



# **MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM**

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK CLASS OF 2023**

### **Disclaimer**

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This Student Handbook will be your primary source of information for the Program. The Program will expect you to refer to it prior to asking or emailing a question. The Program reserves the right to modify this handbook during enrollment.

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# UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

## Student Handbook – Class of 2023

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**Introduction**

This handbook contains policies and requirements that govern academic performance and student conduct for students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program (Program), within the School of Health Sciences (School) at the University of the Pacific (University or Pacific). It is the responsibility of all students to be knowledgeable about Program, School, and University policies. Students are advised to refer to University resources for additional information and material when referenced. These policies are to all aspects of the student's academic progress and personal conduct for as long as the student is enrolled. Some policies are unique to the Program and are designed to promote standards for academic competence, professional discipline, and personal responsibility. The Program reserves the right to outline policies and requirements more stringent than University policy. They represent the parameters of achievement and behavior the faculty expect of all students.

The Program and the University reserve the right to make changes, at any time, to this handbook or admission requirements, graduation, tuition, fees, and any rules or regulations. The University maintains the right to refuse to enroll or matriculate a student deemed by the faculty to be academically incompetent or otherwise unfit or unsuited.

**Non-discrimination Policy**

It is University policy to admit qualified students irrespective of race, age, gender, color, creed, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Students must possess the academic credentials and professional attributes deemed essential by the respective program admissions committee to be considered for admission to any program.

**ACCREDITATION****University of the Pacific**

The University of the Pacific is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). WASC reaffirmed Institutional Accreditation in 2019.

**Physician Assistant Program**

The ARC-PA has granted **Accreditation-Provisional** status to the **University of the Pacific Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program** sponsored by the **University of the Pacific**.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA

Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students. Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class.

## SECTION 2      PROGRAM GOALS AND COMPETENCIES

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### PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Physician Assistant Program at the University of the Pacific is to provide students with a superior, learner-centered educational experience that will produce compassionate health care professionals committed to life-long learning and leadership in their careers and communities.

#### **Goals**

The Program's goals are to graduate PAs who have thorough education, training, and experience in:

1. Apply medical knowledge and clinical skills in patient-centered practice.
2. Apply systems-based practice principles to patient care.
3. Model professionalism and leadership
4. Model commitment to life-long learning.

#### **Competencies**

Graduates of the Program must demonstrate knowledge of and, when appropriate, proficiency in the following areas and tasks as physician assistants:

##### **Domain 1: Medical Knowledge**

###### **Competencies**

- 1.1 Apply principles of evidence-based medicine
- 1.2 Recognize etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for common medical and surgical conditions
- 1.3 Distinguish the signs, symptoms, differential diagnosis, diagnostic work-up, and management of common medical and surgical conditions, across healthcare settings and care levels
- 1.4 Indicate disease prevention and health promotion principles

##### **Domain 2: Patient Care**

###### **Competencies**

- 2.1 Provide patient-centered care, across the lifespan, as part of a health care team
- 2.2 Obtain an accurate patient history and physical examination
- 2.3 Discriminate appropriate differential diagnoses
- 2.4 Compare diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in a patient-centered approach
- 2.5 Perform medical and surgical procedures appropriate to the scope of practice
- 2.6 Counsel and educate patients and their families in accordance with health literacy levels
- 2.7 Utilize information technology effectively to enhance patient care

2.8 Implement health promotion and disease prevention interventions

### **Domain 3: Practice-Based Learning and Improvement**

#### **Competencies**

- 3.1 Cultivate self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative in self and others
- 3.2 Locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies to clinical practice
- 3.3 Recognize and address personal biases and gaps in medical knowledge through lifelong learning
- 3.4 Analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team

### **Domain 4: Interpersonal and Communication Skills**

#### **Competencies**

- 4.1 Create and sustain an ethically sound therapeutic relationship with patients
- 4.2 Adapt communication style to the context of the interaction
- 4.3 Work effectively within a health care team
- 4.4 Demonstrate emotional stability, respect, compassion, and integrity
- 4.5 Effectively relay accurate and adequate clinical information (verbal and written)

