

**HSC at Fort Worth**  
**School of Health Professions**  
**Department of Physician Assistant Studies**

**Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE)**  
**Student Handbook**

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**Class of 2025**

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***Notify the DCE of any significant issues. This can best be achieved by courtesy copying (cc'ing) the DCE in email to the preceptors, SCPE Faculty Course Directors and staff.***

## **Table of Contents**

<b>DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SENIOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>STUDENT-PRECEPTOR RELATIONSHIP .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TITLE IX .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SUPERVISION IN THE CLINICAL OR HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>STUDENT CONDUCT AT CLINICAL SITES.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>MAXIMIZING THE SCPE EXPERIENCE.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SCPE PREPARATION .....</b>	<b>11</b>
PROGRAM CRITERIA FOR IDEAL SCPE SITES .....	11
<b>UNDERSERVED CLINICAL ROTATION SITES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>EMAIL.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>OUT-OF-TOWN HOUSING.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENT SUCCESS FUND .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>WHAT TO DO BEFORE EACH SCPE BEGINS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
• CREDENTIALING.....	15
• CALLING AHEAD.....	15
• BADGES FROM HOST FACILITIES .....	15
• DRESS CODE .....	15
• SYLLABUS.....	15
<b>IMMUNIZATIONS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CERTIFICATIONS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>DRUG SCREENING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>STUDENT REMOVAL FROM A CLINICAL SITE.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT DURING SCPEs .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SCPE SCHEDULES .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>ROTATION REFUSAL.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SCHEDULE CHANGES.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOURS AND LENGTH OF WEEK .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>THURSDAY TRAVEL DAY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>BACKFILLS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
EARLY DISMISSAL/DAYS OFF DURING CLINICAL ROTATIONS PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION .....	19
THE PRECEPTOR ABSENT.....	20

EARLY DISMISSAL OR DAY OFF.....	20
CLINIC IS CANCELED .....	20
EXCEPTION TO THE BACKFILL SITE PROCESS*** .....	21
<b>PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCPE SUMMATIVE (PASS) DAY .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PROCESS FOR ABSENCES.....</b>	<b>22</b>
MEDICAL AND BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES <i>DURING CLINICAL ROTATION</i> .....	22
MEDICAL OR BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES <i>ON PASS DAY</i> .....	22
NON-MEDICAL OR NON-BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES <i>DURING CLINICAL ROTATION</i> .....	23
NON-MEDICAL OR NON-BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES <i>DURING PASS DAY</i> .....	24
<b>RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>OFFICIAL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND INCLEMENT WEATHER .....</b>	<b>24</b>
UNIVERSITY AND HOLIDAY BREAKS PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTATION.....	24
IN E*VALUE™ UNDER “TIME TRACKING” .....	24
INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTATION.....	24
DOCUMENTATION IF CLINIC CLOSES EARLY.....	25
DOCUMENTATION IF CLINIC IS CANCELED .....	25
<b>LEAVE OF ABSENCE .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>SCHEDULING AROUND PREGNANCY.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>TITLE IX AND PREGNANCY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
PREGNANCY AND PARENTING ACCOMMODATIONS .....	26
<b>TECHNICAL STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PREVENTION OF HAZARDOUS EXPOSURES.....</b>	<b>28</b>
METHODS OF PREVENTION .....	28
HAZARDOUS EXPOSURES.....	29
<b>GRADED COMPONENTS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
SCPE GRADING .....	29
EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT BY THE PRECEPTOR.....	29
END OF ROTATION (EOR) EXAMS .....	30
<b>EXAMS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
EXAM SECURITY .....	30
IMPORTANT NOTE FOR EXAMS.....	31
MISSED EXAMS .....	31
EOR EXAM FAILURE REASSESSMENT POLICY.....	31
REMEDIAION PRIOR TO RETAKING A FAILED EOR EXAM .....	31
COURSE GRADES AFTER A REMEDIAION EOR EXAM REASSESSMENT.....	31
<b>ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ACADEMIC COURSEWORK.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>MID-SCPE PRECEPTOR EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT BY THE PRECEPTOR .....</b>	<b>32</b>
EVALUATION DETAILS .....	32
EVALUATION AND REMEDIAION .....	32
<b>EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT BY THE PRECEPTOR- PAPER FORMS .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>PATIENT ENCOUNTER LOGS AND TIME TRACKING GRADING RUBRIC .....</b>	<b>33</b>

<b>PATIENT LOG AND TIME TRACKING GRADING RUBRIC.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE PRECEPTOR.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PROFESSIONALISM .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CONFIDENTIALITY .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>STUDENT SCPE DRESS CODE.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>ACADEMIC CONCERN .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>PLEASE REFER TO PROCEDURE NUMBER 16 FOR MORE INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>DUAL DEGREE INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>	<b>38</b>
HAZARDOUS EXPOSURE.....	38
<b>APPENDIX B.....</b>	<b>40</b>
END OF ROTATION EXAM INFORMATION .....	40
HISTORY TAKING AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION.....	40
DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES.....	40
DIAGNOSIS.....	40
HEALTH MAINTENANCE.....	40
CLINICAL INTERVENTION.....	41
CLINICAL THERAPEUTICS.....	41
SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS .....	42
<b>APPENDIX C.....</b>	<b>43</b>
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT FORMATTING CRITERIA .....	43
<b>APPENDIX D EXAMPLE TITLE PAGE FOR WRITTEN PAPERS .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>APPENDIX E HONORS ELECTIVE SCPE PROCESS.....</b>	<b>45</b>
PROCESS FOR APPLYING TO HONORS ELECTIVE SCPEs .....	45
APPLYING TO INDIVIDUAL HONOR ELECTIVE SITES: .....	45
<b>APPENDIX F: ELECTIVE SCPE CHANGE FORM .....</b>	<b>47</b>
ELECTIVE SCPE (SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE) SPECIALTY CHANGE FORM .....	47
<b>APPENDIX G: PA STUDIES PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>48</b>
PROCEDURE MANUAL .....	48
<i>Procedure No. 1: Physician Assistant Deceleration Procedure.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Procedure No. 2: Physician Assistant Course Remediation .....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Procedure No. 3: Physician Assistant Applicant Screening.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Procedure No. 4: Physician Assistant Student PA Awards.....</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Procedure No. 5: Physician Assistant Clinical Site Selection .....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Procedure No. 6: Physician Assistant Student Employment .....</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Procedure No. 7: Physician Assistant Prerequisite Admission Requirements.....</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Procedure No. 8: Physician Assistant Involvement in Patient Care Activities.....</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>Procedure No. 9: Physician Assistant Transfer of Course Credit.....</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Procedure No. 10: Physician Assistant Student Service Work.....</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Procedure No. 11: Physician Assistant Health and Technical Standards.....</i>	<i>68</i>
<i>Procedure No. 12: Physician Assistant Advance Placement and Course Waivers.....</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Procedure No. 13: Physician Assistant Leave of Absence .....</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Procedure No. 14: Physician Assistant Grade Appeals.....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Procedure No. 15: Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements.....</i>	<i>77</i>

<i>Procedure No. 16: Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, Dismissal Procedure Manual.....</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>Procedure No. 17: Physician Assistant Deferred Matriculation .....</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Procedure No. 18: Physician Assistant Professionalism Violation Procedure.....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Procedure No. 19: Physician Assistant Admission Seat Deposit.....</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Procedure No. 20: Physician Assistant Student Attendance Procedure.....</i>	<i>88</i>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Information in this handbook is considered policy and procedure of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. This handbook is provided to guide the student through the activities, processes, and circumstances unique to the Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE). Clinical education is referred to throughout this handbook as the SCPE. These learning experiences are conducted at a variety of clinical sites, which may include (but are not limited to): being privately owned, part of a group practice, government-operated, or directly within the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth (HSC).

The information provided in this handbook is intended to assist the student in completing the requirements of the HSC PA Studies Program SCPEs and to provide a quick resource related to the set precedence. The HSC PA Studies Program reserves the right to amend or add academic policies/procedures and scholastic regulations at any time during a 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 with appropriate notice provided. Herein, "*student*" refers to physician assistant (PA) student in the HSC PA Studies Program throughout the SCPE Student Handbook.

## **STUDENT-PRECEPTOR RELATIONSHIP**

The goal of clinical education is to involve the student in the practice of medicine, including appropriate direct patient contact under the supervision of assigned preceptors. The SCPE emphasizes the pathophysiology of diseases and health care modalities specific to each specialty area. Throughout the clinical education phase, students are expected to become involved in providing patient care commensurate with their stage of development and clinical knowledge. Students should only participate in tasks that are appropriate to their stage of development.

Students are required to be supervised by the preceptor(s) when performing patient care procedures and other responsibilities. The preceptor is typically a physician or advanced practice provider (APP), but this role may be delegated to other licensed health care professionals. Students will not perform patient care activities and procedures without the approval and supervision of the preceptor. A chaperone is required during all breast, genital, rectal and other sensitive patient examinations. A chaperone is also required at patient request.

All patient encounter documentation prepared by students (e.g. progress, discharge notes, etc.) must be reviewed and countersigned by the preceptor that is responsible for the patient's care. When applicable, this must be compliant with the CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) guidelines for medical students and residents). Please refer to [this link](#) for more detailed information.

**Under NO circumstances are students allowed to write orders or prescriptions (electronically or verbally) independently.** Neither the nursing staff nor ancillary support staff are permitted to complete orders given by a PA student.

Students learn through observation and interaction with preceptors and patients. Students should not relay any information or assessments to the patient or family members without prior approval from the preceptor. The student is expected to identify oneself to the patient as a student and describe their scope of practice as a

student. The preceptor is expected to ensure that the patient has given consent for the student to interact with the patient. This is important as some patients may not be able to distinguish the individual roles of the health care team.

While at clinical sites, students must be sensitive and respectful to everyone. Minor problems can amplify into major issues through miscommunications and/or failure to communicate. Please be cognizant of these concerns, remain professional, and properly communicate with all clinical site personnel.

## **TITLE IX**

HSC Fort Worth is committed to ensuring an educational and employment environment that is free of discrimination and harassment based on sex. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is the federal statute that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. It reads: No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

<https://www.unthsc.edu/title-ix/>

**For HSC’s Title IX policies :** 1.107 Title IX and 5.106 Prohibition Against Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Retaliation. For any questions, please contact the UNTHSC Title IX Office at [TitleIX@unthsc.edu](mailto:TitleIX@unthsc.edu) or at (817) 735-5919.

## **SUPERVISION IN THE CLINICAL OR HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT**

The student’s preceptor is responsible for supervising the student when performing patient care activities and related duties they are assigned. Preceptors may not permit PA students to perform any medical service or function without appropriate supervision, which is defined as the preceptor being physically present or immediately available on-site to provide guidance. **Students should never be placed in a situation where they are managing patients without supervision.**

- **Performance of Patient Care-Related Activities:** Students will be required to have direct contact with patients while on SCPE. Students are not licensed health care providers and therefore may not assume responsibility for patient care that exceeds their capabilities as a student or that violates other legal restrictions. Activities involving direct patient care and access to patient information must be under the supervision and direction of a qualified preceptor or faculty member. Patient care activities should not exceed the student’s stage of learning or clinical knowledge.
- **Replacing Qualified Staff:** Students may not take on the responsibility of staff. After demonstrating proficiency, students may be permitted to undertake increasingly more difficult/defined activities under appropriate supervision and direction of the preceptor. Under no circumstances are students permitted to write patient care orders independently or allowed to conduct patient care activities that exceed those a certified physician assistant would otherwise be directed to perform. **Every aspect of the patient encounter must be evaluated and approved by the preceptor. PA students cannot independently write prescriptions or call in prescriptions to the pharmacy without the direct supervision of the preceptor.**
- **Patient Notification of Student Status:** Students are required by Texas State law to wear an



**identification badge with the words “Physician Assistant Student” always spelled out in its entirety while on SCPEs** and when involved with patient care (except in the operating room or other location where it would pose an infection control or safety hazard). The best way to satisfy this Texas State requirement is to wear the HSC student ID plate issued by the PA Studies Department (pictured below). Students must take reasonable steps to disclose their status as a *Physician Assistant Student* while performing patient care-related activities. Students must inform patients and guardians that they are a PA student and act as such. Misrepresentation of student status is a felony.



- **Compensation and gifts: Students may not accept payments, stipends, or other remuneration for services they perform as a part of their educational program. Students are also not permitted to accept gifts of ANY kind from their preceptors or clinical site.**
- **Administrative Tasking:** Students are *not* prohibited from *helping* with administrative tasks such as transporting patients, collecting laboratory specimens, paging team members, filing reports or calling patients with lab results, as long as they do not receive remuneration for performing these services. However, if the student feels that these tasks are impeding the learning experience, the subject should be discussed with the preceptor and/or the DCE.
- **Supervision of Medical Services:** Preceptors should not permit PA students to perform any medical service or procedure without direct supervision, which is defined as the preceptor being physically present or immediately available to provide guidance.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

In addition to adhering to the HSC Fort Worth Student Code of Conduct, students are expected to perform the following during their clinical rotations:

- Must wear the HSC Fort Worth-issued ID plate always spelling out the words “Physician Assistant Student” (This is a Texas State law requirement).
- Must identify themselves as a student from our institution to every patient
- Wear their white lab coat with the PA Program emblem at all times during clinic
  - Except in the operating room or if the preceptor deems that jacket impedes care in special patient populations (psychiatric, pediatric, etc.)
- Minimum dress requirements are business casual or specific attire (e.g. scrubs, etc.) as requested by

the preceptor office

- Supply own physical examination equipment (e.g. stethoscope, reflex hammer, etc.)
- Arrive on time and report all absences to the DCE in a timely fashion
- Cell phones turned off or on vibrate while seeing patients
- Maintain patient confidentiality and HIPAA standards
- Act in a professional manner befitting a medical professional at all times
- Obtain detailed histories and conduct physical exams, develop a differential diagnosis, formulate an assessment and plan through discussion with the preceptor, give oral presentations, and document findings
- Perform and/or interpret common lab results and diagnostics
- Educate and counsel patients across the lifespan regarding health-related issues
- Attend clinical rotations as scheduled, in addition to grand rounds, lectures, and conferences, if available to them
- Demonstrate emotional resilience, stability, adaptability, and flexibility during the clinical year

### **STUDENT CONDUCT AT CLINICAL SITES**

Students are held to the same standard during their SCPE as they are on campus and are expected to abide by all HSC and PA Program policies regarding ethical conduct, integrity, honesty, and professionalism. Breaches in ethical conduct will be handled per HSC policy. Students should be familiar with these policies and abide by them.

### **MAXIMIZING THE SCPE EXPERIENCE**

To enhance the learning experience, consider the following behaviors:

- The student is an ambassador for the HSC PA Studies Program. The students should present themselves as professional, enthusiastic, and willing to learn.
- It is the HSC PA Studies Program's responsibility to provide SCPE opportunities. During SCPEs, most of the learning is achieved through self-motivation, not from others teaching the student. Students should not be passive but should take initiative for their learning experience.
- Some SCPEs are more challenging than others. Each SCPE has the potential to provide a unique experience. Each task, regardless of how *seemingly mundane*, is still an opportunity to learn. Assignments given by the preceptor are considered part of the SCPE requirements and must be completed as directed.
- Students should treat patients with dignity and without bias. Patients can have different cultural backgrounds and may have differing values and beliefs than the student is accustomed. Students should remain self-aware and respond appropriately to others with cultural and socioeconomic differences. (*5.106 Prohibition Against Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Retaliation*) <https://unthsc.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=637&public=true>
- The student's educational experience may occur from others not immediately precepting the student, such as nursing staff, interprofessional allied health providers, administrative staff, and others. Be respectful of the role these individuals provide in the professional setting. Remember that PAs are often involved and responsible in ALL aspects of clinical practice.

- SCPEs in preferred specialized areas are not always available. The student should use elective experiences not only to explore potential future employment opportunities but to expand their knowledge in topics which they are weak.
- The student is strongly encouraged to send thank you notes or letters to all preceptors after having completed the SCPE. Remember, preceptors may be used as a resource when the student begins searching for a job after graduation.

## **SCPE PREPARATION**

A great deal of time and effort has been put into developing clinical sites and preceptors before they are used (i.e., affiliation agreements with legal offices, preceptor interviews, site inspections/evaluations, credentialing, and clinical site approval). For student and program protection, each clinical site and preceptor must meet HSC PA Program and ARC-PA accreditation standards to be approved. In some cases, the preceptor may have gone through significant personal efforts to obtain approval as a clinical preceptor. The approval process can take weeks to months. Sites such as hospitals and surgical centers may also require more time due to the affiliation agreements that must be arranged. These agreements alone can take from up to 24 months or more to obtain. It is essential that students keep the program informed of any activities that could result in a negative impact on future site utilization, and that the student understands they are an Ambassador for the HSC PA Studies program. Preceptors volunteer their time to provide learning experiences for the student. Both student evaluations and information obtained from site visits are used when evaluating a clinical site.

### **Program Criteria for Ideal SCPE Sites**

- A preceptor and office staff committed to training students
- Sufficiency of patients to facilitate learning
- Diverse patient populations to include ethnicity, gender, religious belief, cultural background, sexual orientation, age and geographic location
- Patient populations with varied socioeconomic status that may include indigent patients and those receiving assistance from the government
- Resources to facilitate learning such as exam rooms, equipment, medical references, and access to the internet
- The majority of SCPEs will take place in the state of Texas except for pre-established out of state electives (Yellowstone, etc.) and SCPEs acquired by a student's previous network. All SCPEs and exceptions are subject to approval by the DCE.
- Students are NOT required or encouraged to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors but may make suggestions to clinical year faculty about potential preceptors or clinical sites. .
- The student should forward the potential preceptor's contact information to the Clinical Site Coordinator once the preceptor contact information is received, the Clinical Site Coordinator will send the preceptor the necessary paperwork to be completed so that we can perform the necessary credentialing and background check. All SCPEs and exceptions are subject to approval by the DCE.
- Students are NOT to coordinate SCPE schedules directly with preceptors. Violations will be subject to professionalism sanctions.

- Students are not to contact any preceptor outside of when they are assigned to the rotation site by the Clinical Team.
- Students must not “cold-call” or solicit clinics to request rotation sites.

### **SITE VISITS**

The purpose of a site visit is to determine the adequacy of the site in meeting the overall PA program’s expectation for the student’s clinical experience and meets the ARC-PA accreditation standards. Site visits can occur either virtually or in-person with both the student and preceptor. For new clinical sites or preceptors, the initial site visit is typically conducted by the DCE, unless there is an extenuating circumstance in which a clinical team representative will be delegated by the DCE to conduct the initial site visit. Subsequent site visits are performed every 2 years to ensure that the clinical site maintains the PA program and ARC-PA accreditation standards. The subsequent site visits can be performed by any member of the clinical team or by PA Studies Faculty. From time to time, a clinical team member from the PA Program may visit the preceptor and student for an unscheduled visit. If possible, the clinical team member will notify the preceptor of the intent to visit, however, the student is not always notified.

