **Motor:** Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers. This includes performance of basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, CBC, etc.) and may also include diagnostic procedures (proctoscopy, paracentesis, etc.) and reading EKGs and X-rays. A candidate should be able to execute movements which are reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required include the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.
 4. **Intellectual:** Candidates should possess Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities. These include obtaining measurements and performing calculations, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, candidates should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand spatial relationships of structure(s).
 5. **Behavioral:** Candidates must have sufficient emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities in the exercise of good judgment and prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients in a mature, sensitive and effective relationship to patients. Candidates must be able to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities which are assessed during the admission and education process.

PAS Program Philosophy

Overview. The PAS program philosophy guides all policies and procedures in the PAS program. PAS students are required to understand, uphold, and adhere to the student responsibilities within the PAS program philosophy.

PAS Program Philosophy. Our purpose is to graduate competent professionals, and we believe that student success is the result of full participation and cooperation between the program (i.e., policies, procedures, courses, faculty, and staff) and the student

- **PAS Program Responsibilities**
 - Provide clear and fair standards for educational components and student success
 - Conduct critical ongoing evaluation of program policies and procedures
 - Provide an environment conducive to learning and with honest and open communication
 - Know, support, and promote program philosophy, policies, and procedures
 - Display integrity and professionalism in attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (includes all UNTHSC values)

- **PAS Student Responsibilities**
 - Demonstrate self-responsibility, self-motivation, self-regulation, and effort in your learning
 - Continually assess own strengths, weaknesses, and barriers in learning and utilize resources for student success
 - Communicate honestly and openly any issues *prior to* major events or failures
 - Know and follow program philosophy, policies, and procedures
 - Display integrity and professionalism in attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (which include all UNTHSC values)

Note that course failures and violations of the Code are grounds for dismissal from the PAS program. In addition, PAS students who have been on academic probation or who commit “minor” violations of the Code are not eligible for PAS honors and awards. Furthermore, when preparing materials for state licensure, PAS graduates must disclose to the Texas Medical Board any and all anomalies in their PA education including but not limited to, academic probation, academic course failures/repetitions, professionalism sanctions, drug/alcohol offenses, or warnings/sanctions from any department within UNTHSC. Any disclosures may delay, inhibit, or limit Physician Assistant licensure.

PAS Program Curriculum

Overview. The PAS program curriculum is designed to ensure PAS students meet the expected entry-level PA graduate competencies published by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), in conjunction with the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), and the Accreditation Review Commission for the Education of Physician Assistants (ARC-PA). Entry-level competences cover areas of medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, patient care, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems based practice. Expected graduate competencies can be found on the PAS program website at <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-health-professions/physician-assistant-studies/physician-assistant-competencies/>

- The PAS program is a full-time program that will leave little to no time for outside employment. There are two phases of the PAS program curriculum: the didactic phase and the clinical phase. More information about the PAS program curriculum can be found on the PAS program website at <https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-health-professions/physician-assistant-studies/current-students/>

Didactic Phase. The didactic phase of the curriculum occurs from Fall semester of Year 1 to Spring semester of Year 2 and includes classroom coursework (about 20 hours per long semester) in overview courses, basic sciences courses, and clinical medicine courses.

- **Overview Courses**
 - The overview courses include Approach to PA Practice, Principles of Evidence Based Medicine, and PA Master's Project.
- **Basic Sciences Courses**
 - The basic sciences courses include Clinical Anatomy, Human Physiology, Clinical Pharmacology, and Introduction to Disease.
- **Clinical Medicine Courses**
 - The clinical medicine courses include Physical Diagnosis, Medical Interviewing, Physical Exam Skills with Lab; Dermatology; Hematology and Lab Medicine; Obstetrics and Gynecology; Musculoskeletal System; Gastroenterology; Neurology; Endocrinology; Head, Eyes, Ears, Nose, & Throat; Genitourinary; Cardiovascular Medicine; Pulmonology; Pediatric Medicine; Emergency Medicine; Fundamentals of Behavioral Science; Clinical Skills; and Clinical Integrative Medicine.

Clinical Phase. The clinical phase of the curriculum occurs during the last 13 months of the PAS program and includes 12 clinical practicum courses and Senior Seminar.

- **Clinical Practicum Courses**
 - PAS students will complete twelve 4-week practicum courses: nine cover the core areas of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Surgery, Women's Health, Emergency Medicine, Inpatient, and Underserved, and the other three are electives.
 - PAS students will learn more about practicum experiences and placement as they near the clinical phase of the curriculum.
- **Senior Seminar**
 - Senior seminar is a capstone course designed to assess the graduate competencies required for entry into the PA profession in the areas of knowledge base, patient management skills, and professionalism. Presentations, lectures and workshops are provided during the course to assist students in preparing for the PA National Certifying Examination after graduation.
 - PAS students will learn more about the content and timing of Senior Seminar as they near the clinical phase of the curriculum.

PAS Program Promotion, Probation, and Dismissal

Overview. Academic standing in the PAS program is based on the accumulation of course grades during each academic phase of the curriculum: the didactic phase and the clinical phase. PAS students need to understand these guidelines, take responsibility for keeping up with their studies, and appropriately address any issues before they impede their academic performance. For more information, see Policy 15.413 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Didactic Phase. The didactic phase of the curriculum occurs from Fall semester of Year 1 to Spring semester of Year 2 and includes classroom coursework (about 20 hours per long semester) in overview courses, basic sciences courses, and clinical medicine courses.

- **Good academic standing.** In the didactic phase, a PAS student with course grades consisting of no more than 2 Cs and no Fs in didactic courses taken is considered in good academic standing.
- **Academic Probation.** A PAS student with course grades consisting of 3-5 Cs and no Fs in didactic courses taken will be on academic probation.
- **Removal from Academic Probation.** A PAS student will be removed from academic probation and promoted to the clinical phase of the curriculum after completing the didactic phase with course grades consisting of no more than 5 Cs and 0 Fs in all didactic courses.
- **Remediation.** A PAS student who fails a course in the didactic phase can remediate that course. Successful remediation will result in a grade of “C” for that course, which will then count toward the number of Cs the PAS student has accumulated in the didactic phase. Only one course can be remediated during the didactic phase.
- **Dismissal from the Program.** A PAS student will be dismissed from the PAS program during the didactic phase for the following: (1) accumulation of 6 or more Cs in didactic courses taken, (2) unsuccessful remediation of a failed didactic course, (3) failure of a second didactic course after the successful remediation of a didactic course, (4) accumulation of 2 or more Fs in didactic courses in any one semester, or (5) documented critical, persistent, or multiple professionalism issues.

Clinical Phase. The clinical phase of the curriculum occurs during the last 13 months of the PAS program and includes 12 clinical practicum courses and Senior Seminar.

- **Good academic standing.** Once promoted to the clinical phase, a PAS student with course grades consisting of no Fs in practicum courses taken is considered in good academic standing.
- **Remediation.** A PAS student who fails a practicum course in the clinical phase can remediate that course. Successful remediation will result in a grade of “C” for that course. Only one practicum course can be remediated in the clinical phase.
- **Dismissal from the Program.** A PAS student will be dismissed from the PAS program in the clinical phase for the following: (1) unsuccessful remediation of a failed practicum course, (2) failure of a second practicum course after the successful remediation of a failed practicum course, or (3) documented critical, persistent, or multiple professionalism issues.

Other Issues. Life can get in the way of academic success.

- **Documentation for Other Issues.** In either phase of the curriculum, if a PAS student has any issues (e.g., medical, personal) that would affect their academic performance, the PAS student must do the following: (1) contact Student Affairs for documentation and resources, (2) demonstrate consistent use of appropriate resources to support academic performance in light of issues, and (3) inform the Associate Chair in the PAS Department that the PAS student is working with Student Services.
- **Consideration of Other Issues.** A PAS student does not have to identify the nature of the issues to the PAS program, but the above three items must be documented prior to poor academic performance for any consideration of such circumstances on poor academic performance.