### **Domain 5: Professionalism**

#### **Competencies**

- 5.1 Summarize legal and regulatory requirements for PA practice
- 5.2 Distinguish the role of the physician assistant in a given practice setting
- 5.3 Maintain professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers
- 5.4 Exemplify accountability to patients, society, and the profession
- 5.5 Demonstrate commitment to ethical principles regarding privacy, business practices, and provision or withholding of clinical care
- 5.6 Demonstrate sensitivity to patients' culture, age, gender, abilities, and autonomy
- 5.7 Maintain healthy behaviors and work-life balance
- 5.8 Demonstrate leadership in the community and profession
- 5.9 Demonstrate personal, professional and intellectual integrity and ethical behavior

### **Domain 6: Systems-based Practice**

#### **Competencies**

- 6.1 Function effectively within different types of medical delivery systems
- 6.2 Interpret funding sources and payment systems
- 6.3 Practice cost-conscious health care
- 6.4 Assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- 6.5 Recognize and attempt to correct systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- 6.6 Partner with stakeholders to improve patient outcomes
- 6.7 Use medical information and clinical data systems effectively



## **Location and Evaluation of Program's Competencies**

All didactic and clinical courses address all six domains. Enriched pedagogical tools and clinical experiences provide fundamental and patient specific instruction. Competency assessment occurs with multiple choice examinations, individual and group projects, practical examinations, standardized patient encounters, clinical encounters, preceptor evaluations.

### PROGRAM TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The student must be able to achieve and maintain certain technical standards of knowledge and skill to complete the PA Program. The technical standards in this document apply to satisfactory performance in all academic and clinical course work, as well as the fulfillment of non-academic essential functions of the curriculum involving physical, cognitive, and behavior factors that are essential to a professional clinical practitioner.

More specifically, a student in the Physician Assistant Program must have adequate abilities and skills in the following five areas: 1) Observation, 2) Communication, 3) Sensory and Motor Function, 4) Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities and 5) Behavioral and Social Attributes.

1. **Observation:** The student must be able to observe demonstrations and conduct experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to chemical, biological, anatomic and physiologic sciences, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms. A student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities. A student must be able to integrate all information visually and through the other senses.
2. **Communication:** A student must be able to communicate effectively, sensitively, and rapidly in English with patients and members of the health care team. A student must be able to elicit information from patients, perceive nonverbal communications, and describe changes in mood, activity, and posture. Communication includes not only speech but writing, reading, interpreting tables, figures, graphs, and computer literacy.
3. **Sensory and Motor Function:** The student must have sufficient sensory and motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. The student will be required to coordinate both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of hearing, touch, and vision. More specifically, the student must be able to exercise such fine motor skills as to adequately perform laboratory tests, including but not limited to wet mount, urinalysis, and gram stain. The student must exercise such a level of dexterity, sensation, and visual acuity to accurately complete such processes as administering intravenous medication, making fine measurements of angles and size, measuring blood pressure, respiration and pulse,

performing physical examinations, and performing therapeutic procedures such as suturing and casting. The student must be able to hear sufficiently to accurately differentiate percussive notes and auscultatory findings, including but not limited to, heart, lung, and abdominal sounds, as well as discern normal and abnormal findings using instruments such as tuning forks, stethoscopes, sphygmomanometers, and Doppler devices.

A student must be able to transport himself or herself in a manner that provides a timely response in both general and emergency care situations. Moving patients and engaging in some procedures such as CPR will require a necessary level of strength.

4. **Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** A student must have the intellect necessary to quickly analyze and resolve problems. These intellectual abilities include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning, analysis judgment, and synthesis. The student must be able to identify significant findings from the patient's history, the physical examination and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, and choose appropriate medications and therapy. The ability to incorporate new information from many sources in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, diagnostic, and therapeutic planning is primary. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others.
  
5. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** A student must possess the emotional health required for full use of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. The development of mature, sensitive, effective, and professional relationships with patients and members of the health care team is essential. Students must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are desired in a health professional and assessed during the admissions and education processes.