### **UNDERSERVED CLINICAL ROTATION SITES**

*(Referenced from <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/workforce-shortage-areas/shortage-designation>)*

Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) and Medically Underserved Populations (MUPs) identify geographic areas and populations with a lack of access to primary care services. These designations help establish health maintenance organizations or community health centers. MUAs have a shortage of primary care health services within geographic areas such as: a whole county; a group of neighboring counties; a group of urban census tracts; or a group of county or civil divisions. MUPs have a shortage of primary care health services for a specific population subset within a geographic area. These groups may face economic, cultural, or language barriers to health care. Examples of underserved clinical sites may include shortage designation identified as an area, population, or facility experiencing a shortage of health care services. There are several types of shortage designations:

- MUAs and MUPs (see description above)
- Exceptional MUP: a specific population within a defined geographic area that doesn’t qualify as a MUP. Unusual circumstances prevent the population from having access to primary care services.
- Governor’s-Designated Secretary Certified Shortage Areas for Rural Health Clinics: areas that a state governor or designee identifies as having a provider shortage. A state-established shortage plan is used to establish an RHC.
- Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs): geographic areas, populations or facilities that have a shortage of primary, dental, or mental health providers.

- Facility HPSAs:
  - Other Facility (OFAC): Public or non-profit private medical facilities. They serve a population or geographic area with a shortage of providers.
  - Correctional Facility
  - State/County Mental Hospitals
- Automatic Facility HPSAs (Auto-HPSAs): Facilities that we automatically designate as HPSAs based on statute or through regulation:
  - Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
    - Provide primary care to an area or group of people in need.
    - Offer a sliding fee scale.
    - Provide complete services.
    - Have an ongoing quality assurance program; and
    - Have a governing board of directors.
    - All organizations receiving grants under Health Center Program Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act are FQHCs.
  - FQHC Look-A-Likes (LALs)
    - Community-based health care providers
    - Meet the requirements of the HRSA Health Center Program
    - Don't receive Health Center Program funding
  - Indian Health Facilities
    - Federal Indian Health Service (IHS), tribally run and Urban Indian health clinics
    - Provide medical services to members of federally recognized tribes and Alaska Natives
  - IHS and Tribal Hospitals
    - Federal Indian Health Service (IHS) and tribally run hospitals
    - Provide medical services to members of federally recognized tribes and Alaska Natives
  - Dual-funded Community Health Centers/Tribal Clinics
    - Health centers that receive funding from tribal entities and HRSA
    - Provide medical services to members of federally recognized tribes and Alaska Natives
  - CMS-Certified Rural Health Clinics (RHCs)
    - Outpatient clinics located in non-urbanized areas that are Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) certified and meet National Health Service Corp (NHSC) site requirements (e.g., accept Medicaid and CHIP and provide services on a sliding fee scale).

### **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Remaining in contact with students is very important during the clinical phase. The student must notify the PA program whenever their telephone number or mailing address has changed. The PA program must have current information in the event it is necessary to contact the student about sudden changes or emergencies. A current cell phone number is required to be submitted and maintained to the PA Program during the clinical

education phase. The easiest way to do this is to keep the eValue™ student profile up to date. Students must also submit address changes to the university through MyHSC.

## **EMAIL**

The official form of communication for the PA program and the campus is the student's HSC University email account address. No other email is recognized as official and is prohibited from use except in the event of university email account outage. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for continuous email service and to **access it daily** and as often as possible while out-of-town on SCPEs. If the student is unable to access email while at an out-of-town SCPE, notify the DCE by telephone so other arrangements can be made. An exception to this might be while on an elective SCPE in Malawi. Students are not permitted to use personal email accounts to correspond with the PA Program. Students must use their university-issued email address on all correspondence.

## **OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

A student may be required by a preceptor to carry a pager or cellphone while on a SCPE. This equipment is not provided by the program nor does the program provide funds to pay for this equipment.

## **OUT-OF-TOWN HOUSING**

Each student should anticipate *at least two* SCPE sites occurring outside of the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area during their clinical education. When assigning students to SCPE sites outside of the DFW area, reasonably affordable housing is taken into consideration. However, students need to recognize that paying for housing is considered a student responsibility. **The HSC PA Studies Program is not responsible for securing or paying for housing for students at clinical sites.**

Students are encouraged to plan for housing expenses that may be incurred. The Financial Aid Office has included housing costs in the student budget and may be able to provide some additional or emergency assistance with obtaining loans if a financial crisis exists.

## **SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENT SUCCESS FUND**

The School of Health Professions (SHP) Student Success Fund was established to support students as a relief fund available for those who encounter an unforeseen event that requires immediate financial assistance in order to continue their semester successfully. In the event of a verified short-term crisis outside of the student's control that impacts their financial wellness and personal wellbeing, the student can apply for assistance from the fund, if relief is not available from Student Services. The student will need to request the application from the department chair and then return the completed application to the department chair via email. The student should include supporting documentation proving the crisis such as photos, doctor's notes, insurance claims, leasing agreement, bills, or invoices for payments to be made. The student should redact any specific medical information related to diagnosis or treatment. The student's application will be reviewed by the SHP Academic and Business Director who will make a recommendation to the SHP Executive Team for the final award decision. If the student's application is denied, they will be notified via email and given information on additional resources that could potentially provide emergency assistance. Examples of

covered expenses include those that immediately serve the student's needs, and include items such as rent, groceries, utility bills, safety needs, medical care expenses, or other as approved.

## **Credentialing Requirements**

**Students refusing to comply with clinical facility credentialing prerequisites will not be permitted to continue their SCPE. Students unable to complete all SCPEs may be subject to dismissal from the program.** Refer to the Texas Administrative Code Rule 97.64 for further information for students enrolled in health-related higher education.

## **WHAT TO DO BEFORE EACH SCPE BEGINS**

Prior to arriving at each clinical site, students are expected to do the following:

- **Credentialing.** The student should review all credentialing requirements **30-60 days prior** to the scheduled SCPE start date. This information can be found in Canvas™ and eValue™. It is the student's responsibility to complete all credentialing in accordance with the SCPE requirements. Failure to take these steps could result in not attending the scheduled rotation, incur a professionalism remediation assignment and/or referral to Student Affairs, and possibly delay the student from graduating on time.
- **Calling ahead.** The student is required to **contact the SCPE site two weeks prior** to the scheduled start date to confirm the date and time of arrival and request directions if necessary.
  - **\*If the student cannot confirm their expectation of arrival, the DCE must be notified immediately so an alternate site may be found, if necessary.** Failure to take these steps could result in not attending the scheduled rotation, incur a professionalism remediation assignment and/or referral to Student Affairs, and possibly delay the student from graduating on time.
- **Badges from host facilities.** Many of the facilities that require credentialing may provide an identification badge to wear while at the SCPE. These badges do not replace the student ID plate issued from the PA Program. They may be worn in conjunction with the ID plate. The hospital ID badge must be returned to the host facility upon completion of the SCPE. Failure to do so may result in withholding the grade for the SCPE.
- **Dress Code.** When calling two weeks prior to the scheduled SCPE start date, inquire about the dress code and plan on dressing to the SCPE site standard.
- **Syllabus.** On the first day of the SCPE, offer to share a copy of the course syllabus with the preceptor(s). All clinical course syllabi can be found on Canvas™ in each respective course. By the start date of the clinical SPCE, the student should have reviewed the syllabus and SCPE specific requirements.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

All students are required to have vaccinations consistent with current CDC recommended vaccines for health professionals, state of Texas recommendations, and HSC policies. Immunizations are tracked with Medicat® software through the HSC student health office. Prior to starting the clinical year, the student must have

completed all immunizations and health screening requirements including Hepatitis B (or waiver) and current TB screening. Students must also be prepared to provide evidence of immunity to varicella zoster, measles, and rubella. Each student will have a tuberculosis test within one (1) year of starting each SCPE and is required to repeat testing if the SCPE extends beyond the 1-year anniversary of the test. Some clinical sites require documentation of the two-step PPD, vaccine titers and/or the flu vaccine. This is specified in each site's credentialing procedures. Immunization exemptions must be approved by the HSC Student Health.

<https://www.unthsc.edu/students/student-health/immunization-requirements/> **Please note: some clinical sites may not accept exemptions.**

## **CERTIFICATIONS**

It is strongly recommended that each student maintain copies of all testing/results and certifications in the event those documents need to be presented to the clinical site. These results are often needed after graduation when applying for staff privileges.

The student should be prepared to provide evidence of training/certifications in:

- Basic Life Support (CPR) within the past 2 years
- Universal blood and body fluid precautions (renewed annually)
- Sterile Technique and Surgical Scrub certificate

It is strongly recommended that each student maintain copies of all testing/results and certifications in the event those documents need to be presented to the clinical site. These results are often needed after graduation when applying for staff privileges.

## **DRUG SCREENING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Prescreening requirements have now been introduced into many of the clinical site affiliation agreements. These prescreening requirements (background checks and drug screens) are often the same as those required of employees at the clinical training facilities. This approach often helps the facility to ensure uniform compliance with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization standards pertaining to human resource management.

Students are required to obtain a background evaluation prior to the clinical year curriculum, which includes a criminal background evaluation/history. This is done through Certiphi™ by the HSC Student Affairs office. Some government clinical sites will conduct a more thorough background check and the student continuing at that site will be based on those results, not the results from Certiphi™. A student may not be permitted to participate in educational or patient care activities if the individual has been convicted of a crime. Unless prior arrangements have been made with the facility where the SCPE is performed, the student may be responsible for the costs incurred in any initial and subsequent criminal background checks.

The student will be notified through Certiphi™ approximately one month prior to the start of a SCPE to complete a drug screen and background check. Facilities under the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Foundation accept a one-time screen. However, in other facilities, drug screening and criminal background checks (which may or may not include fingerprinting), may have a specified time frame (sometimes 30-60 days in advance) as proof of screening. Students must be prepared to provide results of drug screening and background checks when required. This information is maintained on the Certiphi™ website and access is limited to individual users and not PA Program employees. It is highly recommended to keep a copy of each to present to individual SCPEs upon request. Students refusing to comply with clinical facility drug screening and



criminal background check requirements will not be permitted to continue their SCPE and may be subject to dismissal from the program and/or possible sanctions with the Texas Medical Board upon completion of the program.

### **PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY**

Students are covered by the professional liability policy of the HSC only when serving on an approved SCPE and conforming to the policies and procedures set forth in this document, the accompanying course syllabi, and the university policies. The coverage limits are \$1,000,000 (all claims from one medical incident) and \$3,000,000 (all incidents each annual period) and acceptance has been assured by our affiliate teaching sites. Please notify the HSC PA Studies Program if any clinical sites require further explanation or will not accept these limits.

There is a face-sheet copy of the student liability insurance located on Canvas™ in the MPAS PASS Day Callback and Admin course files. **PA Students are only covered in program-assigned activities. Coverage does not apply to students who participate in unassigned activities not affiliated with the PA Program.** Any volunteer activity that involves patient contact with the student functioning in the role of a PA student must be approved by the DCE **prior to participation**. Any volunteer activity that a student participates in without prior DCE approval is considered an unapproved activity that is not covered under the professional liability provided by the HSC PA program. **Participation in unapproved volunteer activities will result in a referral to Student Affairs for professional misconduct and possible dismissal from the program.**

### **STUDENT REMOVAL FROM A CLINICAL SITE**

Affiliation agreements with hospitals and other medical facilities require student removal if it is determined that the student does not meet professional standards or other requirements consistent with the qualifications and standards of the practice of medicine and their facility. The facility will usually consult with the program prior to such removal, but this is not required. The removal of a student from a site for cause may result in disciplinary action and/or failure of the SCPE as well as possible sanctions from the Texas Medical Board upon completion of the program.

### **EMPLOYMENT DURING SCPEs**

Employment during SCPEs is highly discouraged. Students are expected to prioritize attendance at clinical rotations and completion of SCPE requirements over employment. Clinical assignments will not be compromised due to employment conflicts. Failure to meet course expectations due to employment conflicts may be cause for dismissal. Students *will not* be afforded special consideration due to employment when making SCPE assignments. Students are not permitted to assume responsibility for or take the place of professional or regular staff while serving on clinical practicums. Per PAS Procedure No. 6, students may not be employed to perform medical or patient care related services at any private or public medical practice, clinic, or institution during any time in which they are under the sponsorship of the PA Studies program and assigned to that practice, clinic, or institution as a student. For example, a student may not receive pay for performing history and physical examinations on nursing home patients while completing an assigned SCPE in the same facility.

### **SCPE SCHEDULES**

SCPE schedules are created individually for each student by E\*Value™. When possible, attempts are made to consider the non-academic needs of the student. Students should be aware, however, that the program

cannot guarantee any specific site, location, or preceptor. The HSC PA Studies Program tries to balance the needs of *all* students in satisfying educational and accreditation requirements. Students are not permitted to customize their own SCPE schedule. **Students are not to contact preceptors to make SCPE changes. Students are not to contact any preceptor outside of when they are assigned to the rotation site by the Clinical Team.** All SCPE changes are coordinated through the DCE and the Clinical Team.

The following guidelines are used when determining where students are assigned for their SCPEs:

- Each student should expect to attend *at least two SCPEs outside the DFW area*. Under some circumstances, students may be placed in more than 2 non-DFW rotations based on preference and site availability.
- The Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area includes Hood, Johnson, Parker, Somervell, Tarrant, Wise, Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hunt, Kaufman, and Rockwall counties.
- The Program is only required to provide a SCPE site. All expenses, travel arrangements, and accommodations are the responsibility of the student.
- At least one SCPE per student will be scheduled in an underserved area/population.
- Each student is provided four elective opportunities. These will be approved in an area of the student's choosing whenever possible. If the student does not choose and arrange for an approved elective opportunity, the HSC PA Studies Program will assign one. If the student's preference list cannot be accommodated, HSC PA Studies Program will assign an elective SCPE that is available.
- SCPE schedules are not released until they have been confirmed with the preceptors. This is completed on a month-to-month basis. The Clinical Team aims to provide students with their assigned SCPE site approximately 2-3 months ahead of each SCPE. Due to unforeseen circumstances that may affect a clinical site precepting a student, some students may not find out where they are going until closer to the start of their SCPE.
- Students are not permitted to miss SCPEs for job interviews or employment-related activities.
- Students are not permitted to extend a SCPE or repeat a SCPE at the same site. In extreme or rare circumstances, exceptions are approved at the discretion of the DCE.
- Students may request to change a **specific specialty** for their elective no less than 3 months prior to the start of their scheduled elective rotation. **Students may not request to change the specific site and/or preceptor within the specialty they chose.** Students may not request to change any electives after Rotation 6. Students must complete an Elective SCPE Specialty Change Form (Appendix F). The completed Elective SCPE Specialty Change Form must be emailed to Ms. Katherine Davis who will send the form via DocuSign for student signature, then to the DCE for approval, and lastly to the Senior Project Manager for schedule adjustment, if approved.

## **ROTATION REFUSAL**

Students are required to accept the assigned rotations and are not permitted to refuse rotations unless there is religious, medical or safety reason not to attend the rotation. Proof of religious, medical or safety reasons for the rotation refusal will need to be provided to the DCE and determination of an exception will be decided by the HSC PA Studies Program Executive Committee. Attempts will be made by the HSC PA Studies Program to accommodate approved exceptions but could result in delayed graduation for the student. Students requesting rotation refusal must make the request via email at least 2 weeks in advance of starting the rotation requested.

## SCHEDULE CHANGES

There are limited situations in which a SCPE schedule will be changed. Student-requested changes to the schedule will require consultation with the DCE. Any schedule change may warrant altering or delaying student graduation to accommodate the change.

## HOURS AND LENGTH OF WEEK

- At least 40 hours or more per week of attendance are required to accomplish many SCPEs.
- Many SCPEs may require students to be available for more than 8 hours a day to meet all educational and performance objectives.
- Participating in after-hours “Call” is generally considered an opportunity to enhance student’s educational experience and may be required to meet all requirements of a particular SCPE.
  - Examples of other activities that may expect students to attend more than the 40 hours per week or 8 hours per day are: attendance at rounds, continuing medical education activities, special assignments and case presentations.
- **Some SCPEs may also require a student to attend activities on weekends, holidays, and during non-regular hours when the clinical preceptor is also working.**
- If a student feels that the work requirements of a SCPE are excessive, the student must discuss that with the DCE before talking to the preceptor. Students may not tell preceptors that any shift, weekend work, on-call activity, or other assignment is not an expectation of the student without first discussing with the DCE.

## Thursday Travel Day

- If the SCPE site within the state of Texas is *greater* than 200 miles from the HSC campus, the student is excused from the clinical site **at noon** on the Thursday prior to PASS day. This is to allow time to travel back to the DFW area. Out of state SCPEs, to include Honors Electives, may use the entire Thursday prior to PASS day for travel back to the Fort Worth area.

## BACKFILLS

### **Early Dismissal/Days Off During Clinical Rotations Process and Documentation**

*The following does **NOT** apply to absences/early dismissal for medical or personal reasons. The student will still need to email the DCE for absences/early dismissals related to medical or personal reasons.*

There are no set required hours for the student’s SCPE experience, however the student should aim at achieving ***at least*** 40 hours or more per week. Remember these rotations are preparing the student for clinical practice. It is encouraged to sign up for backfill sites as often as possible. Gaining more hours and patient care experiences benefits the student as well as their future patients. The signup sheets will be checked by the SCPE Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Directors and DCE to make sure the time tracking hours and available dates/times are filled. In the event, it is determined that a backfill shift was not covered that could have been covered during a student’s time off/early dismissal from clinic, the student will be assigned a professionalism assignment at the discretion of the SCPE Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Directors and DCE. It is **strongly encouraged** that no Mercy Clinic or Mission Arlington shifts go uncovered at all. Backfill hours are to be completed during the same rotation timeframe that the hours were missed. The exception to this completion timeframe occurs when there are no backfill sites available or at the discretion of the DCE. **Backfill hours should be equivalent to the hours missed during the rotation. (e.g. 4 hours missed = 4 hours that must be backfilled).**

## The Preceptor absent

Any time a preceptor is not available at the SCPE site, and an **alternative clinical preceptor experience/assignment** arrangement has not been made for the student by the preceptor, the student is required to notify the DCE immediately. Failure to do so could cause the student to receive an “unexcused absence” and result in a remediation assignment or be required to repeat the SCPE.