PAS Faculty Roles

PAS Primary Faculty. PAS primary faculty members develop, coordinate, and monitor student instruction and clinical experiences in the PAS program, and serve as Faculty Advisors, Course Directors or Liaisons, guest speakers, and faculty course support in the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum.

- **PAS Faculty Advisors.** Upon matriculation into the PAS program, each PAS student is randomly assigned a Faculty Advisor from the PAS faculty.
 - The role of the advisor is to encourage PAS students; advise them regarding academic or professional issues; and direct them to campus academic resources.
 - Faculty advisors do not serve as personal counselors and are not allowed to provide medical or personal advice.
 - It is required for PAS students to meet with their faculty advisors once per semester during the didactic phase of the curriculum. PAS students can request additional sessions as needed.
 - PAS administrative staff will schedule mandatory advising appointments according to course and faculty schedules each semester.
- **PAS Course Director or PAS Course Liaison.** Each PAS course is assigned a PAS Course Director (when the course is administratively housed in the PAS program) or a PAS Course Liaison (when the course is administratively housed in another UNTHSC department).
 - The role of the Course Director or Liaison is to ensure that course and exam content are relevant, accurate, up to date, organized, and evidence-based.
 - Course Directors or Liaisons are also responsible for the development, coordination, conduct, and/or support of course syllabi, course activities, and course schedules.
 - All PAS student questions, comments, or concerns about PAS course content and conduct should be directed to the PAS Course Director or Liaison

PAS Faculty Administration. In addition, some PAS primary faculty have faculty administrative roles in the PAS program, including the following.

- **Program Director/Department Chair.** The Program Director (PD), also known as the Department Chair, is a primary faculty member who is also responsible for the day-by-day operations of the PAS department and for long-term development in all areas of academic activity.
- **Medical Director.** The Medical Director works directly with the PAS PD and other faculty to assure courses, activities, and experiences in the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum meet current practice standards related to the role of the PA in providing patient care.
- **Associate Director.** The Associate Director is a primary faculty member who is also second to the Program Director and guides faculty activities, tracks operations in the department, and supports initiatives related to student education.
- **Director of Academic Education.** The Director of Academic Education (DAE) is a primary faculty member who also works to design, implement, coordinate, schedule, and evaluate educational activities in the didactic phase of the MPAS curriculum.
- **Director of Clinical Education.** The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) is a primary faculty member who also works to design, implement, coordinate, schedule, and evaluate educational activities in the clinical phase of the MPAS curriculum.
- **Research and Evaluation Coordinator.** The Research and Evaluation Coordinator is a primary faculty member who is also responsible for developing, planning, and promoting research and evaluation activities related to the overall goals of the department.

PAS Program Staff Roles and the PAS Office Suite

PAS Program Staff. The administrative staff of PAS Program help make PAS operations and activities run smoothly. The staff positions include the following.

- **Assistant to the Chair.** The Assistant to the Chair provides administrative support to the PAS Program Director (PD) and acts as office manager for the PAS department. This person will work with PAS student officers on budgets and supplies for activities during the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum.
- **Administrative Coordinator.** The Administrative Coordinator provides administrative support for PAS faculty in didactic courses including scheduling and providing administrative support for course activities.
- **Senior Administrative Associate.** The Senior Administrative Associate serves as the office receptionist, greeting those that enter the PAS office suite, fielding questions, setting PAS student appointments with PAS faculty, and directing PAS students toward appropriate persons or resources.
- **Clinical Site Coordinator.** The Clinical Site Coordinator works with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) to build community relationships to establish and maintain clinical education/practicum/rotation sites for the clinical phase of the curriculum. This person will work with PAS students if needed to set up student-identified rotation sites.
- **Senior Administrative Coordinator.** The Senior Administrative Coordinator works with the DCE and Clinical Site Coordinator to schedule clinical rotations during the clinical phase of the curriculum. This person will interact with PAS students in assigning clinical rotations.

PAS Office Suite. The PAS program office suite is located in EAD 416 and houses the PAS program reception area or “front office” and most of the PAS faculty and staff offices.

- **Assistance.** The receptionist runs the PAS front office during hours of operation. If she is not there, the PAS front office area is under video surveillance and monitored by other PAS staff via webcam who will assist. We ask that all PAS students stop at the front desk and not proceed further into the PAS office suite without invitation.
- **Turning in PAS Course Assignments.** When turning in course assignments to the PAS program front office, students are instructed to time-stamp their assignments by using the time clock and dropping assignments *face down* into the turn-in box (both located in the front office area). PAS students are prohibited from looking at other students’ assignments already in the turn-in box. To do so could constitute a violation of the student code of conduct. PAS administrative staff are available for assistance when turning in assignments
- **Making Appointments with Faculty.** Because PAS faculty and course schedules vary, we ask that all PAS students make an appointment to speak with faculty as opposed to “dropping in”. To make an appointment with a PAS faculty member, email Sandra.mann@unthsc.edu or call 817-735-2301. If Sandra Mann is not available, any staff member can make the appointment.
- **Making Appointments with the Program Director (PD).** Appointments with the PD should be requested through kim.williams@unthsc.edu or by calling 817-735-5499.

Department of Physician Assistant Studies Contact Information

Department of Physician Assistant Studies
UNT Health Science Center
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard, EAD 416
Fort Worth, TX 76107-2699
Phone: 817-735-2301
Fax: 817-735-2529
Email: pastudies@unthsc.edu

PAS Student Identification

Student ID Badges. The UNTHSC will issue each student an ID badge that has an embedded microchip that allows access to certain doors as well as parking garages. The PAS program also uses ID badges to check classroom attendance and for identification for proctored exams.

- Students are required to wear ID badges daily attached to their collar or around their neck on a lanyard
- Replacement ID badges are \$20 payable to campus police

PAS Student Name Tags. The PAS program will issue PAS students magnetic name plate that must be worn on the right of the student's white coat and at any event where the nametag is necessary. In the clinical phase of the curriculum, PAS students are required to wear these nametags, which identifies the wearer as a Physician Assistant student.

- The initial name tag is provided at no charge.
- Any damaged, lost, or stolen name tags will have a \$7.00 replacement fee. To order a replacement, contact kim.williams@unthsc.edu.

Contact Information/Name Changes. Changes to personal information including contact information and name changes are processed by the Office of the Registrar and distributed to the appropriate academic and administrative units of the UNTHSC. For more information about how to change personal information, visit <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/registrar/>

- It is the student's responsibility to obtain a new ID badge and name tag if there is a name change.

Criminal Background Checks for Students. This policy is designed to provide a safe environment for the patients and clients at UNTHSC and affiliating training sites. For more information, see Policy 07.134 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

- Criminal background checks allow the university to evaluate whether UNTHSC students are qualified, eligible, and possess the character and fitness to participate in off-site programs (i.e. clinical care and/or clinical rotation sites).

PAS Program Student Dress Code Policy

Didactic Phase. The PAS program has a dress code policy for the didactic phase of the curriculum. PAS students are required to follow the PAS program dress code during the didactic phase.