The University of the Pacific will provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities otherwise qualified to complete the essential functions of the curriculum. However, such essential functions must be completed by the student in a reasonably independent fashion. The safety and welfare of a patient shall never be put in jeopardy as a result of an effort to reasonably accommodate a disability.

## SECTION 4

## DISABILITY SERVICES

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The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Disabled students' rights are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). It is the policy of the University to ensure that no qualified student with a disability is excluded from participation in or subjected to discrimination in any University program, activity, or event.

If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations, please contact the Director of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) for information on how to obtain an Accommodations Request Letter. Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. To initiate the process, please contact the:

Office of Services for Students with Disabilities  
University of the Pacific - Stockton Campus, McCaffrey Center, Rm. 137  
Phone: 209.946.3221  
Email: [ssd@pacific.edu](mailto:ssd@pacific.edu)  
Online: [www.pacific.edu/disabilities](http://www.pacific.edu/disabilities)

To ensure timeliness of services, obtain the accommodation letter(s) from the Office of SSD at the start of the semester or earlier. After the instructor receives the accommodation letter, please schedule a meeting with the instructor during office hours or some other mutually convenient time to arrange the accommodation(s).

**Degrees Awarded**

The Program awards the following degree: Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS).

**Licensure Eligibility**

Upon successful completion of the 27-month program, graduates are eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) administered by the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA, [www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)). After passing the PANCE, graduates become certified Physician Assistants (PA-C) and are eligible for licensure to practice as determined by a state's licensing board.

**Maximum Hours/Time-Frame Allowed**

All students are expected to complete degree requirements after having attempted not more than 150% of the number of credit hours of course work required for the degree program, rounded down to the nearest credit. If it is determined at any time within a student's course of study that he/she will be unable to graduate within the 150% time-frame, the student will become immediately ineligible for financial aid. Please, direct questions regarding this policy to the Registrar and/or the Financial Aid Office. Any disciplinary action resulting in content or course remediation may, in turn, delay a student's completion of the Program and may result in additional tuition and/or fees.

**Advanced Placement**

Advanced placement cannot be granted in the Program.

**Credit by Examination**

There is no credit by examination for courses taken at other institutions. All students must take all courses in the program and complete the clinical year of rotations in its entirety.

**Transfer of Credit and Credit for Experiential Learning**

Transfer of credit is not allowed. No credit will be granted for work-related experiences.

**Transfer Students from other PA Programs**

The Program does not accept transfer students.

**Part-Time Status**

The Program does not allow a part-time option for incoming or continuing students. The Program has an integrated lock-step curriculum requiring that all courses each semester be taken together to facilitate knowledge acquisition and application. Students may not request a part-time curriculum.

## **Deceleration**

Completion of the Program curriculum on a decelerated timeline is only permitted as a recommendation by the Student Progress Committee (SPC). Students may not request a decelerated curriculum. Deceleration occurs when a currently enrolled student joins the subsequent cohort. The SPC determines when a student will be required to join a subsequent cohort and what if any coursework must be repeated. The academic standing of a decelerated student is evaluated on an individual basis.

## **Repeat Coursework**

The Program's integrated curriculum is lock-step. Enrollees complete the curriculum as a cohort. Courses are only offered once a calendar year. The opportunity to repeat coursework is not available unless outlined by the Student Progress Committee (SPC) as a component of a remediation plan. The SPC determines what, if any, coursework must be repeated. At the SPC's discretion, a student may be required to repeat any coursework regardless of the grade received during the initial class attempt. All course attempts will be calculated into the student's overall GPA. The student acknowledges that additional tuition and fees may be incurred with repeat coursework, and that said coursework might not be eligible for financial aid. The academic standing of a student repeating coursework is evaluated on an individual basis.

## **Holidays**

The University of the Pacific observes most federal holidays. Refer to the University calendar for observed holidays. Students on clinical rotations do not follow the University holiday schedule, but rather the holiday schedule for the clinical site.

## **Student Identification**

### **Pacific Student Identification**

Student identification is required at all times when on campus. Students will be provided with a student identification card, also known as the PacificCard. The card provides access for building entry, residential facility entry (if applicable), allows you to check out books from the library, and gain entrance to Pacific sporting events. Additionally, this card can serve as PacificCash, a debit card system, attached to your student account. PacificCash allows students to access PacificPrint copy machines, campus laundry facilities, meal plan purchases, etc.