## Early Dismissal or Day Off

1. Check the listed alternative SCPE backfill sites for availability in Canvas > PASS Day Callback & Admin Course > Assignments > Mercy Clinic, DOC, Mission Arlington, etc. on the specific missed/early day or on the weekend to make up a missed shift (e.g. Tuesday off but no Tuesday backfill, however backfill on Saturday) and make a note in time tracking.
  1. **Documentation for Completing a Backfill Site:** The student will select the current rotation they are on and mark the day as “Present” for the number of hours worked. Document in the comment section, *“Completed backfill shift at XXX” (E.g. Mission Arlington, DOC, Mercy Clinic, etc.)*.
2. **If no backfill sites are available on Canvas, the student has a day off from their scheduled SCPE, or the student is dismissed early (at or before 2pm), then the student must email the Clinical Administrative Assistant, Ms. Katherine Davis [Katherine.davis@unthsc.edu](mailto:Katherine.davis@unthsc.edu) and cc the DCE.** Ms. Davis will reach out to the Dallas and Fort Worth VA backfill preceptors and notify the students where to go if there is a Dallas or Fort Worth VA backfill site available, or any other sites available at the time.
3. **If no backfill sites are available at all,** then the student is expected to use the time to study for their End of Rotation examination or PANCE and/or use this time to work on other clinical year assignments. The student should make a note in time tracking as described below:

## Documentation If Clinic Closes Early:

1. If there are no alternative SCPE backfill sites to go to, the DCE approves the student to study for their End of Rotation Exam and/or PANCE or complete other assignments that are due. The student should email their SCPE Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director and notify them that they have completed the above process and will be using their time to study, etc.
2. In E\*Value™ Time Tracking, the student should mark the day as *“Present”* for the number of hours they were present (e.g. 8am-11am) and document in time tracking under the comment section for the day, *“Clinic/Cases ended early due to XXX. SCPE Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director notified and DCE approved remainder of day to study for EOR and/or PANCE and/or complete the following assignments XXX.”*

## Clinic is Canceled

1. If there are no alternative SCPE backfill sites to go to, the DCE approves the student to study for their End of Rotation Exam and/or PANCE or complete other assignments that are due. The student should email their SCPE Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director and notify them that they have completed the above process and will be using their time to study, etc.
2. If clinic or cases were canceled and no hours were obtained for the day, then mark the day as *“Not A Scheduled Workday”* and document in the comment section, *“Clinic/Cases canceled due to XXX. SCPE*

*Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director notified and DCE notified and approved remainder of day to study for EOR and/or PANCE and/or complete the following assignments XXX.”*

### **Exception to the Backfill Site Process\*\*\***

**If the student is credentialed at MD Anderson or is rotating in Houston** and has an anticipated day off from their scheduled SCPE or get early dismissal at or before 2pm, then notify DCE via email. The DCE will arrange for a backfill site at those specific locations if available.

### **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCPE SUMMATIVE (PASS) DAY**

PASS day activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- End of Rotation (EOR) exams
- Small and Large Group Discussions
- Information sharing and guest speakers
- Interprofessional Education lectures/workshops
- Case Presentations
- Grand Rounds
- Review of Medical Literature/Research
- OSCE type exercises
- Educational Workshops
- Student File Review and Maintenance
- Program Announcements
- Meeting with Clinical SCPE Faculty Course Director, DCE and/or other faculty

PASS Day normally occurs every 4 weeks on the last Friday of the SCPE and is typically scheduled from 8:00am-5:00pm. PASS Day is an integral part of the clinical educational program and satisfies several accreditation requirements. Attendance at each PASS Day is **mandatory** for all students in SCPEs. Participation in PASS day activities is worth 5% of the overall SCPE grade. Participation is required whether the student is taking an end of rotation exam or not. An unexcused absence for this mandatory component may result in failure of the SCPE and require that the student repeat the entire SCPE. Students are expected to dress professionally in business casual attire for PASS Day unless instructed to wear scrubs for a separate PASS Day activity.

### **ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE**

**Preceptors are not the approving authority to determine excused or unexcused absences. Approval of absences are at the discretion of the DCE and need to be requested prior to taking off. In emergent situations, the student must notify the DCE immediately via email.**

Failure to obtain approval from the DCE of any absence, including absence due to tardiness, may also include a remediation assignment. A pattern of non-attendance and tardiness may be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. In the event of a SCPE failure, a student’s attendance record will be considered when making recommendations on probation, remediation, and dismissal.

**Any time a student is absent or tardy or expects to be absent or tardy from the SCPE, they must notify/email the DCE (cc the SCPE Faculty Course Director) and the clinical preceptor as soon as feasible or the absence will be considered unexcused. Failure to do this will be**

considered unprofessional behavior. The student must record each absence in eValue™ time tracking.

Students are not permitted more than 2 excused absences total per SCPE. This does *not* mean that a student is automatically granted 2 absences per SCPE. **Greater than 2 absences will result in repeating the entire SCPE, with the exception of illness that requires quarantine.**

Excessive excused absences can result in additional clinical experience/assignments and potentially repeating the entire SCPE. The student will be required to make up the missed time at the discretion of the DCE. **In the event the student cannot make up the missed time prior to the end of the SCPE, the student will be required to repeat the entire SCPE.** Make up assignments are not permitted to interfere with other SCPE requirements.

- The DCE will determine if an absence is excused or unexcused.
- The DCE is permitted to require the student to provide verification for any absences that occur, which may include proof of illness from a healthcare provider or proof of funeral attendance.
- Taking call may be a requirement of a SCPE setting. Failure to respond or participate in call mandated by the preceptor will be considered an unexcused absence as well as unprofessional conduct.
- Some clinical assignments may require the student to attend activities on weekends, holidays, or other irregular hours when their clinical preceptor is working. A lack of willingness to participate in these activities reflect negatively on the program and the PA profession and will be considered unprofessional conduct.
- Unreported absences will automatically be considered unexcused absences, which could result in failure of the SCPE, be considered unprofessional conduct and possibly result in dismissal from the Program.

## **PROCESS FOR ABSENCES**

### **MEDICAL AND BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES DURING CLINICAL ROTATION**

Students who become ill or who have an emergency that causes them to be absent, **must** inform the preceptor and DCE (cc the Clinical SCPE Faculty Course Director) of the absence as soon as possible. Unreported absences or notifications that appear unusually delayed will be considered unexcused which could result in a failure of the SCPE and a referral to Student Affairs for unprofessional conduct.

- The student must notify the DCE of any medical absence and provide a doctor's note.
- The student must notify the DCE of any absence due to bereavement and provide proof of funeral attendance (e.g. funeral program or letter from funeral home).
- **Documentation in Time Tracking:**
  - The student must mark the day as "*Absent*" and document the following comment in time tracking after absence has been approved by the DCE, "*Medical Absence approved by DCE,*" or "*Bereavement approved by DCE.*"

### **MEDICAL OR BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES ON PASS DAY**

Students who become ill or who have an emergency that causes them to be absent, **must** inform the DCE of the absence as soon as possible. Unreported absences or notifications that appear unusually delayed will be

considered unexcused which could result in a failure of the SCPE and a referral to Student Affairs for unprofessional conduct.

- The student must notify the DCE of any medical absence and provide a doctor's note.
- Regarding communicable diseases and attendance, the program uses CDC guidelines as a basis for attendance.
- The student must notify the DCE of any absence due to bereavement and provide proof of funeral attendance (e.g. funeral program or letter from funeral home).
- **Documentation in Time Tracking:**
  - The student must mark the day as "*Absent*" and document the following comment in time tracking after absence has been approved by the DCE, "*Medical Absence approved by DCE,*" or "*Bereavement approved by DCE.*"
  - The student will be required to complete a 1000-word written remediation assignment on the missed PASS Day lectures to make up for missing any component of PASS Day for medical or bereavement reasons. The remediation assignment is due **1 week after PASS Day at 8am.**
    - Students will submit the remediation assignment under the Canvas course (for the missed PASS Day)>Assignments>Remediation (e.g. The PASS Day ending the ER SCPE will be submitted under the ER Canvas Course > Assignments > Remediation).
    - The student will use the Written/Remediation Assignment format in the Appendix of the Clinical Phase Handbook for the Medical/Bereavement Absence PASS Day Written Remediation Assignment.

## **NON-MEDICAL OR NON-BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES DURING CLINICAL ROTATION**

### Request and Approval Process

- The student must **request** permission from the DCE at least one month prior to the rotation start if planning to be off for a non-medical absence during clinical rotation.
- The student must **obtain** approval from the DCE prior to planning to be off for a non-medical absence during clinical rotation.
- The student must then notify the Preceptor and Faculty Course Grader **after** approval by the DCE for a non-medical absence during clinical rotation.
- The student must discuss with the preceptor if the missed hours can be made up during their rotation. If not, the student must find backfill hours to make up the missed time.
- The student must notify the DCE and Faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director of when the missed hours will be made up and document it in Time Tracking.

### Documentation of Absence

- **Documentation in Time Tracking:** The student must mark the day as "*Absent*" and document the following comment in time tracking after absence has been approved by the DCE, "*non-medical and non-bereavement Absence approved by DCE. Backfill site to be completed on (specify date) at (specify clinic).*"
- The student will be required to complete a 2500-word written remediation assignment (topic assigned by the DCE) for non-medical and non-bereavement absences from the clinical rotation. The remediation assignment is due by 8am **on** the PASS Day of the specified SCPE timeframe being missed.
  - Students will submit the remediation assignment under the Canvas course (for the missed PASS Day)>Assignments>Remediation (e.g. The PASS Day ending the ER SCPE will be submitted under the ER Canvas Course > Assignments > Remediation).
  - The student will use the Written/Remediation Assignment format in the Appendix of the

Clinical Phase Handbook for the Non-Medical/Non-Bereavement Absence During Clinical Rotation written remediation assignment.

### **NON-MEDICAL OR NON-BEREAVEMENT ABSENCES DURING PASS DAY**

Non-medical and non-bereavement absences during PASS Day are strongly discouraged. At the discretion of the DCE, these absences may or may not be approved, with additional required assignments. Failure to complete the PASS Day component of any SCPE could result in failure of the SCPE.

### **Religious Holy Days**

Religious holidays are considered non-medical and non-bereavement absences. Excused absences for Religious Holy Days are approved in accordance with HSC policy. Please see the above requirements for non-medical and non-bereavement absences. Requests should be made in writing within the first week of the semester to the DCE when requesting an absence for a religious holiday.

### **OFFICIAL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Students are required to be at the clinical site at the same times as their preceptor, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. Official school holidays and school campus closures for inclement weather *do not apply to students on SCPE*, especially being that many SCPE sites are throughout the state of Texas. The attendance needs of the SCPE site supersede the traditional school holiday schedule. If the SCPE site is open and the preceptor is working during school holidays or days that the school is closed for inclement weather, the student is expected to be in attendance. Generally, ***“If the preceptor is there, the student is there.”***

### **University and Holiday Breaks Procedure and Documentation**

During breaks, such as Memorial Day or Winter break, some clinics may close in observance of the holiday. Please remember that if the preceptor is working, the student should be working as well, regardless of the holiday. **University campus closures do not apply to students on clinical rotation.**

If the clinic is closed for the holiday, the students do not need to email the DCE or SCPE Faculty Course Director to notify them of the holiday time off. It is encouraged to sign up for a backfill site if it is available, to make up the hours for single day holidays (e.g. Memorial Day), but it is not required. If no backfill site is available, it is encouraged to study or use the time to complete assignments.

### **In E\*Value™ under “Time Tracking”**

- **Documentation for Single Day Holidays:** Please select the SCPE you are currently on (e.g. Surgery) and mark the day as *“Not A Scheduled Workday”* and document in the comment section, *“Clinic closed due to XXX”* (e.g. Thanksgiving).
- **Documentation for Week-long breaks:** Please select the SCPE option as *“Not on Rotation”* and mark the day as *“Not A Scheduled Workday”* and document in the comment section, *“Clinic closed due to XXX break.”* Please log week-long breaks under the SCPE Faculty Course Director for the subsequent rotation (e.g. if your next rotation after break is ER, then log it under the faculty grading ER).

### **Inclement Weather Procedure and Documentation**

If clinic is closed early or for the day due to inclement weather, the student must notify the SCPE Faculty Course Director as soon as they are made aware of any closures due to inclement weather. The student is



expected to use the time off to study for their End of Rotation examination or PANCE and/or use this time to work on other clinical year assignments. The student should make a note in time tracking as described below:

### **Documentation If Clinic Closes Early**

If clinic or cases end early, then mark the day as “*Present*” for the number of hours the student was present (e.g. 8am-11am) and document in time tracking under the comment section for the day, “*Clinic/Cases ended early due to XXX Inclement Weather. The faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director was notified and approved remainder of day to study for EOR and/or PANCE and/or complete the following assignments XXX.*”

### **Documentation If Clinic is Canceled**

If clinic or cases were canceled and no hours were obtained for the day, then mark the day as “*Not A Scheduled Workday*” and document in the comment section, “*Clinic/Cases canceled due to XXX Inclement Weather. The faculty SCPE Faculty Course Director was notified and approved remainder of day to study for EOR and/or PANCE and/or complete the following assignments XXX.*”

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The Leave of Absence (LOA) Procedure must be adhered to when processing a LOA request. Refer to the PA Studies Procedures, Appendix G at the end of the SCPE Student Handbook. Upon return from LOA, the student will receive a curriculum plan from the program that will outline coursework necessary to complete the program.

### **SCHEDULING AROUND PREGNANCY**

In the event a student is pregnant and expects to deliver during the clinical year, the student should notify the UNTHSC Title IX Office ([titleIX@unthsc.edu](mailto:titleIX@unthsc.edu)) and the DCE as soon as possible so any schedule changes around the delivery date can be accommodated. Questions about a LOA for reasons of pregnancy and regarding arrangements should be directed initially to the DCE and ultimately the Program Director of HSC PA Studies and Registrar’s Office. The student should recognize that a LOA will likely delay graduation. The pregnant student is encouraged to inform their preceptors about any medical concerns during the SCPE and to avoid any hazardous exposures.

### **TITLE IX AND PREGNANCY**

“The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is responsible for enforcing laws prohibiting discrimination in federally assisted educational programs and activities. These laws include Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities. All public and private educational institutions that receive any federal financial assistance must comply with this law. OCR released a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) that outlines the obligations of colleges and universities to accommodate pregnant and parenting students under Title IX. ED’s regulation implementing Title IX specifically prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions. The Title IX regulation also prohibits a school from applying any rule related to a student’s parental, family, or marital status that treats students differently based on their sex.

HSC is committed to compliance with Title IX, and to supporting the academic success of pregnant and parenting students. If you are a pregnant and parenting student (child needs documented medical care) who wishes to request reasonable related accommodations from the University, **please submit the electronic form below along with appropriate medical documentation**, as soon as possible prior to the need for accommodations.

## **Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations**

The requirements and suggestions include:

- Schools must excuse a student's absences because of pregnancy or related concerns, including recovery from childbirth, for as long as the student's doctor deems the absences to be medically necessary.
- Absence policies in classes must accommodate pregnancy or childbirth-related absences and allow for make-up work. Specifically, OCR has explained that "a teacher may not refuse to allow a student to submit work after a deadline that she missed because of absences due to pregnancy or childbirth. Additionally, if a teacher's grading is based in part on the class attendance or participation, the student should be allowed to earn credits she missed so that she can be reinstated to the status she had before the leave.
- A school may offer the student alternatives to making up missed work, such as retaking a semester, taking part in an online course credit recovery program, or allowing the student additional time in a program to continue at the same pace and finish later, especially after longer periods of leave. The student should be allowed to choose how to make up the work.

HSC's Title IX office will provide reach out to the appropriate academic for parenting students who need to take their children to doctors' appointments or to take care of their sick children as long as they provide proper paper documentation from a medical provider. Students needing such an accommodation should contact the HSC Title IX Office as soon as possible after the missed class. For any questions, please contact the UNTHSC Title IX Office at [TitleIX@unthsc.edu](mailto:TitleIX@unthsc.edu) or at (817) 735-5919.

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

All candidates must meet certain health and technical standards to participate in the physician assistant educational programs. Graduation signifies the graduate is prepared for entry into the practice of medicine as a physician assistant with the requisite knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and provide a wide spectrum of patient care.

A candidate for the physician assistant degree must have abilities and skills in five areas: Observation, Communication, Motor, Conceptual, Intellectual, and Behavioral. Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain areas, but for the majority, the candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary requires a candidate's judgment to be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. Therefore, assistance from trained intermediaries to meet these technical standards may eliminate an essential element of the program and is not a permissible accommodation.

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 must exhibit interpersonal skills to enable effective caregiving of patients, including the ability to communicate effectively in person and in writing with all members of a multidisciplinary health care team, patients, and those supporting patients to gather information and describe changes in moods, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communication.
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 and may also include diagnostic procedures 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 tactile and visual assessment.
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.
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.
6. Environmental- Candidates should be able to function in educational and healthcare settings with potential exposure to chemicals, gases, biohazards, and environmental allergens that may be normally present in those settings. In those settings that require exposure to biohazards and/or chemicals, OSHA exposure limits and standards must be followed, including ability to use appropriate PPE.

If a student has undergone medical or surgical treatment that limits their mobility, causes an impairment, represents a potentially hazardous condition for themselves or others, or prevents them from participating in certain clinical rotations (e.g. surgery, etc.), the student is required to notify the DCE, PD and ODA immediately. The student must provide medical documentation stating the physical limitations, required medical device, and length of time needed for the device and/or limitation to ODA. If medical limitations prevent a student from participating in a SCPE and accommodations cannot be made, the student has the option to request a leave of absence.

A letter from the student's physician(s) stating that it is safe for them to continue patient care activities may be required. Refer to Program Health and Technical Standards policy.

## **Prevention of Hazardous Exposures**

Students are educated throughout the curriculum on methods of prevention for hazardous exposures in healthcare such as use of universal precautions and sharps safety. Students have completed course content and obtained certificates in the following areas to prevent exposures: PPE, Fit Testing for N95 Masks, Blood Borne Pathogens, Infection Control Sharps Safety, Sterile Technique, Proper Scrub Procedures.

In addition, students have attested to the health and technical standards which outlines environmental exposures. The Health and Technical standards state the following:

*Candidates should be able to function in educational and healthcare settings with potential exposure to chemicals, gases, biohazards, and environmental allergens that may be normally present in those settings. In those settings that require exposure to biohazards and/or chemicals, OSHA exposure limits and standards must be followed, including ability to use appropriate PPE.*

## **Methods of Prevention**

### *Injuries*

- Wear appropriate attire: closed-toe shoes, non-slip footwear, clothing that fits appropriately (not too loose or tight), eyewear that does not slip/fall from face.
- Notify appropriate personnel for spills or debris on walkways.
- Perform lifts and patient transfers only if specifically trained to do so.