- **General Attire**
 - PAS students are expected to convey a professional appearance or image and are expected to be neat and clean.
 - Unless otherwise instructed by PAS Course Directors or Course Liaisons, PAS students are required to wear solid colored scrubs in the color assigned to their class to all course activities Monday through Thursday.
 - Unless otherwise instructed by PAS Course Directors or Course Liaisons, PAS students may wear either their solid colored scrubs or PAS program shirts with jeans/khakis on Fridays.
 - PAS students may be required to wear their clean white lab coats to specific labs or other official functions.
- **Skills Lab/OSCE Attire**
 - On days noted in the schedule with “lab attire required”, students should wear the following **modest** clothing:
 - Males: shorts and a T-shirt
 - Females: shorts, T-shirt and sports bras underneath (regular bras should not be worn)
 - PAS students may wear scrubs or T-shirts over the above clothing when they are not serving as the “patient”.
 - PAS students may use a gown to drape areas not being examined when being the “patient”.
 - When appropriate, students must also wear the appropriate safety gear such as goggles, gloves, lab coat, and foot wear as approved by the lab supervisor and the UNTHSC Safety Office.
- **Violations of PAS Student Dress Code**
 - Students in violation of the dress code may be asked to immediately leave class in order to change into appropriate attire.
 - Faculty may also remove PAS students from exams, meetings, seminars, workshops, special events, patient care areas, or clinical rotation days if their appearance does not meet professional standards.
 - If a PAS student dress code violation occurs at times of graded activities, no additional time will be given to complete any activity while the student changes to appropriate attire.

Clinical Phase. PAS students will learn more about the dress code for clinical rotations as they near the clinical phase of the curriculum.

PAS Program Attendance Policy

Didactic Phase. Attendance is required for ALL PAS course activities in the didactic phase of the curriculum. As soon as you know you will be late or absent, PAS students must email the PAS Course Director/Liaison and pastudies@unthsc.edu with documentation as appropriate.

- **Tracking Attendance.** Attendance will be documented in each PAS course. No PAS student may record the attendance of another PAS student for any reason, and to do so will constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and will result in disciplinary proceedings.
- **Excused Absences.** Excused absences are usually granted for emergencies (i.e., death in the immediate family) or illness related to the PAS student or dependent family members. Documentation substantiating reasons for absences may be required. In addition, UNTHSC respects the rights of students to observe religious holy days (see UNTHSC Policy 07.103 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>). All excused absences must be approved by the PAS Course Director or Liaison.
- **Unexcused Absences.** Each unexcused absence will result in a 1% deduction on the final PAS course grade. For example, a final average of 91% for the course would drop to 90% for one unexcused absence and to 89% for two unexcused absences.
- **Tardiness.** PAS students are expected to arrive to PAS course activities on time. PAS students should notify the PAS Course Director or Liaison of their estimated arrival time as soon as possible if tardiness is anticipated. Chronic tardiness is not acceptable. Every 3 occurrences will result in an unexcused absence.
- **Makeup PAS Coursework.** Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, there are no make-up sessions or “re-teaching” of previously delivered materials. The PAS student is responsible for all material covered during any missed class activity. Lab sessions, clinical integration labs (CILs), objective structured clinical evaluations (OSCEs), guest lectures, team-based learning (TBL), and small group activities cannot be made up or recreated.
- **Makeup PAS Exams.** PAS students who miss an exam with an unexcused absence will not be able to take the exam and will receive a 0 for that exam. For a PAS student who misses an exam due to an excused absence, The PAS Course Director or Course Liaison will set another time for the student to take the exam if it is possible to make up the exam.
- **PAS Program Attendance Information Usage.** PAS student attendance may be considered when making recommendations for, but not limited to, the following: disciplinary actions, remediation, dismissal, awards, scholarships, and honors.
- **Missing Multiple Class Meetings.** PAS students with prolonged illnesses or other circumstances that would result in missing 3 or more class meetings should consider taking a leave of absence.

Clinical Phase. PAS students will learn more about the policies and procedures for attendance during clinical rotations as they near the clinical phase of the curriculum.

PAS Student Use of Technology in the PAS Program

Laptops. All incoming PAS students receive a university-issued technology package during the UNTHSC Student Orientation, which includes a laptop. The technology package is included in student fees and is owned by the student thereafter. PAS students will use their university-issued laptops daily to access PAS course and program information and to send/receive PAS program communications.

- It is the responsibility of the PAS student to ensure their computer equipment is always in good working order in both the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum.

Email Use – Official Form of Communication. Email is the official mode of communication on the UNTHSC campus. PAS students will be assigned a university email address (e.g., xxxx@live.unthsc.edu) during the UNTHSC Student Orientation. All students must have a working university email address, must use it for university-related business (use of personal email addresses is not acceptable), and check it daily to maintain current information for PAS program and course information. Information regarding the PAS program, courses, course assignments, and any changes will be communicated to the PAS students through university email.

- Because changes to the PAS schedule can have short notice, PAS students are strongly encouraged to check their university emails multiple times per day and prior to coming to class.

E*Value™. E*Value is a cloud-based system that the PAS program uses to schedule and track PAS program activities. Information about E*Value will be distributed at the UNTHSC Student Orientation. PAS students will use E*Value to access semester calendars and course schedules and to maintain resume information. PAS students in the clinical phase of the curriculum will use E*Value to log patient encounters and hours worked in clinical rotations.

- Future questions, comments, or concerns about the use of E*Value should be directed to pastudies@unthsc.edu.

Canvas™. Canvas is a learning management system free to all UNTHSC students. The PAS program requires that all PAS students become familiar with the Canvas technical requirements, features, and other information needed to have a successful online learning experience. For more information about Canvas, go to <http://web.unthsc.edu/canvas>. For specific questions regarding Canvas, email canvas@unthsc.edu.

- Each PAS course will have its own Canvas course that contains the course syllabus, lecture information, handouts, grading rubrics, and assignment dates.

IT Helpdesk and Client Services. The UNTHSC Helpdesk has desktop and peripheral support and routes service requests to ITS departments as appropriate. The Helpdesk is available to students from 7:30 AM to 9:00 PM at 817-735-2192 or helpdesk@unthsc.edu

PAS Student Use of Electronic Devices during Class Time. Computers and similar devices (e.g., notebooks, iPads, smartphones, etc.) may be used in class for class-related activities (determination made by the PAS Course Director or Liaison).

- To use your computer for non-course related activities including but not limited to Web surfing, playing games, texting, instant messaging, and social media, is unprofessional and distracting.
- Audio or visual recording is not permitted without the prior approval of the PAS Course Director or Liaison or individual lecturer.
- Cell phones must be turned off or placed on “silent” mode during PAS course activities. If PAS students anticipate the need to take a call during class time, let the lecturer before the start of class and sit in the back of the class so as not to disturb others when you leave the classroom.
- Violations may result in loss of the privilege to have an electronic device in class.

PAS Program Course Set Up

PAS Course Registration. Except for the first semester, PAS students do not need to manually register for courses. PAS students are automatically registered for their courses each semester after the first semester.

PAS Course Scheduling. All PAS students within an incoming PAS class cohort will attend all PAS courses at the same time and in the same order.

- **Didactic Phase.** PAS course activities during the didactic phase of the curriculum are conducted Monday through Friday during normal business hours, which is 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 - Daily schedules vary by courses but typically PAS students have one course in the morning and one in the afternoon.
 - With rare exception, all PAS courses in the didactic phase are conducted on the UNTHSC campus.
 - PAS students are required to be available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for PAS program activities, even if PAS activities were not originally scheduled, because PAS schedules can change when the PAS program deems necessary.
- **Clinical Phase.** Course activities during the clinical phase of the curriculum have varied schedules and locations, and all but a few are off-site.
 - Daily schedules vary by rotation site with some requiring evening, overnight, weekend, and on-call hours.
 - Location and distance to rotation sites vary from Fort Worth, to the DFW metroplex and surrounding areas, to other cities around the state. Each PAS student is required to complete at least two rotations at non-DFW area sites.
 - PAS students will learn more about rotation sites and schedules as they approach the clinical phase of the curriculum.
- **Housing and Transportation.** PAS students are solely responsible for securing housing and transportation for all PAS course activities, including course activities during the clinical phase of the curriculum. The PAS program and/or UNTHSC are NOT responsible to locate or pay any portion of student housing or transportation during on-campus or off-campus educational activities.