### **PA Program Student Identification**

Students will be provided a Program-specific nametag that must be worn at all times while on clinical rotations. Additionally, students must wear a short clinical white coat with the Program patch while at all clinical sites unless instructed not to do so by the clinical site or the Program. Students must always identify themselves as a "Physician Assistant student" to patients and clinical site staff, and never present themselves as physicians,

residents, medical students, licensed physician assistants, or utilize previously earned titles (i.e., RN, MD, DO, Ph.D., etc.) for identification purposes.

The Program nametag does not replace a student's Pacific identification card. Students may be required to wear both forms of identification while at clinical sites. Students are financially responsible for the replacement of any identification items.

## **Medical Records**

Health records required for enrollment at the University of the Pacific (i.e., immunization and/or blood test documentation, medical history and physical examination forms and tuberculosis clearance and screening forms) are collected and retained in a secure electronic environment by the University of the Pacific Student Health Center.

The Program utilizes an external agency (CastleBranch) to verify and store health records and clearance documents required for enrollment in the Program and clinical rotation placement. Students are advised to retain a copy of all documents for their records, since these records may be required by a variety of institutions as the student progresses through his/her professional career.

## **Student Health Admission Requirements**

Students must fulfill the requirements listed below before and during the Program in compliance with the Program's policy for health and communicable disease clearance protocol.

- Health History and Physical Examination - annual
- Hepatitis B – completion of vaccination series and verification of immunity (quantitative titer required)
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) – verification of immunity (quantitative titer preferred)
- Tdap Vaccine (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular Pertussis) – within 3 years
- Varicella (Chickenpox) – verification of immunity (quantitative titer preferred)
- Influenza Vaccine – annual
- Tuberculosis (or PPD) Test/Screening – initial 2-step with annual 1-step, Quantiferon Gold tests, or Chest X-ray.
- Meningococcal vaccine – if <21 years old and living in on-campus housing

### **Recommended**

- HPV vaccination series
- Hepatitis A vaccination series
- Submission of all vaccination records – if available (many facilities where you will train require both proofs of vaccination and titers)

Forms are found at <http://www.pacific.edu/immunizationcompliance>

All health screening information may be made available, as required, to the Program, clinical preceptors, and clinical rotation sites.

Students whose immunizations and titers are not up to date may be removed from classes or clinical rotation(s) until the deficiency is corrected. Some clinical training sites require students with positive latent Tb test results to be treated. As a result, students who have not been treated may not be allowed to attend certain clinical rotations, which may result in a delay of completion of the Program.

Students must report any change in their health not noted on their annual physical examination to the Program and Pacific Student Health Services immediately. Students must meet the Program's Technical Standards throughout enrollment. Failure to meet the Program's Technical Standards may result in dismissal from the Program. Failure to notify the Program and University of a change to one's health that may affect patient care or ability to meet Program Technical Standards is a violation of the Professional Code of Conduct and violation of Program policy thus may result in dismissal from the Program.

Per ARC-PA accreditation standards, PA Program principal faculty, program director, and medical director must not participate in the health care of PA students enrolled within the Program.

### **Infectious Disease and Environmental Hazards**

Students enrolled in the Program may be exposed to various infectious diseases and environmental hazards. Students are required to complete the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training before matriculation. This training will address environmental hazards, infectious disease, and universal precautions. These topics are reviewed in the didactic curriculum. Clinical rotation sites may require students to complete additional, facility-specific, training procedures. It is the student's responsibility to remain compliant. Students who are not in compliance will be removed from classes or clinical rotation(s) until the deficiency is corrected. No exceptions.

### **Allergen Exposure**

Students may also be exposed to allergens during training. Students with known chemical or latex allergies must inform the Program. While the Program will attempt to reduce exposure to potential allergens, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their exposure and take the necessary steps for self-protection.

### **Infectious Disease Impact on Student Learning**

The presence of an infectious disease may impact a student's ability to complete the necessary curriculum requirements within the originally dedicated period. Students may be removed from learning activities, as indicated by the nature of the disease. Clinical rotation sites dictate some clearance policies; therefore, failure to provide documentation may impact clinical rotation placements.