### *Universal Precautions*

- Cover any open wounds/lesions.
- Always use barrier protection.
- Use gloves for protection when working with or around blood and body fluids.
- Change glove between patients.
- Use glasses, goggles, masks, shields, and waterproof gowns/aprons to protect face from splashes.
- Wash hands if contaminated and after removing gloves.
- Use resuscitation equipment and devices for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Minimize spills and splatters; use leak-proof containers.
- Decontaminate all surfaces and devices after use.
- Promptly seek medical attention and counseling if exposed to contaminated materials.

### *Sharps Safety*

- Plan safe handling and disposal before any procedure.
- Use safe and effective needle alternatives when available.
- Choose safe sharps that are engineered with injury protection (i.e. retractable needles, blunt suture needles, safety scalpels, needleless blood transfer equipment).
- Always activate the device's safety features.
- Do not recap, shear, or break contaminated needles.
- Wear goggles/face shield and double gloves when using sharps.

- Do not pass used needles between workers.
- Do not leave sharps out where they may injure others.
- Immediately dispose of contaminated needles in in properly secured, puncture-resistant, closable, leak-proof, labeled sharps containers.
- Never place your hand in a sharp’s container.

## **Hazardous Exposures**

In the event the student experiences a needle stick injury or splash exposure they are instructed to report it immediately not only to their preceptor and the institution where it occurred, but also to the DCE, HSC Fort Worth Safety Office and Student Affairs. Students should follow the procedures outlined by your office and/or the institution and HSC Fort Worth policies. For needle sticks, students should refer to their SCPE Student Handbook for instructions. If hazardous exposures occur in Fort Worth during business hours, students should report to the HSC Student Health Clinic., After hours or if the clinic site is located outside of Fort Worth, the student should be evaluated at the nearest Emergency Room.

See **Appendix A** for more information.

## **GRADED COMPONENTS**

Students are required to refer to the designated syllabus for the SCPE they are attending for the specific requirements. This section will describe the common graded components of all SCPEs.

### **SCPE Grading**

- To successfully complete a SCPE, the student must pass all components that are outlined in the syllabus. Each SCPE syllabus includes specific grading requirements. Grading criteria will vary based on the rotation components that may or may not include a PAEA End of Rotation Exam. Failure to complete or pass any SCPE for reasons of academic failure or unprofessional conduct may result in failure of the SCPE and possible dismissal from the program.
- When a student is required to repeat a SCPE for any reason, the grade for the repeated SCPE is used when calculating the overall GPA. However, all SCPE grades, including those of a failed and repeated SCPE, will be recorded on the student’s official transcript. Any student earning a grade of “C” or lower on a SCPE is required to meet with the DCE for academic counseling.
- Refer to the PA Studies Procedures Appendix G, Procedure No. 16 Probation, Dismissal Manual at the end of the SCPE Student Handbook.

### **Evaluation of the Student by the Preceptor**

Evaluation of the student by the preceptor consists of two required evaluations: *Mid-SCPE Preceptor Evaluation* and a final *Preceptor Evaluation of PA Student* at the end of the rotation. It is the student’s responsibility to review the mid-SCPE preceptor evaluation with the preceptor to ensure they are meeting the SCPE Learning Outcomes and have an opportunity to address any student deficiencies in a timely manner. Mid-SCPE evaluations are required and earn a “completion” grade.

**In the event a student fails the Preceptor Evaluation of PA Student at the end of the rotation with a grade < 70%, that student will be considered to have failed the SCPE. A failed SCPE will need to be successfully remediated by repeating the SCPE in its entirety at a time convenient for the program schedule during the clinical year and will result in delayed program completion.**

Students are evaluated in the following areas that are aligned with the PA Program Competencies, Learning Outcomes, and Instructional Objectives:

1. Medical Knowledge
2. Interpersonal Skills
3. Clinical and Technical Skills
4. Clinical Reasoning and Problem Solving
5. Professional Behaviors
6. Societal Responsibilities

The *Preceptor Evaluation of PA Student* is final upon submission to the program and students should not dispute grades with the preceptor. Any such behavior will be considered unprofessional conduct and will be addressed by the DCE. All discussions concerning the preceptor evaluation are to be addressed with the DCE. An example of the evaluation form can be found in the Canvas course for each SCPE. **Students must ensure that ALL the instructional objectives are observed by the preceptor to prevent the loss of points for that objective and/or an additional assignment.** To demonstrate competence, the student must score "Average" or greater on all preceptor evaluation objectives to successfully pass the SCPE and meet the PA Program competencies. Any student who scores less than "Average" or receives "Not Observed," will be required to successfully remediate the missed objective(s). Successful remediation earns an "Average" score for the objective, and unsuccessful remediation results in either a subsequent remediation or repetition of the SCPE.

### **End of Rotation (EOR) Exams**

Core SCPEs will include a standardized Physician Assistant Education Association End of Rotation examination:

- Emergency Medicine
- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Surgery
- Women's Health

Refer to the individual SCPE syllabus for specific grading criteria. EOR Exams are normally given on the last day of the SCPE (PASS Day). The DCE must approve any exceptions. The minimum passing score for EOR exams is a scaled 70%.

## **EXAMS**

### **Exam Security**

Exam questions are secure test items; therefore, students are not permitted to view exam items before or after test delivery *or to discuss them with anyone other than faculty*. Discussing exam items with student(s) who have not yet taken the exam is considered a breach of the Student Code of Conduct and the student(s) will be subject to dismissal from the program. Any student who records information about a test in any form, or who receives information about a test in any form, whether solicited or not, or who gives information

about a test to another person in any form, will be guilty of academic dishonesty and subject to disciplinary action as outlined above.

### **Important note for exams**

The student will incur a 10% score reduction of the unscaled grade for the first tardy of an EOR exam. Additional tardiness will result in a 10% reduction of unscaled grade and a remediation written assignment. Referrals (e.g., Student Affairs, PASPC, Program Director of HSC PA Studies, etc.) will be made as deemed necessary.

### **Missed Exams**

In the event of an excused absence that causes the student to miss a scheduled EOR Exam, that student is required to request a makeup exam in writing to the DCE within 3 days of returning from the excused absence. A student who does not take the exam as originally scheduled by the program due to an unexcused absence will result in the student receiving a failure for the missed exam. A makeup EOR exam must be rescheduled prior to the next PASS Day. The maximum score for the makeup of an unexcused missed exam will be 70%. Exceptions must be approved by the DCE.

### **EOR Exam Failure Reassessment Policy**

A student who fails an EOR exam will be permitted one reassessment for the SCPE before the final grade is assigned. Remediation and reassessment of a failed EOR exam *must* be completed on or prior to the next PASS Day. Exceptions must be approved by the DCE. In the event a student fails a reassessment of an EOR exam within a course, that student will be considered to have failed the SCPE. A failed SCPE will need to be repeated in its entirety with a passing grade at a time convenient for the program schedule during the clinical year and will result in a delayed graduation. Failure of a second SCPE during the clinical phase will result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program. The student may be charged an additional fee for EOR remediation examinations.

### **Remediation Prior to Retaking a Failed EOR Exam**

The DCE will assign a remediation curriculum per the PA Studies Procedures Appendix G, Procedure No. 2 Remediation Procedure. The curriculum will include material missed on the EOR exam based on the PAEA exam results provided to the student but may also include additional material at the discretion of the DCE.

### **Course Grades after a Remediation EOR Exam Reassessment**

Any student taking a reassessment of an EOR exam must pass the reassessment with a score of at least a scaled 70% to pass the SCPE. Regardless of the final EOR exam reassessment score, the maximum final grade awarded for the EOR exam will be 70%. The grade for the entire SCPE will be calculated with the weighted remediation exam score of 70%.

### **Artificial Intelligence in Academic Coursework**

Per the Student Code of Conduct and Civility, “use of any unauthorized assistance in academic and professional assessments (e.g., board exams, end of rotation exams, certification exams, etc.), including graded or ungraded

coursework, research, quizzes, tests or examinations” is prohibited. As such, the use of an artificial intelligence (AI) generator such as ChatGPT, iA Writer, MidJourney, DALL-E, etc., is explicitly prohibited unless otherwise noted by the instructor. The information derived from these tools is based on previously published materials. Therefore, using these tools without proper citation constitutes plagiarism. Additionally, be aware that the information derived from these tools is often inaccurate or incomplete. It is imperative that all work submitted should be your own. Any assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized AI tools may receive a zero and/or be reported for academic misconduct.

### **Mid-SCPE Preceptor Evaluation of the Student**

During each SCPE, students are evaluated by preceptors using a standardized form that can be found under the files section of the applicable Canvas™ course. Students must be evaluated at the mid-SCPE point (approximately 2 weeks) to ensure they are meeting the SCPE Learning Outcomes and have an opportunity to address any student deficiencies in a timely manner. Students will use the specific form designated on the Canvas™ page as each mid-SCPE preceptor evaluation is specific to the course in which the student is enrolled. The evaluation includes assessment of specific items in each of the following domains: medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical/technical skills, clinical reasoning/problem-solving, professional behaviors, and societal responsibilities. *Assignment details:*

- **Evaluation Review:** It is the *student’s responsibility* to review the mid-SCPE evaluation with the preceptor and to confirm it has been **completed electronically prior to the SCPE end date**. It is strongly encouraged that the student and preceptor review the evaluation in a one-on-one meeting to obtain constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- This is a completion grade. Failure to submit the mid-SCPE Preceptor Evaluation by 8:00 am on the Tuesday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the rotation may result in SCPE failure.

### **EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT BY THE PRECEPTOR**

#### **Evaluation Details**

Students are evaluated in the following areas that are aligned with the Instructional Objectives in the syllabi and the PA Program Competencies:

1. Knowledge Base
2. Interpersonal Skills
3. Clinical Technical Skills
4. Clinical Reasoning
5. Professional Behaviors
6. Societal Responsibilities

#### **Evaluation and Remediation**

Any low-scoring areas on the preceptor evaluation will require remediation at the discretion of the DCE. An example of the evaluation form can be found in the Canvas course for each SCPE. In the event the preceptor determines that a category is *not observed* on the rotation and “Not Observed” is selected, it will not be calculated into the grade. **Students must ensure that ALL the instructional objectives are observed by the preceptor to prevent the loss of points for that objective and/or an additional assignment.** A minimum of 70% is required to pass the preceptor evaluation of the student. To demonstrate competence, the student must score “Average” or greater on all preceptor evaluation objectives to successfully pass the SCPE and meet the PA Program competencies. Any student who scores less than “Average” or receives “Not Observed,” will be required to successfully remediate the missed objective(s). Successful remediation earns an “Average”



score for the objective, and unsuccessful remediation results in either a subsequent remediation or repetition of the SCPE.

It is the **student's responsibility** to review the evaluation with the preceptor and to confirm it has been completed prior to the SCPE end date. It is strongly encouraged that the student and preceptor review the evaluation in a one-on-one meeting to obtain feedback, constructive criticism, and suggestions for improvement. A weekly progress review is also highly recommended and should be initiated by the student. A preceptor's evaluation is final *upon submission to the program* and students should not dispute with the preceptor. Any such behavior will be considered unprofessional conduct and will be addressed by the DCE. All discussions concerning the preceptor evaluation are to be addressed with the DCE. Failure of the Preceptor Evaluation constitutes failure of the SCPE, and the student will be required to repeat the entire rotation if they meet criteria to repeat the SCPE per PA Studies Procedures, Appendix G, Procedure No. 16.

### **Evaluation of the Student by the Preceptor- Paper Forms**

The preceptor will be sent a link via email from E\*Value™ to complete the evaluation electronically. Some preceptors may prefer to send in a paper form or fax the evaluation directly to the HSC PA Studies Program office. This is acceptable; however, it could delay entering the student's grade submission to the Registrar's office due to late delivery. In the event of paper evaluations, the student should remind the preceptor that the program needs to receive these evaluations ***within 7 days of the completed SCPE***. Each SCPE is considered a course and without a completed preceptor evaluation, the grade for the course will be listed on the student's transcript as "*Incomplete*" until the evaluation is received.

If the preceptor opts to send in a paper copy evaluation, it should arrive at the PA Program in a sealed envelope with the preceptor's signature written over the sealed flap. Evaluations that are not hand delivered or mailed per these rules will not be accepted. The PA Program can provide the student with postage paid envelopes for mailing the preceptor's final evaluation if necessary. If a preceptor needs assistance with this, please contact the Clinical Team, Senior Project Manager.

The address to be used for mailing the Preceptor Evaluation is:

HSC Physician Assistant Studies Program  
Attn: Director of Clinical Education  
3500 Camp Bowie Blvd. IREB 480H  
Fort Worth, TX 76107-2699  
Fax 817-735-2529

### **PATIENT ENCOUNTER LOGS AND TIME TRACKING GRADING RUBRIC**

Refer to the individual SCPE syllabus in the files of each Canvas course to determine which faculty is the SCPE Faculty Course Director for each specific SCPE. It is important for each student to send time tracking and Patient Encounter Logs to the correct faculty each SCPE for weekly verification.

Patient Encounter Logs and Time Tracking are to be submitted **no later than Monday at 6:00 a.m. central time** weekly so the SCPE Faculty Course Directors can review them. This is a requirement even if the Monday is a holiday. The Patient Encounter Logs from the final week of the SCPE are to be submitted by **8 a.m. on PASS Day**. The DCE or SCPE Faculty Course Director may request the student to submit time tracking mid-week at any time during the SCPE at their discretion. **Every day** (including weekends and holidays) of the entire clinical

year is to be logged in time tracking. Time tracking is not to be submitted in advance of the close of a business day. Since time tracking cannot be submitted in advance, the weekend after PASS Day may be logged under the following month's clinical SCPE.

Patient Encounter Logs and Time Tracking are a mandatory component of each SCPE. Failure to maintain and submit Patient Encounter Logs and/or Time Tracking can result in a failure of the SCPE. Delays in submitting Patient Encounter Logs and/or Time Tracking can result in lowering of the student's grade or an "incomplete" grade reported to the registrar's office. Patient Encounter Logs and/or Time Tracking not received in accordance with the noted timeframe may result in a loss of up to 5 points. Multiple occurrences will be treated as a professionalism issue and may result in a remediation assignment. The maximum possible points for logging per SCPE are 5, split between Patient Encounter Logs and Time Tracking. The following grading rubric provides guidelines Patient Encounter Logs and Time Tracking and is graded at the discretion of the SCPE Faculty Course Director.

### **Patient Log and Time Tracking Grading Rubric**

Area Assessed	Patient logs & time tracking	Accuracy of ICD & CPT codes
<b>Satisfactory</b>	Turned in by the weekly deadlines*	Infrequent errors (< 2)
Satisfactory Points Awarded	1 point per week	1 point
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Not turned in by the weekly deadlines*	Frequent errors (2 or more)
Unsatisfactory Points Deducted	-1 point per week	-1 point
Total Possible Points (Out of 5)	4 points	1 point

### **STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE PRECEPTOR**

All students are required to complete preceptor/site evaluations after each SCPE. These evaluations, in addition to the site visits provide valuable information to help the PA Program determine if a clinical site is maintaining the PA Program and ARC-PA accreditation standards. The evaluation is due within 5 days from the last day of the SCPE. Grades will be withheld for students who do not complete an evaluation. The evaluation details are kept anonymous and are not given to the preceptor until the end of the academic year in an aggregate form.

### **EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Professional behavior at the clinical site includes, but is not limited to, the following characteristics:

- **Altruism**: Concerned with the interests of others.
- **Accountability/Work Ethic**: Diligent attendance to activities and assignments; asks for additional opportunities after completion of assigned tasks.
- **Responsive to Correction**: Accepts constructive criticism in a positive manner. Accepts responsibility for errors or failures and makes corrective changes.
- **Initiative/Independence**: Takes initiative in solving problems.
- **Understands Limitations**: Seeks help appropriately; understands limitations.
- **Duty**: Positive attitude and enthusiasm for learning and work.
- **Attendance**: Freely accepts commitment to attend and be prompt.

- Honor/Integrity: Fair, truthful, and forthright in dealings with others.
- Respect for Others: Always demonstrates respect and sensitivity for others. Manages conflict in a positive manner and displays appropriate intellectual curiosity. Respectful toward patients, preceptors, and clinical staff.
- Collegiality: Honors others and enhances a collegial atmosphere. Displays appropriate respect for speakers or guests. Respects the opinions of others.
- Punctuality: Be at the right place at the right time.
- Mobile Phone: Personal texting, internet use and calls should be limited to emergencies only. When accessing for clinical use, verbalize this to the preceptor.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

- Professionalism violations that are referred outside of the department or are repetitive in nature may result in further sanctions, including reporting the professionalism violation to the Texas Medical Board.
- Students may be given a verbal and/or written professionalism violation reprimand before being referred to PAS SPC, Student Affairs, or CARE Team.
- All violations and actions taken will be documented in the E\*Value student record as professionalism violations.
- Professionalism violations, a code of conduct violation or referral for professionalism violation will preclude a student from participating in Honors Elective SCPEs.
- For more information, see Procedure No. 18: Physician Assistant Professionalism Violation Procedure

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Patient information must be maintained in confidence in accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines and PA Program policy. Students are bound to common confidentiality principles that are upheld in healthcare settings. Students must also abide by confidentiality requirements of affiliate institutions. In general, students should not release patient information to anyone outside of the clinical preceptor, related clinical staff, or a qualified faculty member unless they are instructed to do so by their preceptor to complete patient care tasks or by a qualified faculty member as to complete performance evaluations. In cases where students are required to produce documentation as a part of their academic performance, the student **MUST** remove all patient-identifying data in accordance with HIPAA guidelines. Students may be required to sign a statement of understanding regarding patient confidentiality and completion of HIPAA training at a clinical site. Confidentiality also applies to ***all forms of social media***. Please refer to the HSC Social Media Policy for further details. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program or Texas Medical Board citations upon graduation.

## **STUDENT SCPE DRESS CODE**

- Students should present themselves in accordance with professional standards. It is the student's individual responsibility to find out what the dress code is for each SCPE and dress appropriately. This can usually be done by contacting the preceptor once assigned to the SCPE site. Students not meeting standards of dress and appearance may be denied access to patients, which will jeopardize completion of the SCPE. Violations of dress code policies could result in a failure of the SCPE and a referral to Student Affairs for unprofessional conduct and possible dismissal.
- There are, however, some principles and course policies that apply to every SCPE as follows:
  - Clothing should be chosen for professional appearance as well as safety.