PAS Course Syllabi. Academic standards for successful completion of each PAS course are contained in the course syllabus. Each PAS course syllabus will specify all of the requirements the course, including academic assignments, evaluation and grading schemes, and schedule of course activities.

- Modifications to PAS course requirements, grading schemes, and schedules may be made when the PAS program deems changes are necessary to improve instruction or to conform to scholastic regulations of the department, school, or university.
- PAS students are required to read through each PAS course syllabus prior to beginning the respective course AND to consult the syllabus during the course for all course-related questions.
- PAS course syllabi can be found online in the Canvas course set up for each PAS course.

PAS Course Textbooks and Equipment. Specific textbooks and equipment required for a PAS course will be identified in the PAS course syllabus. Most (if not all) textbooks and equipment are already included in PAS course fees. Any questions about course-related textbooks or equipment should be directed to the PAS Course Director or Liaison.

- PAS students should read any required textbooks and are encouraged to read any recommended textbooks to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to be successful in the course.
- PAS students should read the manuals that come with the equipment to learn basic functioning, such as how to properly insert the ear buds of the stethoscope, “turn on” the bell or diaphragm of the stethoscope, or turn on and dim or brighten the otoscope/ophthalmoscope). In addition, equipment with batteries, should be charged prior to use (i.e., prior to class).

PAS Program Course Activities

PAS Student Responsibilities. Students are responsible for learning course content and material. That is why you are here! As a PAS student, you should always:

- Show up early and be prepared for all course activities.
- Review course content and materials for the day's topic(s) *prior to* class time.
- Pay attention, take notes, and ask questions during class time.
- Review course content and materials for day's course topic(s) *after* attending class.
- Set up a weekly schedule for when and where you will study course content and material for each PAS course in which you are enrolled.
- Continually assess and reassess your strengths and weaknesses for learning different content and materials and find and access resources that could help.
- Complete course and faculty evaluations and provide constructive (not "venting") feedback. For information on the UNTHSC procedures for the collection and use of student evaluations of courses and instructors, see policy 07.120 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

PAS Course Content Dissemination. PAS courses vary in the ways that course content and material are disseminated during and outside of class time. PAS courses can have any combination of the following.

- **Lectures.** Course content and material is primarily disseminated in lecture format with learning outcomes named/described for the session. Materials are testable and based on PAS course objectives.
 - **PAS Faculty Lectures.** PAS faculty members may prepare and teach their lectures, most using PowerPoint presentations. PAS faculty members are not obligated to share the PowerPoint slides or personal notes with students.
 - **Guest Lecturers.** PAS Course Directors may utilize PA and physician colleagues within or outside the UNTHSC campus to assist in content delivery. Guest lecturers may or may not provide PowerPoint slides or handouts.
- **On-line Materials.** Course content and material can also be disseminated online with learning outcomes named/described for the session. Materials are testable and based on course objectives.
 - **Modules.** PAS courses may have information posted in Canvas or elsewhere as modules that students access and complete independently inside or outside of class time.
 - **Audio-video.** PAS courses may have information posted in Canvas or elsewhere as audio or video files that students access independently outside of class time.
- **No Student Distribution.** PAS students are not to distribute course content or materials to anyone. Course materials are the property of UNTHSC.

PA Course Assessment. Frequency and types of assessments within a PAS course are determined by the PAS Course Director according to the volume and types of material covered (see Types of Course Assessments on the next page).

- PAS students will be required to successfully complete assessments that include demonstrating context-appropriate knowledge, technical skills, problem-solving skills, interactions with patients and other health care providers, and use of research tools (textbooks, journals and sources of medical information).
- Students shall be informed of their progress through formal and informal feedback mechanisms in addition to their course grades.

Types of PAS Program Course Assessments

Overview. PAS courses tend to have a combination of low-stakes and high-stakes assessments.

Low-stakes Assessments. Low-stakes assessments are designed to allow PAS students and faculty to assess students' progress in learning and applying course content and materials up to that point. These assessments do not contribute a high percentage to the overall PAS course grade. There are multiple types of low-stake assessments that may be conducted across PAS courses to include the following.

- **Lab.** An Interactive, hands-on, individual or group activity overseen by faculty or other designated person(s) with specified learning outcomes and conducted during class time
- **SIM lab.** An interactive, hands-on, individual or group activity overseen by faculty or other designated person(s) using simulated patients with specified learning outcomes and conducted during class time
- **Clinically integrated learning (CIL).** A case discussion planned and led by faculty or other designated person(s) with specified learning outcomes and conducted during class time. PAS students are usually assigned specific study materials to learn on their own beforehand.
- **Group activity.** PAS students are assigned to or voluntarily form small groups in which to complete an assignment during or outside of class time.
- **Student presentation.** Individual or group presentation scheduled during class time. Development of the presentation may occur during or outside of class time.
- **Scheduled or pop quizzes.** A short paper, Scantron, or electronic quiz to include any combination of multiple choice, matching, true/false, short answer, and essay-type questions that is conducted during or outside of class time.
- **Student participation.** Individual display of contributions toward or involvement in course activities.
- **Professionalism.** Individual display of knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and interactions deemed appropriate for a future Physician Assistant.

High-stakes Assessments. High-stakes assessments are designed to allow PAS faculty to assess PAS student mastery of learning and applying course content and materials. These assessments contribute a high percentage to the overall PAS course grade and become progressively more challenging as PAS students integrate more information. There are generally three types of high-stake assessments that may be conducted across PAS courses to include the following.

- **Written exams.** A paper, Scantron, or electronic test to include any combination of multiple choice, matching, true/false, short answer, and essay-type questions that is conducted to assess PAS students' context-appropriate knowledge, technical skills, and problem-solving skills.
- **Objective Structured Clinical Examinations or OSCEs** {pronounced "oss-keys"}. A student demonstration of medical interviewing and/or physical exam skills performed and videotaped in simulated patient exam rooms that is conducted to assess PAS student content-appropriate knowledge, technical skills, clinical problem-solving skills, and interactions with patients. PAS students will have times and places available outside of class time to practice OSCE material prior to performing OSCEs.
- **Written reports.** In some PAS courses, research and written reports are required.

PAS Program Exam Policies and Procedures

PAS Student Information and Instructions. The course syllabus for each PAS course will include exam dates and types (i.e., written exam, OSCE, or written report), times, and locations.

- Written exams may be paper, Scantron, or electronic. Electronic exams that require use of a personal computer equipped with special software ExamSoft™. PAS students will be instructed about how to download and use ExamSoft during the UNTHSC Student Orientation.
- PAS students must have a student identification badge with them at all times in order to be admitted to and remain in testing areas.
- All exams are proctored, but not necessarily by the PAS Course Director or Liaison. PAS students must comply with test proctor directions. If there is a discrepancy between test proctor directions and student expectations during the exam, the student is to follow test proctor directions and address the issue later with the PAS Course Director or Liaison.
- A PAS student who arrives late will be allowed to take the examination (with no extra time allowed) provided no other student has already turned in an exam.
- PAS students arriving after the first examination has been turned in will have to contact the PAS Course Director or Liaison to request a make-up exam (not guaranteed).
- Generally, the PAS Course Director will allow PAS students who miss a written exam with a valid reason the opportunity to make up the missed test. However, the PAS Course Director is not obligated to do so.
- PAS student tardiness to and/or absence from OSCEs typically cannot be made up.
- For specific instructions and information on testing in a course, the PAS student is referred to the specific PAS course syllabus in Canvas.