### **Infectious Disease Prevention and Protocol**

The University's Student Blood, Body Fluid and Tuberculosis Exposure Policy and the MPAS Blood/Body Fluid Exposure Protocol will be reviewed with students early in



didactic training and again before clinical rotations. This protocol and necessary documents will also be available to students through the CANVAS learning system. This policy includes student responsibilities for prevention, post-exposure student responsibilities, as well as financial and learning activity implications.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

### **Textbooks**

Students can plan on spending approximately \$2,500 to \$3,500 on required textbooks. Course syllabi and the Program Textbook List also include recommended books which students are not required to purchase, but may wish to have as important reference materials. The Program is contracted with AccessMedicine, an online database for McGraw Hill Publishing. Students will have access to some required textbooks through this online resource. The Program recommends students purchase all required textbooks, as the online text versions vary slightly. Students are expected to have purchased required textbooks that are not available online by the beginning of class for each term.

Students may purchase books through the Pacific bookstore or any other source, such as Amazon.com or publisher sites. When purchasing textbooks, please be sure to obtain the correct edition, which is listed next to the title of the book on the book list. Older editions of certain texts may be inadequate as they may provide old information. The ISBN is provided on the list and is the unique identifier for a specific edition of a text.

### **Laptop/Tablet Requirements**

Students are required to have a laptop computer and mobile device. Laptop computers provide students access to primary and supportive information to prepare for and supplement the learning process. Pacific utilizes CANVAS, a web-based educational program, as the central component of the “electronic classroom” employed throughout much of the curriculum. Assignments, course material, assessments, and other tools are available for each class through CANVAS.

Additionally, the Program utilizes computer-based examinations and survey tools. The campus offers a wireless environment enabling access to informational resources via the internet and proprietary Pacific sites such as the online library and other University resources. By making these a Program requirement, the cost is accounted for by Financial Aid.

Any laptop computer made within the last four (4) years with at least 2GB of memory is acceptable and should work well. However, please check that your laptop hardware and software meet each requirement.

### **Hardware Requirements**

#### PC Requirements

- Processor Manufacturer: Intel or AMD

- Wireless Network Interface Card: 802.11b/g
- RAM: 8GB
- Hard Drive: No minimum size but must have 5GB of available space
- Webcam: At least 720p resolution (Built-in or USB)
- Microphone: Built-in, USB, or microphone jack
- **Suggested** – Headphones (for reducing audio feedback during online sessions)

#### MAC Requirements

- Processor Manufacturer: Intel
- Wireless Network Interface Card: 802.11b/g
- RAM: 8GB
- Hard Drive: No minimum size but must have 5GB of available space
- Webcam: At least 720p resolution (Built-in or USB)
- Microphone: Built-in, USB, or microphone jack
- **Suggested** – Headphones (for reducing audio feedback during online sessions)

### Software Requirements

#### Acceptable operating systems

- Microsoft - Windows 10 with all current updates (English version only)
- Apple - Mac OS X 10.15 Catalina with all available updates

#### Other Required Software

- Adobe Reader DC (current version)
- An antivirus suite is required (e.g., MacAfee, Norton Antivirus or Symantec)
- Microsoft Office 365 (may be free through an agreement Microsoft and the university)

### Mobile Processors and Operating Systems – not compatible

Devices that use Mobile Processors (e.g. ARM or Qualcomm Snapdragon) or Mobile Operating Systems are not compatible with University requirements. These include but are not limited to the below devices:

- Chromebooks (Android OS)
- iPads (Apple IOS)
- Microsoft Surface (Windows 10 Mobile)

The Program recommends students purchase an external source to back up their data. Tablets are also acceptable, provided they meet the requirements.

The Program recommends that students purchase extended warranties or service contracts should there be a hardware failure. Neither the Program nor the University of the Pacific IT offers support to help with hardware or software issues.

### **Anatomy Lab Supplies – Medical Equipment**

The cost of the required medical equipment will range from about \$600 to \$1200, depending on the exact equipment models and/or styles chosen. More expense does not necessarily mean a better product; a student may be getting more than is needed.