- Clinical attire normally consists of a clean white clinic coat with the Physician Assistant Studies name plate spelling out the words “Physician Assistant Student” firmly attached to the coat and appropriate business casual attire or scrubs depending on the SCPE site. (
- Clothing must cover and not expose the torso, back, pelvic area, buttock, and thighs to the knees.
- Items *not* permitted include sweeping sleeves, tank tops, T-shirts, backless tops, jeans, shorts, mini-skirts, denim attire, bathing attire or exposed boxer shorts and are not permitted to be worn while participating in the SCPE.
- Appropriate protective gear such as lab coats, face masks, face shields, gloves, eye goggles, and earplugs may also be required. Clinical dress may be altered by a clinical department, attending preceptor, or health professions setting as deemed appropriate.
- Open-toed shoes or sandals that may expose skin to spills or sharp instruments are not allowed at any time during the SCPE. Avoid wearing shoes that may slip easily on wet surfaces.
- Personal Hygiene: Students should have good daily hygiene that includes clean teeth, hair, clothes, and body. Clothing should be clean, pressed, and in good condition. Some clinical settings ask that persons refrain from use of scented products entirely on site due to other’s sensitivity and allergies to fragrances.
- Fingernails: Nail enhancements such as artificial nails, wraps, tips, acrylics, gels, may not be permitted in some SCPE sites.
- Jewelry): All jewelry should be removed in the surgical, pediatric, psychiatric, and other specialty settings as directed by the preceptor.
- Scented Products: Students should not wear excessive perfume, cologne, aftershave, or powder.
- Head coverings: Hats, caps, and other head coverings are not permitted unless being worn for religious or medical purposes.

## **ACADEMIC CONCERN**

Please refer to Procedure No. 16 for more information.

The academic concern status recognizes students that may require additional assistance to successfully complete didactic phase requirements. Academic Concern status will persist through didactic and clinical phases. The procedure outlined:

1. Placement on Academic Concern status will be recommended by the PA Student Performance Committee (PA SPC) to the Program Director of HSC PA Studies for all clinical phase students who meet the academic and/or professionalism referral requirements described above.
  - If the Program Director of HSC PA Studies agrees with the recommendation for placement on Academic Concern, they will send a letter to the student advising them of the change in status and restrictions of Academic Concern.
2. The DCE will notify the PA SPC Chair of a student’s failure of any end of rotation exam, course failure, or professionalism issue impacting rotation performance.
  - The recommendation for Academic Concern will state the area(s) (knowledge, skills, professionalism, etc.) needing further development to support and encourage success during the clinical phase.
3. The student will meet with the DCE and PA SPC chair to discuss the following, if applicable:

- Current academic status of the student based on the PA Studies Procedures Appendix G, Procedure No. 16. Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, Dismissal Procedure Manual
  - Areas needing additional knowledge and skills development.
  - Remediation plan
  - Timeline of Remediation Exams/Assessments
  - Honors Elective SCPE Status
  - Academic Concern restrictions
  - Referrals and resources to assist in remediation including the CAP and Care Teams
4. For students placed on Academic Concern during clinical phase, the student will sign the PA Studies Remediation Plan Contract and email the signed contract to the DCE and PA SPC Chair.
  5. If the student does not fulfill the remediation plan, contract, and reassessments during the clinical phase, the PA SPC will review the case for further action.

### **DUAL DEGREE INFORMATION**

- The PA Studies Program offers multiple dual degree programs. More information about these programs can be found on the HSC Website [linked here](#).
- Students interested in a dual degree will need to refer to the dual degree program for specifics regarding grading and completion of components outside of the PA program. Components of a dual degree that are housed in the HSC PA Studies Program coursework must be completed to receive the dual credit hours. A leave of absence is not allowed to complete other degrees.
- The same procedures regarding grading and completion of course and practicum requirements for the HSC PA Studies Program apply to dual-degree students as non-dual- degree students. Accommodations will not be made for dual degree students to complete course requirements for either program.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Hazardous Exposure**

Students are educated throughout the curriculum on methods of prevention for hazardous exposures in healthcare such as blood borne pathogens. Students have completed courses and obtained certificates in the following areas to prevent exposures: PPE and Surgical Gowning, Blood Borne Pathogens, FIT testing, and Sterile Technique.

In addition, students have attested to the health and technical standards which outlines environmental exposures. The Health and Technical standards state the following:

Candidates should be able to function in educational and healthcare settings with potential exposure to chemicals, gases, biohazards and environmental allergens that may be normally present in those settings. In those settings that require exposure to biohazards and/or chemicals, OSHA exposure limits and standards must be followed, including ability to use appropriate PPE.

In the event of a hazardous exposure (needle stick injury, body fluid splash, etc.), students must notify the DCE immediately via email. The student will not be penalized in any way for a hazardous exposure occurring. However, not reporting the incident immediately will result in remediation for failure to follow mandated guidelines. Proper management and reporting should begin immediately. It is critical to receive treatment within the first two hours after injury Follow facility specific guidelines at SCPE clinical site. Students are instructed to go to the nearest emergency department for treatment using their own insurance if the SCPE clinical site is not equipped to handle hazardous exposure. <https://www.unthsc.edu/safety/occupational-health-services/>

Students may also go to:

**During Business Hours:** Priority Care Clinic HSC Health Pavilion, 855 Montgomery St., Fort Worth, TX 76107, (817) 735-2273

**Weekend and After Hours:** Nearest Emergency Department

- If treated at a clinic outside of the HSC Priority Care Clinic, the student should upload their lab results to the Mediat.

#### **Incident Report:**

- HSC Non-Employee Injury Reports can be found on Canvas in the MPAS PASS Day Callback Admin Course under Files > Hazardous Exposure.
- Students should fill out the HSC Non-employee Injury Report form to the best of their ability, then forward it to the DCE, HSC Director of Safety and Student Affairs:

Christopher Erickson  
Director, HSC Safety Office  
Office: 817-735-2697  
Christopher.Erickson@unthsc.edu

HSC Student Affairs Office  
StudAffr@unthsc.edu

**Billing**: The student should submit their own insurance. Any bills received thereafter should be forwarded to HSC Student Affairs.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **End of Rotation Exam Information**

#### **Core Tasks and Objectives Set Forth by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA)**

<https://paeaonline.org/assessment/core-tasks-and-objectives>

The following tasks and objectives apply to each specific exam topic. Students should understand each of the following areas as they relate to the specific medical conditions noted on the seven individual End of Rotation examinations.

#### **History Taking and Physical Examination**

- Identify elements of, and need for, comprehensive and focused interviews appropriate for the age and gender of the patient, reason for visit, urgency of the problem, and patient's ability to provide history.
- Recognize and interpret pertinent historical information.
- Identify history commonly associated with specific medical conditions.
- Identify elements of, and need for, comprehensive and focused physical examinations appropriate for the age and gender of the patient, reason for visit, urgency of the problem and patient's ability to participate in the examination.
- Identify required techniques in the physical examination.
- Recognize and interpret pertinent physical examination findings when presented in written or illustrated form.
- Determine the need for other resources (e.g., past records, consultation, other members of the health care team) to expand knowledge of the patient's history.
- Interpret history and physical examination findings to differentiate one disorder from another.

#### **Diagnostic Studies**

- Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate patient and family education related to laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- Identify techniques and potential complications for common diagnostic procedures.
- Select the appropriate initial and subsequent laboratory and diagnostic studies based upon initial impressions determined from the history and physical examination or germane to the health-screening situation.
- Identify the indications for specific laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- Identify risks associated with laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- Recognize normal and abnormal values for routine laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- Interpret the results of routine laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- Select appropriate laboratory and diagnostic testing by considering and evaluating the cost, probable yield, invasiveness, and contraindications of laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- Determine if and when additional diagnostic studies are required.
- Identify laboratory and clinical studies considered to be the best for the diagnosis of certain conditions.

#### **Diagnosis**

- Determine a differential diagnosis based upon historical information, physical examination findings, and laboratory and diagnostic study findings.
- Select the most likely diagnosis based upon historical information, physical examination findings, and laboratory and diagnostic study findings.

#### **Health Maintenance**

- Determine appropriate counseling, as well as patient and family education, related to preventable diseases, communicable diseases, immunization schedules, and healthy lifestyles.



- Determine the appropriate history and physical examination in screening an asymptomatic patient during well-care visit based on age.
- Recognize risk factors for conditions amenable to prevention or detection in an asymptomatic individual.
- Recognize the impact of stress on health and the psychological manifestations of illness and injury.
- Recognize the effects of aging and family roles on health.
- Recognize the impact of environmental and occupational exposures on health.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and the indications for intervention and referral.
- Identify common barriers to care.
- Identify the risks and benefits of immunizations.
- Select the appropriate laboratory and diagnostic screening studies and identify normal ranges.
- Identify growth and human development milestones.
- Match anticipatory guidance to the appropriate age level and to the sequelae it intends to prevent.

### **Clinical Intervention**

- Select the application or technique required for common clinical interventions.
- Identify appropriate monitoring for patients after interventions, including checking for compliance, adverse events, and effectiveness.
- Recognize appropriate counseling and patient and family education related to clinical interventions.
- Identify proper referral strategies for patients to other services for clinical intervention as appropriate.
- Determine appropriate follow-up from referrals.
- Select a clinical intervention plan that is consistent with the working diagnosis. Prioritize clinical interventions in emergent, acute, and chronic care situations.
- Evaluate severity of patient condition in terms of need for medical and /or surgical referral, admission to the hospital or other appropriate setting.
- Determine appropriate surgical treatment and post-surgical/post-procedural management.
- Identify potential complications of specific clinical interventions and procedures.
- Recognize appropriate plans for patient discharge, as well as appropriate medical, surgical, and rehabilitation follow-up.
- Select non-pharmacologic modalities (e.g., physical therapy, surgery, counseling) to integrate into patient management plans.

### **Clinical Therapeutics**

- Identify appropriate counseling and patient and family education related to a clinical therapeutic agent including drug-drug interactions.
- Identify key safety factors related to the administration of medications (oral, topical, sublingual, subcutaneous, intramuscular, rectal, otologic, vaginal, and ophthalmic).
- Recognize appropriate plans to monitor pharmacotherapy, checking for compliance, side effects, adverse reactions, and effectiveness.
- Select a clinical therapeutic plan that considers the cost, efficacy, possible adverse reactions, contraindications, and drug interactions for medications selected.
- Recognize the pharmacokinetic properties, indications, and contraindications for the use of pharmacologic agents. Apply this knowledge to the safe and effective selection and administration of medications.
- Identify side effects, adverse reactions, contraindications, precautions, therapeutic effects, and dosing of the major classes of clinically important drugs and commonly used medications.

- Identify the risks for, and signs and symptoms of, drug interactions resulting from polypharmacy in the therapeutic regimen.
- Recognize the appropriate actions to take in response to acute, specific drug toxicity.
- Modify therapeutic regimen within the context of continuing care.

#### **Scientific Concepts**

- Apply basic sciences (anatomy, physiology, microbiology, genetics, etc.) to the diagnosis and management of specific medical conditions.
- Recognize associations of disease conditions and complications through application of scientific concepts.
- Demonstrate understanding of concepts of public health in the management of the population's and an individual patient's health and well-being, as well as disease.
- Identify underlying processes or pathways responsible for a specific condition or disease.

Topic List Blueprints for each SCPE can be found at the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) End of Rotation (EOR) exam website at: <http://endofrotation.org/>

*Please note that the Topic List is a guide for studying and is NOT all-inclusive of the material that may appear on the EOR.*

## APPENDIX C

### Written Assignment Formatting Criteria

- **Language:** The entire document, to include all source references, is to be written in the English language.
- **Software:** The assignment will be submitted using Microsoft Word.docx
- **Font:** The entire document must be in black ink, 12 point, Times New Roman
- **Margins:** One-inch margins at the top, bottom, right, and left of every page
- **Spacing:** Double-spaced, except for the reference page (refer to reference page below)
- **Cover Page:** Use the example cover page provided below.
- **Word Count:** The word count only includes the body of the text and cited references within the body of the text. Word count does *not* include the title page or the reference page.
- **Emphasizing Words:** Avoid using **boldface**, “quotation marks,” and underlines to *emphasize* words. When a word needs to be emphasized, use *italics* but only use those italics the first time the word is used.
- **Paragraphs:** *Indent* the first line of each paragraph ½ inch. *Do not* add extra spaces between paragraphs.
- **Justification:** All paragraphs are justified to the left. The title page is center justified.
- **Page Numbers:** Include page numbers centered justified at the bottom of each page. Only use the number, without any accompanying words (i.e., do not use the word “Page”). Do not place a page number on the cover page, even though it is considered page one. Ensure the page numbers are the current font.
- **Grammar and Spelling:** Use correct punctuation, grammar, and syntax.
- **Citations:** Use of the American Psychological Association (APA) style is required in all writings. APA style as described in the APA Manual.
- **Headers:** Do not use running headers.
- **Reference Page:** References will be placed on a separate page from the rest of the assignment. **Each assignment must include at least one reference.** Do not indent the first line of each reference but do indent each line of the reference after the first line. Double space within each reference, but single space between each new reference. References should be organized alphabetically and formatted according to the guidelines in the APA Manual.
  - When citing and referencing, students are required to use collegiate sources. (i.e. original peer reviewed journal articles, books. Etc.). Refrain from using Wikipedia as an original source.
- **Quotation use:** Avoid excessive use of quotations. When a direct quotation is necessary, use quotation marks and identify the source of the quotation with the appropriate citation, including the page number as noted in the APA Manual. Instead of using quotes, it is better to place the original author’s ideas into your own words and then cite accordingly using APA style.
- **Abbreviations & acronyms:** *All* are to be spelled out in their entirety and placed in parenthesis the first time used prior to using abbreviations/acronyms in remainder of assignment (Write for the lay person to understand the content).

**APPENDIX D EXAMPLE TITLE PAGE FOR WRITTEN PAPERS**

***Must be 12-pt font, Portrait Orientation***

University of North Texas Health Science Center

Physician Assistant Studies Program

TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT (ALL CAPS)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of course requirements for

MPAS XXXX

XXXX Clinical Practicum Experience

By

Student Name

Date submitted

## **APPENDIX E HONORS ELECTIVE SCPE PROCESS**

### **Process for Applying to Honors Elective SCPEs**

*(MPAS Announcements Class of? > Files > Clinical Phase Documents > Honors Elective Information)*

#### **Application Request and Letter of Understanding:**

- Student will review the requirements for Honors Electives SCPEs to ensure the criteria to apply has been met.
- Submit the following via email to the DCE and cc Claudia Garcia, Senior Clinical Administrator:
  - **Application Request and Letter of Understanding**
  - Written Statement of Interest (500 words or less) outlining the desire to attend and reasoning as to why the student would like to be selected to attend the Honors Elective SCPE.
- SPC (Student Performance Committee) verifies that the student has no academic or professionalism issues and notifies DCE.
- Executive Committee (Program Director, Associate Program Director, DCE and Director of Academic Education) reviews the **Application Request and Letter of Understanding** and Written Statement of Interest to determine if student meets HSC **PA Studies Order of Merit Criteria** at initial screening.
- The Executive Committee determines if the student meets or does not meet the HSC **PA Studies Order of Merit Criteria** at the initial screening. They are subsequently notified via email by the DCE and instructed whether to proceed or not with applying to Honors Elective SCPE.
- Students approved to proceed with the Honors Elective SCPE application are to review the application process for the specified Honors Elective SCPE (MD Anderson or Yellowstone) and apply accordingly. The student is responsible for meeting the individual application deadlines.
- Students are to notify DCE and Claudia Garcia if they are accepted or denied to the Honors Elective SCPE as soon as they are notified. Usually, the site notifies the Clinical Team, but in the rare instances that they do not, it is up to the student to keep the Clinical Team informed. Lack of notifying Clinical Team could result in potentially losing the Honors Elective SCPE and/or a professionalism assignment and/or professionalism referral at the discretion of the DCE.
- Students on Academic Concern status with unfulfilled Honors Elective SCPE assignments will be reassigned to a replacement non-Honors Elective SCPE by the Clinical Team.

#### **Applying to Individual Honor Elective Sites:**

##### **Yellowstone**

- Applications open in the Spring/Summer **PRIOR** to Clinical Year.
- Rotations usually take place Summer of Clinical Year.
- Student will review the requirements (**Yellowstone Student Elective Information and Application** document and **Yellowstone Elective SCPE Objectives** document) and complete the application.
- Student will email the following to PA John Bradford, Clinical Manager, Yellowstone:
  - Completed application
  - Copy of liability coverage (found on Canvas MPAS PASS Day Callback and Admin Course > Files >Forms > Certificate of Coverage)
    - Students applying before Clinical Phase starts can request a copy of liability coverage from the Clinical Team.
- Student will request the following from DCE:

- A **Yellowstone Letter of Recommendation Form** acknowledging that you have/will have completed emergency medicine and surgery rotations prior to date of Yellowstone Honors elective.
- This letter is emailed directly from DCE to PA John Bradford on university letterhead.
- Once accepted or denied, the student must notify the DCE and Claudia Garcia via email.
- The application fee for the Yellowstone Honors Elective SCPE is paid as per the Yellowstone application process. Please see their instructions for specifics surrounding fees and refunds.
- PA John Bradford will notify the student when they rotate on their Yellowstone Honors Elective SCPE. The student **MUST** confirm these dates with Claudia Garcia to ensure the required rotation pre-requisites are completed prior to the Honors Elective dates.

### **MD Anderson**

- Because of the rotation pre-requisites for MD Anderson, students are allowed to apply for the following rotation time frames of their Clinical Phase.
- Please check MD Anderson website for exact dates:
  - Applications open **August to November of Didactic Phase** prior to starting Clinical Phase for **Summer** rotation time frame (June to August of Clinical Phase).
  - Applications open **November of Didactic Phase to February 1 of Clinical Phase** for **Fall** rotation time frame (September to November of Clinical Phase).
  - Applications open **February to May of Clinical Phase** for **Winter/Spring** rotation time frame (December of Clinical Phase to February-graduation year).
- Student will review the requirements.
- During the appropriate application period as per MD Anderson website, email the Office of Physician Assistant Education at [paponc@mdanderson.org](mailto:paponc@mdanderson.org) to initiate application process.
- Follow the application instructions for their online portal.
- Student will email DCE and request:
  - **MD Anderson Letter of Recommendation Form** to be completed and emailed directly from DCE to Office of PA Education [paponc@mdanderson.org](mailto:paponc@mdanderson.org)
  - **MD Anderson Supplemental Application Form** that states requirements will be met prior to rotation start. This Form will be sent to the student to upload with their application.
- Once accepted or denied, the student must notify the DCE and Claudia Garcia via email.
  - Once the DCE is notified, they will complete a **MD Anderson Proof of Enrollment Letter** for the student to submit with their remaining acceptance documents.
- MD Anderson will notify the student when they rotate on their MD Anderson Honors elective. The student **MUST** confirm these dates with Claudia Garcia to ensure the required rotation pre-requisites are completed prior to the Honors Elective SCPE dates.