No Reproduction or Distributions of Exam Items or Content. PAS students are not to reproduce ANY exam questions verbally, in writing, or electronically. Examples include, but are not limited to, talking with fellow students about exam questions and specifically which answer choice was correct; telling the next set of students what the OSCE scenario is prior to their performing the OSCE; motioning to your lab partner the procedures they should conduct next; transcribing test questions and saving them in a document to provide for other students; posting questions about exam items on Facebook or any type of social media; or emailing questions about exam items to fellow students or faculty.

- Any reproduction or distribution of exam items will constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and will result in disciplinary proceedings.

Exam Feedback. Exam grades are posted in the Canvas course related to the PAS course. Information on the exact questions and answers students missed is not available for PAS students in most if not all PAS program courses. Instead, PAS Students will be given feedback (if available) in formats such as but not limited to, exam reports, rubrics, or written notes. For example, the exam report for multiple choice exams offers information on the types, topics, and categories of questions missed.

No In-Class Exam Reviews, Make an Appointment with the PAS Course Director or Liaison. Post-exam reviews related to exam questions and answers are not conducted during class time in any PAS program courses. PAS students interested in going over the concepts/types of questions they missed can make an appointment with the PAS Course Director or Liaison (other faculty, including your advisors, will not discuss exam material in courses they do not direct). Discussions with the PAS Course Director or Liaison will relate to correct or incorrect knowledge and/or thought processes for concepts/types of questions missed.

PAS Student Appeals

Grade Appeals. Grade appeals are handled in accordance with UNTHSC Policy 07.127, Student Academic Grievance Policy located at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>. Grades assigned by PAS Course Directors are final. A student may appeal a course grade if one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. The final course grade has been incorrectly assigned to the student (e.g., due to miscalculation or failure to include points earned by the student but not credited towards the final grade), or
2. The final course grade has been unjustly rendered (e.g. did not follow the procedures outlined in the course syllabus), OR
3. The final course grade appears to have been assigned in a capricious manner.

If a PAS student believes that an incorrect grade was assigned, the student is expected to first submit an appeal in writing and attempt to resolve the issue with the PAS Course Director. If needed or desired, after receiving an appeal decision from the PAS Course Director, further appeal may be made to the PAS Program Director. All appeals must be made in writing within 5 business days of receipt of the original grade or decision.

Failing Course Grade. If a PAS student fails a PAS course, the student will appear before the PA Student Performance Committee (PASPC). The PASPC will make recommendations to the PA Program Director for student remediation or dismissal. The final decision will be made by the Program Director.

Appeal of Dismissal. If a PAS student is dismissed from the PAS program, the student can file an appeal with the Dean of the School of Health Professions within 5 business days of the decision by the PAS Program Director. For information, see Policy 07.128 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>. The Dean is expected to notify the student of a decision on an appeal within 5 business days. If the Dean determines that dismissal is not supported, the Dean will consult with the PAS Program Director to develop a remediation plan. If the dismissal is upheld, the PAS student is dismissed.

- Except in cases where attendance presents a potential for disruptive influence, a PAS student who has filed an appeal of dismissal will be allowed to register for and attend PAS course activities until a decision has been reached.

PAS Student Options for Leave of Absence and Withdraw

Leave of Absence for Medical or Personal Reasons. Life sometimes gets in the way of academic success. As such, students enrolled in academic programs within the School of Health Professions are permitted to request a leave of absence due to a medical condition or for personal reasons. Leave of absence for personal reasons cannot be granted if the student is not in good academic standing at the time the request is made.

- Leave of absence requires approval of the Dean of the School of Health Professions.
- Upon completion of the leave of absence, the student must request readmission to the academic program in writing. The Dean will determine if readmission after completion of leave of absence is approved after consultation with the student and upon recommendation of the PAS Program Director.
- Upon return from leave of absence, the returning student may be required to affirm continued compliance with health and technical standards of their respective academic program. In addition, students returning from leave of absence may be required to complete additional coursework or testing in order to meet academic requirements of their respective program or to increase chances for the student's academic success in the program. Further information on Leave of Absence for Medical or Personal Reasons see under Policy 15.415 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Active Duty Withdrawal. Class attendance is expected of all students. UNTHSC students who are called to active military service may withdraw from enrollment or be excused from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including examinations, if the military service is of a reasonably brief duration. Further information is provided at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies> under Policy 07.135.

Tips for PAS Student Academic Success

Center for Academic Performance (CAP). The Center for Academic Performance offers services designed to enhance any and all levels of academic performance through academic consultations, learning assessments, and self-management. Consultation with CAP can be self-referred. CAP offers the following to all UNTHSC students: academic counseling, learning and study strategy assessment, writing support, tutoring, and workshops. CAP Contact Information:

Center for Academic Performance
Hours of operation: Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm
Phone 817-735-2531
Fax: 817-735-0263
CAP@unthsc.edu

Use of Other Resources. There are many resources available to augment student learning: UNTHSC Lewis library, the Physician Assistant Student Association (PASA) page on Orgsync, books, peers, internet, Facebook, YouTube, etc. However, do not become so distracted by finding too many resources that you then do not have time study. To avoid information overload, PAS students are encouraged to find a few resources that work best for them.

How to Study. Experience has shown that PA students who study 3-4 hours every day (before and after class) and at least another 10-14 hours over the weekend do better on exams and keep up with the pace of learning needed for retention of content and materials in all of their courses. The number of hours studying will typically increase as you get closer to examinations.

- The amount of information that will be presented and expected of students to retain and draw upon is quite large and can seem overwhelming at times. Each course builds on previous information from other courses so that the curriculum advances students in a step-lock fashion. Students should not memorize information “just for the test.”
- PAS students need to manage their free time efficiently and be organized. We suggest you use a calendar and log all activities, *especially study time for all courses each week*. Because there is so much material, PAS students who are disorganized and/or who do not keep up with assignments and studying daily often find that last minute efforts to “cram for the test” lead to poor academic performance short-term and long-term.
- You will need to spend more time studying than ever before. You may not need to radically deviate from your past study techniques (e.g., outlining chapters and making study cards); however, you need to quickly and continually assess how well your study techniques and habits are working and seek out other ways if you are struggling.
- For PAS students having trouble keeping up with the material in all their courses, an assessment of their personal learning style can be provided through the Center for Academic performance office, as well as information and workshops on study skills.
- If you decide to study with others, learn to feel comfortable saying “I don’t understand” to the people in the group. When a student in a group may be challenged by a concept, chances are that someone else in the group is also confused and that another person in the group will understand it and can share their knowledge.
- When is the amount of studying enough? A good way to test understanding is to explain and teach the information to others.

PAS Student Communication and Professionalism. The PAS program welcomes constructive feedback from PAS students on PAS program operations and course content and materials. In addition, PAS students who are concerned about their performance need to communicate those concerns with the PAS faculty.

- If you have questions, comments, or concerns about course content or activities, or about your performance in the PAS program, contact PAS faculty in the following order (as appropriate to the issues): PAS Course Director or Liaison, PAS Faculty Advisor, DAE/DCE, Associate Director, Program Director. PAS students who do not follow the appropriate order will be re-directed before continuing.
- All PAS faculty members are happy to answer PAS student questions in person during class and office hours, or via email. However, students should always attempt to work out answers to questions before asking for help or before simply asking for the answers.
 - For questions related to PAS course activities, be sure to read the syllabus prior to contacting PAS faculty or staff.
 - For questions related to course content, make sure to consult course information and materials, your notes, the required and recommended course readings, the suggested course resources, and if all else fails, Google!, prior to contacting PAS faculty.
- An email to PAS faculty will be answered within 3 business days. Emailing questions on the night or weekend before an exam does not leave enough time for a response. In addition, PA faculty members are not obligated to answer emails during non-business hours.
- PAS students are expected to respond promptly and respectfully to emails sent by PAS faculty and staff members. If you send a request or ask a question, be sure to acknowledge the response.
- It is good practice to re-read an email prior to sending, and avoid sending emails when frustrated or upset. Writing in all capitals can often be interpreted as ‘yelling’ and should also be avoided.
- It is important that PAS students maintain professionalism in all personal, classroom, and laboratory interactions with PAS faculty, staff, and students.