**APPENDIX F: Elective SCPE Change Form**

**ELECTIVE SCPE (Supervised Clinical Practice Experience) Specialty Change Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Student Name) was assigned to MPAS \_\_\_\_\_ (Course Number and Practicum) in the specialty of: \_\_\_\_\_ for the following rotation dates: \_\_\_\_\_ for rotation number (1-12): \_\_\_\_\_ and would like to request approval from the Director of Clinical Education, to change my Elective SCPE Specialty to: \_\_\_\_\_ for the following reason(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The following criteria must be met:

This request is being made no less than 3 months prior to the start of scheduled Elective SCPE.

No request to change the specific site and/or preceptor can be made within the newly requested specialty.

No request to change any Elective SCPEs can be made after Rotation 6.

I understand that the new Elective SCPE specialty chosen may have limited site availability and could potentially result in me being unassigned for the rotation month. I understand that this can result in a delayed graduation for greater than or equal to one month, depending on SCPE site and/or preceptor availability.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

Yes

No

Director of Clinical Education Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(DocuSign Route: Student > DCE > Senior Project Manager)

## APPENDIX G: PA STUDIES PROCEDURES



### **Procedure Manual**

### ***UNTHSC at Fort Worth***

### ***Physician Assistant Studies Program***

Effective Date: April 01, 2020

Revision Date(s): January 01, 2023

Reviewed Date(s): July 01, 2022

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY**

Lauren Dobbs, Program Director

#### **RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT/DIVISION**

J. Glenn Forister, PhD, PA-C

Dean and Professor

School of Health Professions

University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth

3500 Camp Bowie Blvd. IREB 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Ft. Worth, Texas 76107

This manual contains the key procedures for **Physician Assistant Studies Program**.

This procedure manual is provided to maintain equitable and efficient operations and to reflect best practices. The goal of this manual is to have one document to reference procedures in relation to HSC policies. This manual will be updated on a regular basis.



## **Procedure No. 1: Physician Assistant Deceleration Procedure**

### **Procedure Statement**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program does not allow for deceleration of students from one cohort to another.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to state the Physician Assistant Studies Program's stance on deceleration of students within the program.

### **Area of Responsibility**

The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program

### **Procedure Details**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program does not allow for deceleration of students within the PA Program.

### **Related Policies and References**

Physician Assistant Promotions, Probation, and Dismissal Procedure Manual

Physician Assistant Remediation Procedure

### **Definitions**

Deceleration: "Deceleration" is defined as the loss of a student from the entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### **Online Forms**

None

## Procedure No. 2: Physician Assistant Course Remediation

### Procedure Statement

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Program must meet the academic and professional standards established by the PAS Program in order to progress through the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) students who fail a course in the didactic or clinic phase of training, must successfully remediate the failed course and otherwise remain eligible to continue in the PAS Program.

A PAS student who successfully remediates a failed course in the didactic phase will be placed on academic probation. Any PAS student who unsuccessfully remediates a failed course is subject to dismissal. Students enrolled in the PAS Program are allowed one remediation attempt for the didactic phase and one remediation attempt for the clinical phase.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines on remediation after course failure for all students enrolled in the PAS Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
PAS Student	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9
Course Director	2b, 3, 6
Physician Assistant Student Performance Committee (PASPC)	2a, 3, 5
Director of Academic Education (DAE)	3
Director of Clinical Education (DCE)	3
Registrar	6, 10

### Procedure Details

1. Any PAS student receiving a failing grade for a course and who does not meet other criteria for dismissal must remedy that grade to passing or be subject to dismissal from the PAS Program.
  - a. A PAS student may fail a didactic or clinical course for reasons including, but not limited to, failed academic progress, professionalism violation, or poor course attendance as defined in the syllabus and/or the UNTHSC Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.
  - b. Failing grades on tests, OSCEs, and other evaluations within a course may be remediated under the direction of the course director.
2. The Course Director will establish a remediation plan and timeline with guidance from the PASPC, DAE or DCE.
  - a. The PASPC will assist the Course Director in the identification of resources to improve student academic and/or professional performance. The PASPC will also monitor student progress during the remediation process.
  - b. A remediation plan may include, but is not limited to:
    - i. Reading assignments
    - ii. Written completion of instructional objectives developed to target deficiencies identified during review of failed exam
    - iii. Written response to selected exam items with reference citations

- iv. Written self-reflection exercise
  - v. Individual faculty-led tutoring (especially skills related deficiencies)
  - vi. Additional clinical practice experience that may require repeating an entire rotation
  - vii. Simulation training or work with Standardized patients
  - viii. Assignment of additional practice questions from an outside source (i.e. ExamMaster™)
3. The remediation of a failing course grade will be assessed by a method equivalent to course assessments failed by the student (i.e. administration of a comprehensive equivalency examination, OSCE, repeating a clinical practicum, etc.).
  4. A PAS student can only remediate one course failure in the didactic phase and one course failure in the clinical phase.
  5. Potential violations of the UNTHSC Student Code of Conduct and Discipline will be referred to the Student Affairs Office, and if found in violation may receive a failing grade that is subject to remediation.
  6. A PAS student who is required to remediate a failed didactic course will be placed on academic probation.
  7. Successful course remediation will result in a grade of “C” for a graded course and “Pass” for a Pass/No Pass course.
  8. A PAS student who does not successfully remediate a failed didactic or clinical practicum will be subject to dismissal.
  9. Students who do not complete a remediation plan by the assigned due date are subject to dismissal.

The student’s official transcript will reflect the outcome of remediation to include the failed grade, the passing grade due to remediation, and their academic probation status. Only the remediated grade will be reflected in the GPA calculation.

### **Related Policies and References**

- Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements
- Physician Assistant Professionalism Violation Procedure
- Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, and Dismissal Procedure Manual
- UNTHSC Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

### **Definitions**

1. Academic Probation. “Academic probation” serves as notice to the student that their continued enrollment is in jeopardy.
2. Remediation. “Remediation” refers to activities designed to remedy a failed course grade due to academic or professional violation.
3. Successful course remediation. “Successful remediation” means completion of all assigned remediation activities within the established timeline and achieving a passing grade on reassessment. Successful remediation of a failed didactic or clinical course will result in a grade of “C” for a graded course and a “Pass” for a Pass/No Pass course.
4. Unsuccessful course remediation. “Unsuccessful remediation” means either failure to complete all assigned remediation activities within the established timeline or achieving a failing score on reassessment.

### **Online Forms**

- UNTHSC PA Studies Remediation Contract

### **History**

Revision Date(s): August 1, 2021: Definitions were changed to Successful *course* remediation and Unsuccessful *course* remediation. The UNTHSC PA Studies Remediation Contract was added to the “Forms/Online Processes” section.

## Procedure No. 3: Physician Assistant Applicant Screening

### Procedure Statement

The program shall use screening processes designed to identify competitive applicants who meet minimum admission standards and who demonstrate the highest aptitude for success in the curriculum.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to specify the process by which students are admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies Program at The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
Applicant	1, 2, 4
SHP Admissions Officer	1, 2, 5
PA Studies Admissions Committee	2, 3
Dean	3
Student	5

### Procedure Details

Applicants for admission to the Physician Assistant Studies Program curriculum shall be screened by an Admissions Committee based on approved admissions standards and in accordance with the HSC Non-discrimination policies.

1. Application for Admission to the Physician Assistant Studies Program. An application for admission to the Physician Assistant Studies Program must include the following to be considered complete and ready for review by the Admissions Committee:
  - a. Official transcripts from all institutions previously attended by the applicant. Official transcripts must be submitted in accordance with procedures established by the Centralized Application Services for Physician Assistants (CASPA). Upon enrollment, a newly admitted student must request new official transcripts which must be sent directly to the HSC Fort Worth.
  - b. Verification of achievement of all standards of admission including minimum grade point average (GPA).
  - c. Full payment of approved application fees.
  - d. Submission of all required application materials on or prior to posted deadlines. Applications completed after the posted deadline will not be considered by the Admissions Committee. Application materials will be initially screened by the School of Health Professions (SHP) Admissions Officer to validate achievement of minimum admission standards and eligibility for admission.
2. Admissions Process for the Physician Assistant Studies Program. Applicants will be scheduled for an admissions interview based upon an evaluation of their academic and personal achievement as reflected in the applicant's complete admission packet. The Admissions Committee may establish standards for automatic invitation for an admissions interview. Interviews will be structured to evaluate a candidate's interpersonal skills, communication skills, and motivation for entry into the Physician Assistant career field. Applicants who fail to appear for a scheduled admission interview will be denied admission.
3. Applicant Review. Applicants for admission will be reviewed by the PA Studies Admissions Committee, who will ultimately recommend acceptance or denial of admission to the Physician Assistant Studies

Program. Recommendations for admission will be based on the applicant's qualification as verified through written materials and the admissions interview. No single or compounded scores achieved during the application and/or interview process may be used as the sole factor to determine admission; however, scores may be used to compare candidates. The admissions review process will be complete when, by a majority opinion, the PA Studies Admissions Committee has agreed upon a final roster of candidates for admission. All admission decisions are subject to final approval by the Dean or their designee.

4. Admission Decisions. Approved candidates for admission may be admitted on a provisional basis pending completion of remaining admissions verifications. No applicant will be admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies Program on a probationary basis.
5. Deferred Admission. Students admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies Program may request up to one-year deferral of admission by submitting a written request to the SHP Admissions Office. Deferment will be reviewed on a case-by-case and will only be approved in limited, unforeseen circumstances such as:
  - a. Work/study/fellowship related activities, unforeseen medical emergencies,
  - b. Death of a close relative (e.g. parent, sibling or child), or
  - c. Other event of comparable significance. Requests for deferment must be submitted in writing to the SHP Admissions Office.

If approved, the following conditions apply:

- a. The deferment must be used for the purpose stated in the written request.
- b. The student may not seek admission to another program during the period of deferment.
- c. The student may not engage in conduct or activity that would otherwise result in denial of admission.
- d. The student will remain able to perform all technical standards.

Students will be notified regarding the status of their request for deferment by the SHP Admissions Officer.

## **Related Policies and References**

Physician Assistant Remediation

Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements

Physician Assistant Promotions, Probation, and Dismissal Manual

## **Definitions**

1. Applicant. "Applicant" means a person who has submitted a completed application for admission into the Physician Assistant Studies Program using approved processes and who has paid the required application fees.
2. Applicant Review. "Applicant Review" means the process of screening and reviewing applicant's qualifications for possible candidacy and admission into the Physician Assistant Studies Program.

## **Online Forms**

Centralized Application Services for Physician Assistants (CASPA)

**History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## **Procedure No. 4: Physician Assistant Student PA Awards**

### **Procedure Statement**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program encourages student achievement through recognition of exceptional academic and professional performance.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for PA Studies Awards which recognize outstanding achievement in the didactic and clinical phases of the program.

### **Area of Responsibility**

Physician Assistant Studies Program

### **Procedure Details**

1. **Dean's List:** Placement on the Dean's List occurs when a PA student achieves a semester grade point average of 3.51 or greater for a semester that is primarily didactic. Due to the varying experiences during clinical practica, Dean's List recognition is not awarded for clinical practica. A student who has been placed on academic or disciplinary probation for any reason during their enrollment is not eligible for Dean's List recognition.
2. **Graduation with Honors:** Students may be awarded "Honors" upon graduation if their overall grade point average is greater than or equivalent to 3.51 on a 4.0 scale. No graduate who has failed a course or rotation, or who has not been enrolled as a full-time student, or who has been placed on academic or disciplinary probation during their enrollment can receive a degree with honors. No more than 20% of a single graduating class will be awarded "Honors" at graduation.
3. **Outstanding Achievement in Physician Assistant Studies Awards:** These awards recognize exceptional academic and clinical performance based on participation in related activities and demonstrated commitment to learning and the PA profession. The Director of PA Studies makes the final determination of these award winners.
4. **Pi Alpha:** Pi Alpha is the national Physician Assistant honor society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. Membership signifies the inductees' significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community/professional service and other related activities. Student membership requires a minimum GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and demonstrated excellence in research, publishing, community/professional service, or leadership activities.

### **Related Policies and References**

None

### **Definitions**

See procedure details section.



**Online Forms**

The student is responsible for updating their personal information in the performance tracking software and applying for awards in the Spring of their graduation year in order to be eligible for award consideration.

**History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## **Procedure No. 5: Physician Assistant Clinical Site Selection**

### **Procedure Statement**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program will strive to maintain high quality clinical sites. Prior to the activation of a clinical site, the Clinical Team will assess the site's abilities to meet the educational and training goals of the course and the number of students that can be assigned in each academic year. Clinical sites that do not meet the minimum educational requirements for PA students shall be removed from the approved list of clinical sites. The PA student is not required or encouraged to arrange, provide, or solicit their own clinical rotation sites.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process regarding selecting and maintaining high quality clinical sites in accordance with ARC-PA (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant) guidelines for the students enrolled in the clinical phase of The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### **Area of Responsibility**

Clinical Team

### **Procedure Details**

1. The Clinical Site Coordinator is responsible for collecting and compiling information on clinical sites. Clinical rotation sites shall be evaluated for overall suitability based upon:
  - Location and type of clinical practice provided.
  - Demographics of the population served.
  - Formal education, training and experience of the physician supervisor/preceptor(s).
  - Preceptor commitment to goals and objectives of the rotation.
  - Preceptor's knowledge of the Physician Assistant role and profession.
  - Adequacy of physical facilities for teaching and study.
  - Preceptor willingness to participate in instruction and supervision of students.
  - Preceptor willingness to provide written/verbal evaluations of student's performance.
  - Sufficiency of patients to provide adequate student experiences.
  - The presence of a practicing PA on site as a role model (not a requirement).
2. A record of approved clinical sites will be maintained and updated on an ongoing basis.
3. PA student evaluations of preceptors and sites will be collected and reviewed annually.

### **Related Policies and References**

None

### **Definitions**

1. Director of Clinical Education (DCE). “Director of Clinical Education” is a faculty member who develops, maintains, oversees, and ensures adequacy and appropriateness of all clinical experiences to ensure they are in accordance with ARC-PA standards as well as program outcomes and goals.
2. Senior Administrative Coordinator (SAC). “Senior Administrative Coordinator” is an employee who is a high-level administrator that provides support to the DCE and oversees student rotations.
3. Clinical Site Coordinator (CSC). “Clinical Site Coordinator” is an employee who is responsible for recruiting, scheduling and maintaining clinical education sites.
4. Clinical Site. “Clinical site” is any place where PA Student clinical education occurs that is outside the normal classroom or simulation lab environment.
5. Clinical Team. “Clinical Team” is the departmental team comprised of the DCE, CSC, and SAC.

**Online Forms**

Performance Tracking Software

**History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## **Procedure No. 6: Physician Assistant Student Employment**

### **Procedure Statement**

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program are discouraged from obtaining or maintaining employment while enrolled. Physician Assistant students are expected to give attendance to classes and to clinical practicum assignments priority over employment. Physician Assistant students may not be employed to perform medical or patient care related services at any private or public medical practice, clinic, or institution, during any time in which they are under the sponsorship of the Physician Assistant Studies Program and assigned to that practice, clinic, or institution as a student. If by chance a student is employed at a particular clinic or health care institution for any reason, that student may not be placed at that clinic or institution for any of their clinical practica. Students are not required to work for the PA program.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines regarding students that are employed during their enrollment in The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### **Area of Responsibility**

Physician Assistant Studies Program

### **Procedure Details**

1. Students will not be afforded special consideration due to employment when making clinical practicum assignments.
2. Students who fail to meet the expectations during the didactic or clinical practicum phases of the educational program, due to employment conflicts could lead to dismissal from the program.
3. Students must not substitute for or function as instructional faculty or clinical staff or administrative staff while they are a student in any phase of the PA program.

### **Related Policies and References**

Physician Assistant Promotions, Probation, Dismissal Procedure Manual  
Physician Assistant Student Involvement in Patient Care Related Activities

### **Definitions**

None

### **Online Forms**

None

### **History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## Procedure No. 7: Physician Assistant Prerequisite Admission Requirements

### Procedure Statement

All enrolled students must have participated in the competitive admissions process. All completed coursework will be considered in the admissions process. Prerequisite requirements cannot be waived. Exceptions are not permitted. Prerequisite coursework and degree requirements must be completed at colleges and universities located within and accredited by regional accrediting agencies in the United States. The minimum amount of semester credit hours may not be waived. All prerequisites' courses must have been completed with a grade of "C" (2.0 on 4.0 scale), "Pass" or higher. Prerequisite science courses must be designed for science majors. Prerequisite courses cannot be used simultaneously to meet more than one prerequisite.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of the procedure is to establish the prerequisite admission requirements to The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible Party	Procedure Detail section
Physician Assistant Studies Program	1, 3
Applicant	2

### Procedure Details

1. The type and amount of prerequisite coursework required for enrollment in the Physician Assistant Studies Program shall be published on the program's website. The Course Evaluation Request Form can be submitted to have a staff member from the Office of Admissions review a course in question.
2. Course Work Completed at Institutions Outside of the US: Only coursework from regionally accredited colleges and universities in the United States can be used to satisfy prerequisite requirements. Foreign coursework is not accepted. The Office of Admissions cannot provide transcript evaluations. Applicants are responsible for confirming that prerequisite requirements have been satisfied.
3. The PA Admissions Committee reserves the right to approve or deny any coursework substitution.

### Related Policies/Procedures and References

Physician Assistant Applicant Screening  
Physician Assistant Transfer Of course Credit  
Physician Assistant Advance Placement and Course Waivers

### Definitions

1. PA Admissions committee. "PA Admissions Committee" is a departmental committee consisting of faculty within the Physician Assistant Studies Program and School of Health Professions.

2. CASPA. "CASPA" stands for Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants. It is a full-service, web-based application system providing students with the ability to apply to multiple participating PA programs with a single application and facilitating a streamlined admissions process for programs.

**Online Forms**

All prerequisite updates and admission requirements are posted on The University of North Texas Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program Website.

The Course Evaluation Request Form is found on the PA Studies Admission at:

<https://secure.blueoctane.net/forms/ZQM48FWYYSNJ>

**History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## Procedure No. 8: Physician Assistant Involvement in Patient Care Activities

### Procedure Statement

Physician Assistant students may not be given responsibility for patient care that exceeds their capabilities as a student, or that violates other legal restrictions. Students may not take the responsibility or place of qualified staff. Involvement in patient care is permitted only when authorized by the preceptor or faculty member. Assigned patient care activities should not exceed the student's stage of learning or clinical knowledge. Under no circumstances should assigned patient care related activities exceed those which a graduate physician assistant would otherwise be directed to perform. While the Physician Assistant Studies Program will consider personal and cultural values, ethics and religious beliefs of the students, patient health and the mission of the institution will not be impacted as a result of such beliefs.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of the procedure is to establish guidelines regarding student participation in patient care activities while in enrolled in The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible Party	Procedure Detail section
Students	1, 4, 5-7
Faculty	2, 3, 6

### Procedure Details

1. Students must be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the health and technical standards.
2. Student preceptors may not permit PA students to perform any medical service or function without appropriate supervision. Supervision in the clinical setting is defined as the preceptor being physically present or immediately available to provide guidance.
3. After demonstrating proficiency, students may be permitted to undertake additional defined patient care activities under the appropriate supervision and direction of their assigned preceptor.
4. PA students are required to complete HIPAA training prior to any patient contact activities. Students may not release confidential patient information to anyone outside of their clinical preceptor or a qualified faculty member.
5. Students must follow the protocol for "patient notification of student status" and "dress code" as outlined in the SCPE Student Handbook regarding badge and white lab coat wear during clinical rotations. They must take all reasonable steps to disclose their status as a "physician assistant student" while performing patient care related activities.
6. Treatment and care will be provided to persons in need in accordance with the HSC Non-discrimination Policy.