Advice from Successful PAS Students

- Study every day.
- Discuss what you learned with others.
- There is nothing wrong with getting help, CAP has a lot of good resources.
- Figure out what works for YOU. It may not be the same as what’s best for your friends in the class, so don’t study with them if it’s not conducive to your learning.
- Study in the morning.
- Preview!
- Find different classmates that excel in different areas and learn what and how they study.
- Organize your studying. Keep a planner and write down what you’re going to study and when.
- You must study on your own to benefit from what your peers have to offer. Once you know the information, study in groups, bounce ideas off of each other for clarity, compare “important points”, and go to labs (OSCE and anatomy) with different people.
- Do not expect your classmates to teach you what you haven’t studied. Do not copy your peer’s work because you don’t have time to do it yourself. Do not do exactly what everyone else in the class does.
- Give yourself breaks to maintain your sanity. Spend a couple of hours each day with family or friends and do not even think about studying! Set an alarm on your phone when it is time to go back to studying.
- Get your sleep! Staying up too late only makes everything worse!
- Choose what attitude you will have. People that are optimistic have much less stress.

PAS Student Organizations

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs). There are many organizations on the UNTHSC campus that represent a variety of interests within the health professions community. Each year, during Welcome Week in August, members of student governments and student organizations share information about their organization, programs and membership requirements at the Registered Student Organization Fair. A listing and additional information of student organizations can be found at <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/student-development/registered-student-organizations/>.

The following are PA student-related organizations on campus.

- **Physician Assistant Student Association (PASA).** PA Student Association is a chapter from SAAPA, the student association of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). SAAPA provides useful and current information related to being a PA student and about the PA profession. To become a student officer, students can run for officer positions starting in August.
- **Physician Assistant Surgical Organization (PASO).** PASO is unique in that it is one of the first stand-alone specialty clubs that is specifically geared towards PA studies. The mission of the PA Surgical Organization is to represent and educate PA students interested in various surgical fields through physician/PA presentations, skills workshops, and opportunities to explore the surgical field.
- **Physician Assistant Club (PA Club).** The PA Club is an organization designed to give its members opportunities to further their hands-on clinical skills during the didactic phase of their education. The organization holds workshops each semester, such as casting and suture workshops as well as lectures on special clinical topics, such as inhaler use education and diabetic foot checks. PA Club is a group exclusively for PA students at UNTHSC.

PAS Class Officers. Students may run for class officer positions during the first year. Class officer positions include president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, PASA representative, curriculum liaison, activity chair, student advocate, and honor code representative. Elections are conducted through PASA, with positions being re-elected in the spring of the second year. Students on academic probation are not eligible to hold office in sanctioned student groups and are expected to resign from any elected or appointed positions held.

PA Student Professional Organizations. PAS students tend to be active in the following two professional organizations.

- **AAPA.** The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) is the national professional society for PAs in the United States. PASA is a chapter from SAAPA, the student association of AAPA. In order to participate in AAPA activities and sponsored events, PASA is required to have 75% of the three PAS classes as paid members of AAPA. The fee for joining as a student covers all membership dues until graduation. For more information on AAPA and SAAPA, see the following websites: <http://www.aapa.org/> or <http://www.aapa.org/student-academy>. Attending the AAPA conferences is not automatically considered an excused absence so request permission to attend from PAS Course Directors or Liaisons.
- **TAPA.** The Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA) is the state professional society for PAs. Students are encouraged to join, and the membership fee is \$25. Students are encouraged to attend the TAPA conference where students are allowed to participate in Challenge Bowl. For more information: <https://www.tapa.org/amsimis/>. Attending the TAPA conferences is not automatically considered an excused absence so request permission to attend from PAS Course Directors or Liaisons.

PAS Student Extracurricular Activities

UNTHSC Student Programs and Events. The Office of Student Development provides a variety of activities, events and programs for all students at the UNTHSC. For more information of what Student Development has to offer, go to <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/student-development/>.

White Coat Ceremony. Shortly after matriculation to the program, students will participate in the White Coat Ceremony. This ceremony is a tradition symbolizing the transition into being a member of the healthcare profession. Students' white coats have the UNTHSC branded patch, indicating their affiliation with PA Studies. Wearing of the white coat is required at various events, during interactions with simulated patients, during OSCEs, interactions with patients during the clinical year, and at other required times. Some students like to have their name monogrammed on their white coats. The student's name should be monogrammed in black thread. Dorothy's Scrubs Etc. is familiar with UNTHSC white coats. They are located at 1524 Pennsylvania Avenue in Fort Worth, 2.5 miles from campus. The white coat must be kept clean, professional, and free of wrinkles. Students are welcome to purchase an additional white coat at their own expense.

PA Week. National PA Week is held every year in early October. This week is dedicated to PAs and helps promote the PA profession and the value of PAs to our community. Often times, PA students will use this event as a milestone to promote health awareness.

Mission Trips. During Spring Break, the Christian Medical Association (CMA) sponsors a medical mission trip abroad. This is not at UNTHSC or PAS program sponsored event. Students are not required to be a CMA member in order to participate in the medical mission trip. Meetings for the medical mission trip typically begin in early fall, and space is limited. Cost per student depends on the location and duration of the trip.

PAS Boot Party. Second year PA classes often host a Boot Party annually to celebrate their transition to the clinical year. This event is attended, sponsored, and planned by the second year PA students.

PAS Career Fair. This is an annual event for the third-year PAS students in which employers and recruiters of Physician Assistants from all over the state of Texas come to campus to meet with prospective applicants.

PAS Graduation Banquet. This banquet is normally held for the graduating class a week or two prior to annual commencement to honor the graduating class. Program academic awards are given at the banquet, which is jointly planned between the PAS program and the senior class banquet committee.

PAS Graduation/Commencement. The commencement ceremonies take place in May and honors graduates of UNTHSC. Distinguished guests, speakers, family members and friends are invited to join in celebration of our students' hard work and achievements as they prepare to begin the next chapter in their professional lives. PAS students are expected to attend the graduation ceremony.

PAS Student Academic Awards and Honors

Overview. In addition to conferring MPAS degree diplomas, the UNTHSC and PAS Program are proud to recognize student excellence during the PAS program and at graduation. (Note that students who have been on academic probation or committed a violation of the Student Code are not eligible for PAS honors and awards.)

Dean's List. The Dean's List is established to recognize academic excellence when the student achieves a semester grade point average of 3.51 or greater for a semester in the didactic phase of the curriculum. (Dean's List recognition is not awarded in the clinical phase of the curriculum).

Graduation Honors. Students may be awarded "Honors" upon graduation if their overall grade point average is greater than 3.51 on a 4.0 scale. No more than 20% of a single PA graduating class will be awarded "Honors" at graduation.

Special Awards at Graduation. Other special awards may be utilized by the PAS program to recognize exceptional academic, clinical, and leadership performance by a student. Special awards are not annotated on the student's official transcript.

Phi Alpha Honor Society. The UNTHSC PAS program has a chapter of the Pi Alpha Honor Society. The Pi Alpha Honor Society is sponsored by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) and promotes and recognizes significant academic achievement, leadership, research, community/professional service, and the encouragement of a high standard of character and conduct among physician assistants (PA) students and graduates. In order to be inducted into the Pi Alpha Honor Society students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and demonstrate excellence in research, publishing, community/professional service, or leadership activities. Only 15% of the graduating class can be inducted into the Pi Alpha Honor Society. Inductees are chosen by the faculty and receive a letter, certificate of membership, pin, and Pi Alpha Honor Society cords, which can be worn with their academic regalia.

UNTHSC Campus Safety Information

Emergency Preparedness. Incidents of crime and other serious emergencies which occur on campus requiring immediate assistance should be reported to the UNTHSC Campus Police 817-735-2600 when on campus. Off-campus emergencies should be reported and called in to 911. Reports can be made on a confidential basis.

Emergency Plan for Building. In the event of an emergency, students are advised to exit the building using the stairwells. Students should exit to the parking lot and move past the first two rows of parking to await further instruction. Sandy Mann is the PA Studies EAD Safety Liaison and can be reached at 817-735-5017 or Sandra.Mann@unthsc.edu.

Inclement Weather Advisory. Campus facilities will close and operations will be suspended when adverse weather conditions and/or safety hazards exist on the UNTHSC property as the result of such weather. For more information, see Policy 04.107 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Fire Drills. Fire drills are conducted on a scheduled basis for all buildings in which patient care is performed. Students on rotation in clinics should become familiar with clinic-specific fire plans and be prepared to perform assigned tasks, if any, during drills or should a real fire occur. For more information, see Policy 07.123 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Needlesticks and Other Blood-Borne Pathogen Exposures. Needlesticks, other types of “sharps injuries,” and bodily fluid splashes can be both frightening and worrisome because of the potential for exposure to dangerous infectious disease agents, such as HIV and hepatitis. Students should always take these injuries seriously and seek immediate treatment for them. Students should follow the steps below and report the incident so that prophylactic measures can be instituted. Students should not delay treatment until after completing a shift or a surgery. Proper management and reporting should begin immediately. When the injury occurs outside of the Tarrant County area, students should ALWAYS follow the clinical or hospital site infectious disease procedures and later report to Harris Occupational Health Clinic, listed below, as soon as possible. Less than 2 hours to time of 1st dose of medication is optimal to the effectiveness of post-exposure prophylaxis; therefore, it is critical that treatment ensue promptly. In the event of a needlestick, the student should:

Step 1: Immediately clean needle sticks and cuts by washing the skin with soap and water. Splashes to the nose, mouth or skin should be irrigated with large amounts of water. Splashes to the eyes should be irrigated with large amounts of water or saline;

Step 2: Go to an on-campus clinical site, follow Step 1, and then report immediately to the Harris Occupational Health Clinic OR

ALTERNATE Step 2: If off-campus, go to a clinic equipped to provide initial testing and treatment, follow step 1, and then report the incident to your preceptor or supervisor at that facility. Request that the exposure be addressed promptly according to their protocol for employees. If the facility is not equipped to do testing/treatment and you are within 30 minutes of campus, report to Harris Occupational Health. If you are at an off-campus site that is not equipped to do initial testing/treatment and the facility is more than 30 minutes from campus, or it is after hours, follow Step 1 and then go to the nearest Emergency Room and request that they perform “initial post-exposure treatment.” File the visit with your insurance.

Step 3: Regardless of what facility conducted the initial post-exposure treatment, report the incident as soon as possible to the PAS Director of Clinical Education for documentation AND Harris Occupational Health for determination of whether additional testing is needed. You must also fill out a UNTHSC Non-Employee Incident Report Form and forward it to the campus safety office

Remember, the speed at which the incident is reported and treatment obtained can directly affect the outcome of the exposure. If you are in Tarrant County or the Fort Worth area and you receive an injury of this type, you should go immediately to the Harris Occupational Health Clinic, 1651 W. Rosedale, Suite 105, Fort Worth, Texas 76104, Open M-F, 7:00am-6:00pm, TEL 817-250-4840, FAX 817-885-8847. If the injury occurs outside of Tarrant County or after regular hours, go to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.

UNTHSC Student Health

Student Healthcare and Insurance. All students are required to have annual health insurance in order to be in compliance with UNTHSC Policy. A school-sponsored Student Injury and Sickness Insurance Plan is provided through United Healthcare Student Resources: www.uhcsr.com or 1-866-429-4868. Information on specific policies is available in the Office of Student Affairs. The student is responsible for (1) the choice of the specific insurance policy; (2) payment of all healthcare costs, including the premium, as determined by the specific health insurance plan chosen; and (3) following the rules, regulations, and guidelines of their chosen plan (UNTHSC Policy 07.107). Student healthcare is available to all students at the UNTHSC Student Health Clinic located at 855 Montgomery St., 3rd Floor, North. Clinic hours vary and are listed [HERE](#). The CVS Minute clinic adjacent to campus also accepts the student health insurance. All students, regardless of their health plan coverage, may access nursing advice and health information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by dialing 1-877-440-0549. Faculty members do not have access to student medical records and cannot give medical advice to students or act as their healthcare provider.

Immunizations and Health Screening Requirements. UNTHSC requires all students to comply with immunization and health screening requirements in order to protect the campus community, including patients with whom students have direct contact, from illness and disease. Immunizations are submitted to and maintained by the Certiphi™ database (See Preparing for Clinical Practica for more information). For more information, see Policy 07.108 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Student Assistance Program (SAP). UNTHSC offers free in-person counseling to students through the [WellConnect™](#) Program. Students can contact WellConnect™ at 800-326-6142. Additionally, students may contact Student Affairs at 817-735-2505 and on-campus counseling services at 817-735-5159. The Life Synch counseling hotline is available for students 24 hours, 7-days a week by calling 1-855-270-3349. The National Suicide Hotline is also available to students who feel they are in a crisis, whether or not they are thinking about suicide, 24 hours a day, 7-days a week at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Further SAP information is located at <https://www.unthsc.edu/wellness-services/resources/for-students/>. Additional counseling resources can be found on the UNTHSC website at <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/center-for-academic-performance/counseling-services/>.

Substance Abuse and Self-Reporting. UNTHSC strongly encourages student with substance abuse problems get treated successfully before critical incidents (e.g., arrests, usage on campus property, or intoxication in the classroom or during clinical assignments) occur. For more information, see The Code at <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/student-development/student-policy-handbook-2/the-code/> and policy 07.110 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Zero Tolerance for Sexual Violence and Harassment. It is the policy of UNTHSC to maintain a work place and a learning environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation. Harassment of students is a violation of Section 106.31 of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. Harassment of employees is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. Any sexual harassment incidents should be reported immediately to the Office of Student Affairs or the Equal Employment and Opportunity Office. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on the UNT Health Science Center's website at <https://www.unthsc.edu/wellness-services/sexual-assault-support/sexual-assault-and-sexual-misconduct/sexual-harassment/>. For more information, see the Sexual Harassment Policy 07.111 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

UNTHSC Technology

Laptops. All incoming PA students receive a university-issued technology package. Information about the technology package is provided prior to the PAS program start date. Items included in the technology packages are purchased using student fees and are owned by the student thereafter.

Email Use – Official Form of Communication. Email is the official mode of communication on the UNTHSC campus. Official information regarding a course, course assignment, or changes in a course will be communicated to the students through university email. All students must have a working university email address (e.g., xxxx@live.unthsc.edu) and must check emails daily to maintain current information on courses. Sometimes there are last minute changes to the schedule, so students are strongly encouraged to check their emails multiple times per day and prior to coming to class.

Use of Library Computers/Electronic Resources. As part of its mission to serve the education, research, service, and patient care needs of UNTHSC students, staff, and faculty, Lewis Library makes available a limited number of computers that offer access to electronic resources and software packages. Additionally, all library users can access the campus network, using either a wireless or an Ethernet connection. Individuals using the campus network shall comply with UNTHSC Policy 04.301 “Acceptable Electronic Communications Use Policy”, other applicable UNTHSC policies, and state and federal law. UNTHSC is not responsible for any damage done to patrons’ disks, data, hardware, or software by any malfunction of library hardware or software or by malware which may have been contracted on or through library equipment. Additional information is located at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies> under Policy 04.202.