7. Under some circumstances concerning environmental, chemical, and hazardous exposures, the PA student may be asked to make an informed decision concerning their continued participation in that SCPE and the resulting ramifications to their program completion.

### **Related Policies and References**

UNTHSC Electronic Protected Health Information HIPAA Compliance Policy  
Physician Assistant Student Employment  
Physician Assistant Student Service Work  
Physician Assistant Health and Technical Standards

### **Definitions**

1. Patient care related activities. "Patient care related activities" means permitted activities to include direct patient care and access to patient care related information under the supervision and direction of a qualified preceptor or faculty member. Under no circumstances is the student permitted to write patient care orders independently.
2. SCPE. "SCPE" means Supervised Clinical Practice Experience.

### **Online Forms**

SCPE Student Handbook

### **History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020



## **Procedure No. 9: Physician Assistant Transfer of Course Credit**

### **Procedure Statement**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program does not admit transfer students or accept transfer of course credit from other PA programs.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to state the Physician Assistant Studies Program's stance on admitting transfer students and the acceptance of transfer credit(s) from other PA programs.

### **Area of Responsibility**

The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program

### **Procedure Details**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program does not admit transfer students or accept transfer of course credit from other programs.

### **Related Policies/Procedures and References**

Physician Assistant Applicant Screening

Physician Assistant Prerequisite Admission Requirements

### **Definitions**

None

### **Online Forms**

None

### **History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## Procedure No. 10: Physician Assistant Student Service Work

### Procedure Statement

Physician Assistant students may not be given responsibility for patient care that exceeds their capabilities as a student, or that violates other legal restrictions. Students may not take the responsibility or place of qualified staff. Involvement in patient care is permitted only when authorized by the preceptor or faculty member. Assigned patient care activities should not exceed the student's stage of learning or clinical knowledge. Under no circumstances should assigned patient care related activities exceed those which a graduate physician assistant would otherwise be directed to perform. While the Physician Assistant Studies Program will consider personal and cultural values, ethics and religious beliefs of the students, patient health and the mission of the institution will not be impacted as a result of such beliefs.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of the procedure is to establish guidelines regarding student participation in patient care activities while in enrolled in The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible Party	Procedure Detail section
Students	1, 4, 5-7
Faculty	2, 3, 6

### Procedure Details

1. Students must be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the health and technical standards.
2. Student preceptors may not permit PA students to perform any medical service or function without appropriate supervision. Supervision in the clinical setting is defined as the preceptor being physically present or immediately available to provide guidance.
3. After demonstrating proficiency, students may be permitted to undertake additional defined patient care activities under the appropriate supervision and direction of their assigned preceptor.
8. PA students are required to complete HIPAA training prior to any patient contact activities. Students may not release confidential patient information to anyone outside of their clinical preceptor or a qualified faculty member.
9. Students must follow the protocol for "patient notification of student status" and "dress code" as outlined in the SCPE Student Handbook regarding badge and white lab coat wear during clinical rotations. They must take all reasonable steps to disclose their status as a "physician assistant student" while performing patient care related activities.
10. Treatment and care will be provided to persons in need in accordance with the HSC Non-discrimination Policy.
11. Under some circumstances concerning environmental and chemical exposures, the PA student may be asked to make an informed decision concerning their continued participation in that SCPE and the resulting ramifications to their program completion.

## **Related Policies and References**

UNTHSC Electronic Protected Health Information HIPAA Compliance Policy

Physician Assistant Student Employment

Physician Assistant Student Service Work

Physician Assistant Health and Technical Standards

## **Definitions**

1. Patient care related activities. "Patient care related activities" means permitted activities to include direct patient care and access to patient care related information under the supervision and direction of a qualified preceptor or faculty member. Under no circumstances is the student permitted to write patient care orders independently.
2. SCPE. "SCPE" means Supervised Clinical Practice Experience.

## **Online Forms**

SCPE Student Handbook

## **History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## Procedure No. 11: Physician Assistant Health and Technical Standards

### Procedure Statement

All students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program curriculum must meet certain health and technical standards to fully participate in the educational programs contained in the curriculum. A candidate for the physician assistant degree must have abilities and skills in six areas: Observation, Communication, Motor, Intellectual, Behavioral and Environmental. Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain areas, but for the majority, the candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary requires a candidate's judgment to be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation and is not a permissible accommodation.

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 must exhibit interpersonal skills to enable effective caregiving of patients, including the ability to communicate effectively in person and in writing with all members of a multidisciplinary health care team, patients, and those supporting patients in order to gather information and describe changes in moods, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communication.
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 and may also include diagnostic procedures 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 tactile and visual assessment.
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.
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.

6. Environmental- Candidates should be able to function in educational and healthcare settings with potential exposure to chemicals, gases, biohazards and environmental allergens that may be normally present in those settings. In those settings that require exposure to biohazards and/or chemicals, OSHA exposure limits and standards must be followed, including ability to use appropriate PPE.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the requirements regarding the health and technical standards for students' enrollment in, progression through and graduation from The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### **Area of Responsibility**

<b>Responsible party</b>	<b>Procedure detail section</b>
Student	1, 2
Office of Student Affairs	3

### **Procedure Details**

1. Students seeking enrollment into the Physician Assistant Studies Program must sign a statement indicating they have read and understand the Health and Technical Standards requirements and are in compliance with them.
2. Students returning from a medical leave of absence will be required to submit documentation, including a physician's statement of compliance with the Physician Assistant Studies Program Health and Technical Standards requirements.
3. Requests for accommodation under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rules will be referred to the Office of Student Affairs for review and a recommendation.

### **Related Policies and References**

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy  
Physician Assistant Program Applicant Screening  
Physician Assistant Prerequisite Admission Requirements  
Physician Assistant Advance Placement and Course Waivers

### **Definitions**

1. "ADA" means Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government' programs and services.
2. "Special Senses" means vision, hearing & equilibrium, smell and tactile sensations.

**Online Forms**

None

**History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## **Procedure No. 12: Physician Assistant Advance Placement and Course Waivers**

### **Procedure Statement**

The Physician Assistant Studies Program does not award advance placement and course waivers to students accepted into the PA program.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines regarding the awarding of advance placement and course waivers for students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### **Area of Responsibility**

<b>Responsible party</b>	<b>Procedure detail section</b>
PA Studies Chair	1, 3, 4
Student	2

### **Procedure Details**

Advance placement/course waivers are not offered or approved during the admissions process.

### **Related Policies and References**

None

### **Definitions**

None

### **Online Forms**

None

### **History**

Revision Date(s): 06/01/2020

## Procedure No. 13: Physician Assistant Leave of Absence

### Procedure Statement

Students enrolled in academic programs within the School of Health Professions are permitted to request leave of absence due to a medical condition or for personal reasons. Upon completion of the leave of absence, the student must request readmission to the academic program in writing. Leave of absence for personal reasons cannot be granted if the student is not in good standing at the time the request is made. Leave of absence requires approval of the Dean of the School of Health Professions. After consultation with the student and upon recommendation from the respective director of the academic program in which the student is seeking re-enrollment, the Dean will determine if readmission after completion of leave of absence is approved. 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. 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.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines regarding leave of absence requests for students enrolled in the School of Health Professions.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
Student	1-6
Director, SHP	2, 5
Dean, SHP	5-8
Registrar	2, 6, 7

### Procedure Details

1. Leave of absence requests must be made in writing.
  - a. If the leave is due to a medical condition, the request must be accompanied by documentation from a licensed healthcare professional. Documentation supporting leave for medical reasons must describe the nature of the medical need and the estimated length of time needed.
  - b. If leave is due to personal reasons, the student must be in good standing and the request must be accompanied by documentation from the student describing the reason and the estimated length of time needed for resolution. Leave of absence for personal reasons cannot be granted if the sole purpose for taking the leave of absence is to avoid a failing grade or placement onto academic probation.
2. A student taking leave of absence must submit a notification to the Office of Student Affairs indicating the dates of withdrawal and the date the student expects to return as approved by the respective academic program to resume classes or clinical rotations.



3. Upon returning from leave of absence, regardless of the reason, the student must petition for readmission in writing. Depending on the reason, the returning student may be required to submit additional documentation supporting their ability to resume a full academic load in their respective program.
4. The returning student should not present a health hazard to themselves or others in healthcare or academic environments. Documentation may be required to confirm the student continues to meet Health and Technical Standards of the academic program. Students returning from leave of absence may be required to reaffirm they meet immunization and health screening requirements.
5. Students returning from leave of absence may be required to complete additional coursework or testing to meet academic requirements of their respective program. The Dean should consult with the Program Director to confirm any additional requirements. To sustain congruity of learning in the program or to remediate learning deficiencies, the academic program may require a returning student to accomplish a revised academic schedule. A revised schedule may include, but will not be limited to, repeating courses, auditing courses, and/or completing new courses and/or assessments. The purpose of the revised schedule should be to prepare the student to resume progress in the program, to complete remaining courses or activities in the program, and/or to improve the student's chances for success in the program. A student may be required to repeat all or a portion of previously completed portions of the curriculum upon their return. The director of the respective academic program retains approval over any requirements that are part of an approved remediation plan or a revised academic schedule.
6. If readmission is approved, the student shall be reinstated under conditions that are contained in an approved readmission plan. Failure of the student to accept an approved readmission plan may result in the student's dismissal from the respective program.
7. A returning student is normally readmitted in good standing unless placement on academic probation is a condition for continued enrollment under an approved readmission plan. The returning student may be placed on academic probation if required for readmission by their respective program.
8. Leave of absence of greater than 1 year will not normally be approved.

### **Related Policies and References**

Americans with Disabilities Act

Behavior Intervention and Withdrawal

Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

Physician Assistant Remediation

Physician Assistant Health and Technical Standards

Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements

Physician Assistant Promotions, Probation, and Dismissal Procedure Manual

**Definitions**

1. Dismissal: "Dismissal" means the student is no longer eligible to attend courses in the academic program's curriculum. A Dismissed student is not eligible for graduation.
2. Good Standing: "Good standing" requires a cumulative GPA of  $\geq 3.0$  in the DPT program and is defined in the PA procedure 15.413 SHP – Physician Assistant Promotions, Probation, and Dismissal for Students Entering the MPAS Program July 01, 2020 and After.
3. Readmission: "Readmission" means reinstatement into the academic program under specified terms and conditions that may include additional requirements for success.

**Online Forms**

None

**History**

Revision Date(s): 04/01/2020

## Procedure No. 14: Physician Assistant Grade Appeals

### Procedure Statement

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Program are responsible for meeting the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled as well as requirements for completion of their academic program. Faculty members are responsible for establishing standards of academic performance and for evaluating student performance in an equitable manner. Faculty decisions in such matters are considered authoritative and can be overturned only when it has been determined that a grade was assigned in a capricious, inequitable, arbitrary, or erroneous manner.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for appealing grades for all students enrolled in the PAS Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
PAS Student	2,3,4,5
Program Director	4,5
Course Director (CD)	1,3,4
SHP Dean	5

### Procedure Details

1. Grades assigned by PAS Course Directors (CD) are final.
2. Grades are subject to appeal only when the student believes that the grade was awarded in an inequitable, arbitrary, or erroneous manner. Appropriate grounds for appeal include circumstances where the grade was assigned based on:
  - a. inequitable treatment that is the result of departure from the instructor's stated standards, and course policies; or
  - b. a decision based on an error in fact
3. If a PAS student believes that an incorrect grade was assigned, the student is expected to first submit an appeal in writing to the PAS CD.
  - a. All appeals must be made in writing within 5 business days of receipt of the original grade or decision.
4. If needed or desired, after receiving an appeal decision from the PAS CD, further appeal may be made to the PAS Program Director in writing within 5 business days of receipt of the PAS CD final decision.
5. If needed or desired, after receiving an appeal decision from the PAS Program Director, further appeal may be made to the SHP Dean in writing within 5 business days of receipt of the PAS Program Director final decision. The decision made by the SHP Dean is considered final.

### Related Policies and References

**Definitions**

None

**Online Forms**

None

**History**

Revision Date(s): None. Procedure created Nov 2021.

## Procedure No. 15: Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements

### Procedure Statement

Students who have met all course requirements and have been recommended for graduation may be awarded the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree provided they meet all the conditions listed below:

- A. Have satisfactorily completed all academic requirements of the Physician Assistant Studies Program
- B. Have complied with all legal and financial requirements of the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth.
- C. Have exhibited the ethical, professional, behavioral, and personal characteristics necessary for practice as a PA.
- D. Have completed and returned to the Physician Assistant Studies Program or the Office of the Registrar all graduation forms and paperwork required by the Physician Assistant Studies Program and the institution.
- E. Have met other time limits listed below:
  1. The maximum time limit for completing all graduation requirements is seventy-two (72) months.
  2. Rarely, students may be required to meet additional requirements to meet other health science center, state, or national regulations.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to establish consistent requirements for students recommended for graduation from the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth Physician Assistant Studies Program

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
School of Health Professions	1
Student	2
Dean, SHP	3

### Procedure Details

1. Graduation requirements are listed in the catalog at the time of the student's entry into the Physician Assistant Studies Program.
2. Students who have not fulfilled all graduation requirements by the day of graduation must request and receive permission to participate in commencement ceremonies from the Dean of the School of Health Professions.
3. Only in unusual circumstances and with approval of the Dean of the School of Health Professions will a degree be awarded in absentia.

### Related Policies and References

Physician Assistant Remediation

Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, Dismissal Procedure Manual

Physician Assistant Leave of Absence

**Definitions**

None

**Online Forms**

None

**History**

Revision Date(s): 07/01/2022 Removed item from procedure details that states: *Have completed six academic years of credit at an accredited college or university, of which, at least the last three were at the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth.*

## **Procedure No. 16: Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, Dismissal Procedure Manual**

### **Procedure Manual Statement**

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program must meet the academic and professional standards established by the Physician Assistant Studies Program to be eligible for promotion and to graduate noted in this procedure. Students who do not meet standards are subject to probation or dismissal. To be eligible for promotion, the student must meet the requirements of each course in all respective semesters of the curriculum.

This procedure contains the Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, Dismissal Procedure for the following matriculating cohort:

#### **Section 3: For students matriculating July 01, 2020 and after**

##### **Procedure Statement**

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program July 01, 2020 and after, must meet the academic and professional standards established by this Physician Assistant Studies Program procedure in order to progress through the program. Students who fail to meet these standards are subject to academic probation or dismissal.

**Didactic Phase:** Successful completion of the didactic phase of the Physician Assistant Studies Program curriculum is required to progress to the clinical phase. All students must complete the Physician Assistant Studies Program didactic phase with didactic course grades consisting of no more than 5 Cs and 0 Fs. A student who fails a didactic course can remediate that course for a grade of no higher than a C. Only one didactic course failure can be remediated. Students earning six or more C grades during the didactic phase with a program cumulative grade point average (cGPA) less than 3.25 are subject to program dismissal. Students earning six or more C grades with a cGPA  $\geq 3.25$  will continue in the program as long as they maintain a cGPA  $\geq 3.25$ . Upon earning a cGPA  $< 3.25$  in the didactic phase, students with six or more C grades will be dismissed.

**Clinical Phase:** All students must complete the Physician Assistant Studies Program clinical phase with clinical phase course grades consisting of no more than 1 C and 0 Fs. A student who fails a clinical course can remediate that course, but only one clinical course failure can be remediated. Earning two or more C grades in clinical phase courses or failure of a clinical course remediation regardless of cGPA will result in dismissal. A student failing a second clinical course may not remediate the second failure and will be dismissed.

**Academic Probation:** Students will be placed on academic probation if they earn 3 or more course grades of C in the didactic phase. Students will be removed from academic probation upon completion of all didactic phase requirements.

**Academic Concern:** Students will be placed on Academic Concern for any of the following: 1) earning two C grades in the didactic phase, 2) earning one C or requiring a remediation of an F grade in the clinical phase, or 3) requiring a remediation of a professionalism violation. This academic status recognizes students that may require additional assistance to successfully complete didactic phase requirements. Academic Concern status will persist through didactic and clinical phases. Students will be removed from Academic Concern by the Student Performance Committee prior to graduation.

In addition to the Didactic Phase and Clinical Phase criteria above, a Physician Assistant Student who obtains any of the following is subject to dismissal from the Physician Assistant Studies Program regardless of grades earned and/or cGPA for unprofessional behavior or failure to comply with the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and/or with UNTHSC policies.

A student's appeal of a Physician Assistant Studies Program dismissal must be filed in writing to the Dean of the School of Health Professions within 5 business days of dismissal notification.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process surrounding promotion, probation and dismissal from the Physician Assistant Studies Program for students entering July 01, 2020 and after.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
Student	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9
Course Director	2
PASPC Chair	4, 5
Program Director	2, 3, 4, 5
Director of Clinical Education	3
Dean, SHP	8
Student Affairs	9
PA Administration	9

### Procedure Details

1. Physician Assistant Students must accumulate acceptable course grades. Standards for completion of each course are contained in the course syllabus.
2. A Physician Assistant Student who fails a didactic course can remediate that course once. Successful remediation will result in a grade of "C" for that course, which will then count toward the number of Cs a student has accumulated. Only one didactic course can be remediated during the didactic phase.
3. A Physician Assistant Student who fails a practicum course in the clinical phase can remediate that course once. Successful remediation will result in a grade of "C" for that clinical course, which will then count toward the number of Cs a student has accumulated in the clinical phase. Only one practicum course can be remediated in the clinical phase.
4. A Physician Assistant Student with course grades consisting of 3 or more C's in the didactic phase, or who has successfully remediated a failed didactic course will be placed on Academic Probation. Students will be removed from Academic Probation upon completion of all didactic phase requirements with no more than 5 Cs and 0 Fs.
5. A Physician Assistant Student is subject to dismissal from the program for reasons including, but not limited to the following: (1) accumulation of 6 or more Cs in courses taken in the didactic phase with a cGPA of < 3.25, (2) accumulation of 2 Cs in the clinical phase, (3) unsuccessful remediation of a failed didactic or clinical course regardless of cGPA, (4) failure of a second didactic course after the successful remediation of a didactic course regardless of cGPA, (5) failure of a second practicum course after the



successful remediation of a practicum course regardless of cGPA, (6) documented critical, persistent, or multiple professionalism violation(s), or (7) failure to comply with the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline and/or with UNTHSC policies.

6. In either phase (didactic or clinical), if a student has any issues (e.g., medical, personal) they feel would affect their academic performance, a student must do the following: (1) contact the Student Service Center for documentation of the issue(s) and assistance with resources, (2) demonstrate consistent use of appropriate resources to support academic performance in light of the issues, and (3) inform their Academic Advisor and the Associate Director of the PA Department that the student is working with Student Services. A student does not have to identify the nature of the circumstances beyond their discussion with the Student Service Center, but the three points in this paragraph must be documented prior to poor academic performance before consideration of such circumstances on academic performance issues.
7. A student dismissed from the PA program can make an appeal within 5 business days of official notification to the Dean of the School of Health Professions. A student can only appeal dismissal once for nonacademic issues and once for academic issues.
8. 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 Program Director to develop a remediation plan. If the dismissal is upheld, the student is dismissed.
9. Appeals are handled in accordance with UNTHSC Academic and Non-academic Complaint/Grievance Policy

### **Related Policies and References**

UNTHSC Student Affairs Policy Manual, section: UNTHSC Academic and Non-academic Complaint/Grievance Policy

Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements

### **Definitions**

1. Academic Probation. "Academic probation" serves as notice to the student that their continued enrollment is in jeopardy.
2. Academic Concern: "Academic Concern" serves as notice to the student that their continued enrollment is in jeopardy due to poor academic performance and does not alter academic standing.
3. Dismissal. "Dismissal" means disenrollment from the curriculum. A dismissed student is not eligible for graduation.
4. Satisfactory Standing. "Satisfactory standing" in the didactic and clinical portions of the program requires accumulation of acceptable course grades.
5. Remediation. "Remediation" refers activities designed to remedy a failed course grade

### **Online Forms**

None

**History**

The definition “Academic Concern” was expanded upon.

Effective Date: August 01, 2021

## Procedure No. 17: Physician Assistant Deferred Matriculation

### Procedure Statement

The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth (UNTHSC) Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program has a general preference to avoid deferral of matriculation. However, some circumstances may warrant a request to defer admission to the subsequent year. Deferred admission requests are considered by the PA Studies Admissions Committee on a case-by-case basis.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a procedure on deferred matriculation of accepted applicants to the UNTHSC PA Studies Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
Applicant	1-2, 6
Office of Admission and Recruitment	3,5,7
PA Studies Admissions Committee	4
PA Studies Program Director	4

### Procedure Details

1. Accepted applicants who wish to request deferral must submit a written petition (i.e., postal mail, faxed copy, or email with an attached copy) to the Office of Admissions and Recruitment indicating the rationale for the request and describing activities that are planned for the year. Applicants should address their letter to the Office of Admissions and Recruitment, Division of Student and Academic Affairs, UNT Health Science Center, 3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard, Fort Worth, TX 76107. Petitions requesting deferral for longer than one (1) year will not be considered.
2. All requests for deferral must be submitted prior to July 1 of the summer preceding the original matriculation date.
3. The Office of Admissions and Recruitment will forward the letter to the PA Studies Admissions Committee for review.
4. The PA Studies Admissions committee will review and decide to either accept or reject the applicant's request for deferred matriculation. The recommended decision will be forwarded to the PA Studies Director for final approval.
5. If granted, the Office of Admissions and Recruitment will provide a written commitment to hold a place for the student in the next entering class.
  - a. Note: the applicant is not considered to be a physician assistant student and should not represent himself or herself as such for personal or professional gain (e.g., scholarships, scholarly, and/or clinical activity). Additionally, the applicant is not eligible for school resources, including malpractice

insurance, student health or mental health services, financial aid, academic preparation, or curricula content.

6. The applicant is expected to provide a written commitment to attend as scheduled and to refrain from applying to other physician assistant programs. Receiving a deferred admission is not intended to be used to secure a spot in the UNTHSC Physician Assistant Studies Program while continuing applications with other programs in the subsequent year. In doing so, the deferred admission will be rescinded.
7. If denied, the Office of Admissions and Recruitment will provide a written notification to the accepted applicant. The applicant may choose to matriculate with the entering cohort or deny the offer of admission to the program.

### **Related Policies and References**

None

### **Definitions**

“Deferred matriculation” is the matriculation of an applicant who has accepted an offer of admission and intends to enroll but has elected to change their original matriculation term to a future term.

### **Online Forms**

None

### **History**

Revision Date(s): None.

## **Procedure No. 18: Physician Assistant Professionalism Violation Procedure**

### **Procedure Statement**

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Program must meet the academic and professional standards established by the PAS Program in order to progress through the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) students who do not meet the professionalism standards by committing a professionalism violation must successfully remediate their behavior to otherwise remain eligible to continue in the PAS Program.

### **Reason for Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines on remediation of a professionalism violation for all students enrolled in the PAS Program

### **Area of Responsibility**

#### **Responsible party**

PAS Student

#### **Procedure detail section**

1, 6, 7

Associate Program Director (APD)	2
Director of Clinical Education (DCE)	2
Program Director	6, 7
Course Director (CD)	2
PASPC	3
Student Affairs	5

### Procedure Details

1. Any PAS student receiving a professionalism violation must remedy that violation.
2. The CD, DCE or APD will establish a remediation plan and timeline with guidance from the PASPC, DAE or DCE as needed.
3. The PASPC will monitor student progress during the remediation process.
4. A remediation plan may include, but is not limited to:
  - i) Written assignment using a department-approved structure and grading rubric
  - ii) Literature review with presentation
  - iii) Professionalism modules through Student Affairs
  - iv) Mandated professionalism mentoring by the CD, APD or DCE.
5. Potential violations of the UNTHSC Student Code of Conduct and Discipline will be referred to the Student Affairs Office and may be reported to the Texas Medical Board (TMB).
6. A PAS student who commits a professionalism violation, except for minor lapses, will be reviewed and may result in academic concern, academic probation, or other sanctions
7. A PAS student who does not successfully remediate a professionalism deficiency will be subject to dismissal.

### Related Policies and References

Physician Assistant Studies Program Graduation Requirements

Physician Assistant Studies Program Promotion, Probation, and Dismissal Manual

Physician Assistant Studies Program Course Remediation Procedure

Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

*Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession (NCCPA, AAPA, PAEA, ARC-PA)*

### Definitions

1. Professionalism Violation. “Professionalism Violation” refers to any behavior that is deemed unprofessional by the standards established by the PA Studies department, the HSC or the *Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession*.
2. Remediation. “Remediation” refers to activities designed to remedy a failed course grade due to academic or professionalism violation.
3. Academic Probation. “Academic probation” serves as notice to the student that their continued enrollment is in jeopardy.
4. Academic Concern. “Academic concern” serves as notice to the student that their continued enrollment is in jeopardy and does not alter academic standing.
5. Successful professionalism remediation. “Successful professionalism remediation” means completion of all assigned remediation activities within the established timeline.
6. Unsuccessful professionalism remediation. “Unsuccessful professionalism remediation” means failure to complete all assigned remediation activities within the established timeline.

## Online Forms

PA Studies Remediation Contract

## History

Revision Date(s): 08/01/2021

## Procedure No. 19: Physician Assistant Admission Seat Deposit

### Procedure Statement

Applicants admitted to The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth (HSC) Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program must pay a non-refundable Admission Seat Deposit to reserve their seat for full-time admission in the entering class. Admitted students are responsible for ensuring the deposit is paid by the stated deadline; otherwise, they will forfeit their seat in the entering class. The seat deposit will be credited toward the student's first-semester tuition and fees upon enrollment. Some circumstances may warrant a request to extend or waive the Admission Seat Deposit.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the payment of the Admission Seat Deposit for applicants offered full-time admission into the PA Studies Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
Applicant	1-4
Office of Admissions and Recruitment (OAR)	2-4

### Procedure Details

1. Each year, applicants accepted into the PA Studies Program are required to pay a non-refundable Admission Seat Deposit that will be used toward the applicants' tuition upon matriculation.
  - a. By submitting a seat deposit and other required information, the applicant accepts an offer of admission to the PA Studies Program and confirms that they will attend classes for the given year.
  - b. Applicants may rescind the offer of admission to the PA Studies Program by notifying the Office of Admission and Recruitment (OAR) in writing of their decision.
  - c. Admission Seat Deposit payments are non-refundable if the applicant chooses not to attend the program.
2. Half of the Admission Seat Deposit is due 14 days after receiving an official offer. The remaining balance is due on June 1<sup>st</sup> of the matriculation year.
  - a. OAR will contact the applicant if the Admission Seat Deposit has not been received by the due date. Failure to respond may result in rescinding the applicant's seat in the cohort.
  - b. Any offers of admission to the HSC PA Studies Program made after June 1<sup>st</sup> will not require an Admission Seat Deposit.
3. Requesting an extension for the seat deposit:
  - a. Applicants who wish to request an extension must submit a written petition (i.e., postal mail, faxed copy, or email with attached documentation) to the OAR providing the reason for the request and the new proposed due date.

- b. All requests for an extension must be submitted or postmarked by the original due date.
- 4. Requesting a waiver for the seat deposit:
  - a. Applicants who wish to request a waiver must submit a written petition (i.e., postal mail, faxed copy, or email with attached documentation) to the OAR explaining the reason for the request and providing any supporting documentation.
  - b. All requests for a waiver must be submitted or postmarked by the original due date.
  - c. A limited list of acceptable reasons for the request is provided below:
    - i. Financial hardship/need
      - 1. Applicant has qualified for CASPA Fee Assistance Program
      - 2. Applicant has qualified for need-based Federal assistance
      - 3. Applicant has submitted a financial hardship letter and supporting documentation
    - ii. Military status
      - 1. Applicant has current or previous military service
      - 2. Applicant has a direct family member with current or previous military service

### **Related Policies and References**

None

### **Definitions**

- 3. Applicant. "Applicant" is a person who has submitted a completed application for admission into the PA Studies Program using approved processes and has paid the required application fees.
- 4. Matriculation. "Matriculation" is when an applicant becomes a student and is enrolled in courses.
- 5. Admission Seat Deposit. "Admission Seat Deposit" is a non-refundable fee required to reserve an applicant's seat in the class for which they are admitted. The seat deposit is applied toward the applicant's tuition upon matriculation.

### **Online Forms**

All seat deposits are submitted online at The University of North Texas Health Science Center Commerce Manager Payer.

### **History**

Creation Date: 04/01/2023

Revision Date: n/a

## Procedure No. 20: Physician Assistant Student Attendance Procedure

### Procedure Statement

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Program must meet the academic and professional standards established by the PAS Program to progress through the didactic and clinical phases of the PAS Program. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and clinics as per the published SHP academic calendar and course syllabus. Required classes and events for students are scheduled between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM during the didactic phase; however, it may be necessary to hold classes, labs, or activities outside of these hours. Clinical phase students will be required to be available outside of the aforementioned times, as determined by the specific rotation. Students are required to attend course components as published in the schedule and syllabus. PAS students who do not meet attendance requirements in the didactic or clinical phase of training may not remain eligible to continue in the PAS Program. See Promotion, Probation, Dismissal Procedure Manual.

### Reason for Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for attendance for all students enrolled in the PAS Program.

### Area of Responsibility

Responsible party	Procedure detail section
PAS Student	1-7, 9-11, 14, 22-25
PAS Course Director (CD)/Liaison	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 25, 26
PAS Program Administration	2, 22, 26
Director of Clinical Education (DCE)	9-12, 16, 22, 25, 26
Director of Academic Education (DAE)	4, 22, 26

### Procedure Details for Didactic Phase

- Attendance is required for all PAS course activities in each phase of the curriculum. PAS students must email the PAS CD/Liaison as soon as possible when an absence is expected or has occurred. PAS students requesting an excused absence must submit documentation to [pastudies@UNTHSC.edu](mailto:pastudies@UNTHSC.edu) and the PAS CD.
- The PAS student may not accrue more than 5 *cumulative days of absence* per academic block without prior approval by the PAS Program administration.
- Tracking Attendance:
  - Attendance will be documented by the PAS CD in each PAS course.
  - No PAS student may record the attendance of another PAS student for any reason. This action will constitute a violation of the UNTHSC Student Code of Conduct and Civility (“The Code”), resulting in disciplinary proceedings.
- Excused absences may be granted for emergencies (i.e., bereavement) or illness related to the PAS student or dependent family members.
  - Documentation substantiating reasons for absences is required. (i.e., medical note for self or dependent or obituary with funeral date, etc.).
  - Documentation must be sent to [pastudies@UNTHSC.edu](mailto:pastudies@UNTHSC.edu) and the PAS CD.
  - All excused absences during didactic phase must be approved by the PAS CD/Liaison and the DAE.
  - HSC respects the rights of students to observe religious holy days which are considered excused absences. More information can be found in the Student Affairs Policy Manual.



- e. For a PAS student who misses an assessment due to an excused absence, the PAS CD/Course Liaison and DAE, will coordinate with Testing Services (if applicable) to schedule a time, if it is possible, to make up the assessment. Notification of absence should be provided prior to the scheduled assessment.
5. Unexcused absences:
- a. Letter grade courses: 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. PAS students who miss an assessment with an unexcused absence will not be able to take the assessment and will receive a 0 for that assessment. Three unexcused absences will result in a course grade of “F”.
    - i. The PAS student may not miss 2 *consecutive business days for unexcused* absences per academic block (usually 9-week terms). This will result in a professionalism violation. See Professionalism Violation Procedure.
  - b. Pass/No Pass courses: Refer to course syllabus for assessment remediation for unexcused absences. See PA Studies Remediation procedure. Two unexcused absences will result in a grade of “No Pass”.
6. Tardiness is unprofessional conduct. PAS students are required to arrive to PAS course components on time.
- a. PAS students must notify the PAS CD or Liaison of their estimated arrival time as soon as possible if tardiness is anticipated.
  - b. Chronic tardiness is not acceptable. Every 3 occurrences of tardiness in a course will result in an unexcused absence. Additional occurrences may result in a professionalism violation. See Professionalism Violation Procedure.

### Procedure Details for Clinical Phase

- 7. Attendance is required for all PAS course activities in each phase of the curriculum. Preceptors are not the approving authority to determine excused or unexcused absences.
- 8. Excused absences may be granted for emergencies (i.e., bereavement) or illness related to the PAS student or dependent family members.
- 9. Documentation substantiating reasons for absences is required. (i.e., medical note for self or dependent or obituary with funeral date, etc.).
  - a. Any time a student is absent or tardy or expects to be absent or tardy from the SCPE, they **must** notify/email the DCE (cc the SCPE Faculty Course Director) and the clinical preceptor as soon as feasible or the absence will be considered unexcused.
  - b. Failure to do this will be considered unprofessional behavior.
  - c. The student must record each absence in eValue™ time tracking.
- 10. Approval of absences is at the discretion of the DCE and should be requested prior to being absent. The DCE will determine if an absence is excused or unexcused.
- 11. The DCE is permitted to require the student to provide verification for any absences that occur, which may include proof of illness from a healthcare provider or proof of funeral attendance.
- 12. In emergent situations, the student must notify the DCE immediately via email. Failure to obtain approval from the DCE of any absence, including absence due to tardiness, may also include a remediation assignment.
- 13. A pattern of non-attendance and tardiness may be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Civility (“The Code”).

14. In the event of a SCPE failure, a student's attendance record will be considered when making recommendations on probation, remediation, and dismissal.
15. Students are not permitted more than 2 excused absences total per SCPE. This does *not* mean that a student is automatically granted 2 absences per SCPE. **Greater than 2 absences will result in repeating the entire SCPE, with the exception of illness requiring quarantine.**
16. Excessive excused absences may result in additional clinical experience/assignments and potentially repeating the entire SCPE. The student will be required to make up the missed time at the discretion of the DCE. **In the event the student cannot make up the missed time prior to the end of the SCPE, the student will be required to repeat the entire SCPE.** Make up assignments are not permitted to interfere with other SCPE requirements.
17. Taking call may be a requirement of a SCPE setting. Failure to respond or participate in call mandated by the preceptor will be considered an unexcused absence as well as unprofessional conduct.
18. Some clinical assignments may require the student to attend activities on weekends, holidays, or other irregular hours when their clinical preceptor is working. A lack of willingness to participate in these activities reflect negatively on the PAS Program and the PA profession and will be considered unprofessional conduct.
19. Unreported absences will automatically be considered unexcused absences, which could result in failure of the SCPE, be considered unprofessional conduct, and possibly result in dismissal from the PAS Program.
20. For a PAS student who misses an assessment due to an excused absence, the Clinical team member for the clinical phase will coordinate with Testing Services (if applicable) to schedule a time, if it is possible, to make up the assessment. Notification of absence should be provided prior to the scheduled assessment.
21. HSC respects the rights of students to observe religious holy days which are considered excused absences. More information can be found in the Student Affairs Policy Manual.

#### **Procedure Details Pertaining to both Didactic and Clinical Phases**

22. Extenuating circumstances: Request for absences not specified above must be preapproved by PAS Program administration (Didactic Phase: DAE and Clinical Phase: DCE)
23. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, make-up sessions or "re-teaching" of previously delivered materials is not guaranteed. The PAS student is responsible for all material covered during any missed class/SCPE activity. Most course components cannot be made up or recreated.
24. PAS student attendance may be considered when making recommendations for, but not limited to, the following: disciplinary actions, remediation, dismissal, awards, scholarships, honors, and honors elective SCPEs.
25. Virtual attendance. Virtual access to an in-person session is not guaranteed. Virtual access is at the discretion of the CD and/or DCE. Virtual access does not substitute for in-person class attendance or remediation requirements. The PAS student is responsible for all material covered during any missed course component. Refer to excused absence definition and requirements.
26. For all communicable diseases, the PAS Program will follow CDC guidelines pertaining to attendance for any class/SCPE activity.

#### **Related Policies, Procedures, References**

University Academic Calendar  
SCPE Student Handbook  
Physician Assistant Graduation Requirements  
Physician Assistant Professionalism Violation Procedure  
Physician Assistant Promotion, Probation, and Dismissal Procedure Manual

**Definitions**

1. Excused absence: An absence is considered “excused” if the student can provide documentation that the absence was necessary based on emergency or illness (i.e., medical note or obituary with funeral date) and/or has received appropriate approval following the process outlined in the didactic and clinical handbooks.
2. Unexcused absence: an absence is considered “unexcused” if the student is unable to provide documentation that the absence was based on emergency or illness and/or has not received appropriate approval following the process outlined in the didactic and clinical handbooks.

**Online Forms**

N/A

**History**

Procedure created May 2023.

Revision Date(s): none.

## 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 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.

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PAS Student Signature

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PAS Student Name (Printed)

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Date