Acceptable Electronics Communications Use. The University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) provides various electronic communication resources for the purpose of conducting business in support of UNTHSC’s organizational mission. UNTHSC is the legal owner and operator of all electronic communication resources purchased or leased with UNTHSC funds. All electronic records are the property of UNTHSC, not of the individuals creating, maintaining, sending or receiving such data or information. Each person granted access to UNTHSC electronic communication resources and electronic records is responsible for appropriate use as stated within this policy as well as adherence to all applicable federal, state and local laws. UNTHSC reserves the right at any time to limit, restrict or deny access to its electronic communication resources and records, as well as to take disciplinary and/or legal action against anyone who is in violation of this policy or applicable laws. More details on this topic may be found in Policy 04.301 at <https://app.unthsc.edu/policies/Home/AllPolicies>.

Use of UNTHSC Logo. To obtain the logo, approval of use, or with questions on brand use, students may contact [Amy Buresh](mailto:Amy.Buresh@unthsc.edu) at 817-735-5149, in Marketing and Communications. The UNTHSC Marketing and Identity Guide can be found at <https://www.unthsc.edu/outreach/marketing-and-communications-2/graphics-and-branding/>.

Electronic Devices. Computers and similar devices (e.g., notebooks, iPads, smartphones, etc.) may be used in class for class-related activities (determination made by the PAS Course Director or Liaison). Non-course related activities including but not limited to Web surfing, playing games, texting, instant messaging, and social media are not condoned. Audio or visual recording is not permitted without the prior approval of the course director or individual lecturer. Cell phones must be turned off or placed on “silent” mode during course activities. If students anticipate the need to take a call during class time, he/she must tell the lecturer at the beginning of class. Violations may result in loss of the privilege to have an electronic device in class.

UNTHSC Student Services

Student Affairs. Student Affairs oversees issues that are relevant to all students from pre-enrollment through graduation. Student Affairs provides co-curricular and extra-curricular services, programs, and activities to facilitate students' academic training, personal growth, and professional development. Student Affairs is comprised of the following departments: Office of Student Affairs, Center for Academic Performance (CAP), Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office, Student Development Office, Office of International Student Services, Office of Career Services, Disability Accommodations, Office of Health Promotion, and the Founders' Activity Center. Information is available at <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/student-affairs/>.

Gibson D. Lewis Library. An active ID badge is required for entry into the library. Visitors are welcome during service hours, but they must arrive before 9:00 P.M. and leave the building by the time the service desk closes. Visitors will be asked to sign in at the service desk upon arrival. All information and services related to the Lewis Library can be found at <http://library.hsc.unt.edu/content/about-us>

- **Hours of Operation**

- Levels 2 and 4 of the library are normally open to UNTHSC students, faculty, and staff members on a 24-hour basis, seven days per week.
- Level 3 (Hours may be adjusted during holidays and inclement weather)
 - Monday-Thursday 7:00 am - midnight
 - Friday 7:00 am - 10:00 pm
 - Saturday 10:00 am - 10:00 pm
 - Sunday 10:00 am - midnight

- **PAS Student Liaison Librarian.** The liaison librarian for the PAS program is Emily Johnson, Lewis Library, Level 2, Library Research Services Office; Emily.Johnson2@unthsc.edu.
 - Services available: Help with research, finding articles; catalog services; electronic books and journals; Pharos Printing, Copying, and Scanning

Founders' Activity Center (FAC). The FAC is an on-campus fitness center that houses a variety of equipment and offers a wide range of group fitness classes. A multi-purpose outdoor court is available for basketball, tennis, or volleyball. An active ID badge is required for access at all times and patrons must be at least 16 years of age to utilize FAC amenities (including use of outdoor court). Equipment Orientation is available by appointment only. Contact Jarrett Carter at 817-735-2209 or at jarrett.carter@unthsc.edu to schedule an appointment. For more information, go to <https://www.unthsc.edu/wellness-services/recreation/>, call 817-735-2209, or email recreation@unthsc.edu.

- **Hours of Operation** (Hours may be adjusted during holidays and inclement weather)
 - Monday-Thursday 6:00 am - 10:00 pm
 - Friday 6:00 am - 8:00 pm
 - Saturday-Sunday 9:00 am - 8:00 pm

Printing, Scanning, and Copying. The PAS Program does not provide printing, scanning, or copying services for students. Go to <http://library.hsc.unt.edu/content/printing-copying-and-scanning> to find a current listing of all locations and equipment students may use on campus. Information on Pharos, the print management system used at UNTHSC, is also located at this link. For questions, students may contact the Library Service Desk at 817-735-2465 or by email at libcirc@unthsc.edu.

Student Veterans Information. Veteran and military-specific resources and opportunities are available at UNTHSC. More information about opportunities to learn about these resources is provided prior to new student orientation or at <https://www.unthsc.edu/students/registrar/veterans-benefits/>.

Transportation. UNTHSC offers discounts to its employees and students for bus and train fares, as well as on the Bike Share program, to its employees and students. Further information can be found at <https://www.unthsc.edu/operations/sustainability/transportation/>.

Parking. In order to park a vehicle on campus, students must obtain a parking permit. These permits must be renewed annually on September 1st. More information can be found at <https://www.unthsc.edu/police/parking-office/visitor-information/parking-permits/>.

Recycling. UNTHSC offers co-mingled recycling services for our campus community. Co-mingle means that all recyclable items can be collected in one container rather than having to sort each item by type. Receptacles for trash and recycling are located throughout campus. Plastic containers with the recycle sign #1-7 (except 6), paper products, paperboard, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, aluminum cans, steel or tin cans are all accepted in the co-mingle receptacles. Food containers should be rinsed before placing in co-mingled recycling. Other recyclables include ink cartridges and toners, cell phones, and batteries (in special receptacles located in the MET building and in in the library). These items can also be sent through inter-office mail to facilities management. More on these initiatives can be found at <https://www.unthsc.edu/operations/sustainability/waste/>.

Lost and Found. UNTHSC has central lost and found locations in the UNTHSC Police Department and the Lewis Library. If any lost items of PAS students are found by PAS students, those can be brought to the PAS office suite. At all three locations, inquire at the front desk.

Kitchen Area. UNTHSC has provided a kitchen area on the 5th floor near the classrooms. Although this is a general use kitchen, it is primarily used by PA Students. PA Students are required to ensure that the area stays clean and the refrigerators stay tidy. Any small appliances, not furnished by UNTHSC, need to be approved by the PA Studies office prior to placing in the kitchen. No appliances with open heating elements are allowed.

Lockers. During the didactic phase of the curriculum, the PAS program assigns each PAS student a locker near the PAS classrooms. Once promoted to the clinical phase of the curriculum, that locker must be cleared out. For on-campus days during the clinical phase (PASS days), there are a limited number of day-use lockers available outside of the PAS program offices. These lockers are first-come first-serve, and must be emptied at the end of PASS day. Students also have the option of obtaining a locker through Student Affairs; however, this locker could be anywhere on campus. If students need the lock cut off because of a lost key or forgotten combination, he/she may email PAStudies@unthsc.edu. The PAS program accepts no liability for contents within lockers.

Campus Map. The layout of campus and most of these services can be located on the campus map found at <https://www.unthsc.edu/campusmap/>

Acknowledgement and Receipt

I have read the PAS Student Handbook and received answers from PAS faculty or staff to any questions that I may have had. I understand that I may contact PAS faculty and staff in the future should additional questions arise. I recognize that it is my responsibility to understand and comply with the policies and procedures contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it in the future. I know where to find the PAS Student Handbook on the [PA Studies Website](#) and will reference the handbook when PAS program questions arise. I understand that this information applies to me while on or off campus when acting in my role as a PAS student.

PAS Student Signature

PAS Student Name (Printed)

Date