- Otoscope/Ophthalmoscope set w/bulb insufflator
- Stethoscope
- Sphygmomanometer
- Reflex hammer
- Tuning fork 256 MHz
- Monofilament
- Measuring tape
- Visual acuity card
- Bandage scissors
- Short student white lab coats (2)

Equipment costs are a fee for the program, and therefore is accounted for by Financial Aid.

### **Background Screening**

The Program requires students to undergo background screenings before matriculation and periodically throughout enrollment. Students have a fiduciary responsibility for the costs associated with the background screening. Background screening will be completed on all students at matriculation and before placement on clinical rotations. Recent violations that have not been adjudicated and positive findings on a background check may result in dismissal from the Program. Applicants are required to be truthful when completing their application in the CASPA system regardless of time and disposition. Discrepancies noted on the pre-matriculation background screening will be investigated and may result in denial of matriculation or dismissal from the Program. Some clinical rotation sites require additional background screening immediately before the start of the rotation; therefore, students may be required to complete multiple background screenings throughout enrollment.

### **Criminal Background Screening Procedures**

- Upon request of the Program, each student must sign a Release and Authorization Form.
- A non-University entity specializing in lawful background screening will conduct the screening.

- Each student's background may be checked by name, social security number, and license number (if applicable), for up to the prior seven (7) years, and in the state, local, and federal databases for each of their reported addresses showing any activity for that social security number. The screening will include healthcare provider databases. The screening will include criminal records, including arrests and convictions for all offenses of any type, and a review of the registries of reports of child and dependent adult abuse. The screening may include records that have been reported as expunged and judgments that have been deferred.
- Findings from the background screening may be provided to the student for comment if determined by the Program in its discretion.
- Findings from the background screening will be reviewed and maintained by authorized personnel of the Program in accordance with FERPA laws and regulations.
- A copy of the student's criminal background screening will be provided to any clinical rotation site that is participating in the academic training of that physician assistant student, upon written request from the practice site and/or if determined by the Program in its discretion. The clinical site is responsible for determinations whether the student may participate in clinical education activities in the facility, department, or setting.

## **Toxicology Screening**

The Program requires students to undergo toxicology screenings prior to matriculation and periodically throughout enrollment. Students are the fiduciary responsible for the costs associated with toxicology screening. Toxicology screening will be completed on all students prior to matriculation, randomly throughout enrollment, and before placement on clinical rotations. Toxicology screening may be via urine or serum. Some clinical rotation sites require additional toxicology screens immediately prior to the start of the rotation; therefore, students may be required to complete multiple screens throughout enrollment. The Program requires authorization by each student for a urine toxicology screen before matriculation into the Program. Abnormalities noted on the pre-matriculation toxicology screening will be investigated and may result in denial of matriculation. Students with abnormal findings on these screening tests may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for review, which may result in disciplinary action.

## **Toxicology Screening Procedures**

- Upon request of the Program, each student must sign a Release and Authorization Form.
- A non-University entity specializing in toxicology processing will conduct the screening.
- Each student's toxicology screening shall include a 10-drug panel. Urine toxicology screens will include a urine creatinine.

- Findings from the toxicology screenings may be provided to the student for comment if determined by the Program in its discretion.
- Findings from the toxicology screenings will be reviewed by authorized personnel of the Program following FERPA laws and regulations.
- A copy of the student's toxicology results will be provided to any clinical rotation site that is participating in the academic training of that physician assistant student, upon written request from the practice site and/or if determined by the Program in its discretion. The practice site is responsible for determinations whether the student may participate in that setting.

## CURRICULUM – CLASS OF 2023

<b>Semester I</b> (Spring 2021)	<b>January 4 – April 16, 2021</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 200	Clinical Medicine I - Foundations of Anatomy	4
MPAS 201	Clinical Medicine I - Pathophysiology	4
MPAS 211	Pharmacology and Therapeutics I	3
MPAS 221	Behavioral Sciences I	2
MPAS 231	Professional Practice and the Health System I	1
MPAS 241	Clinical Skills I	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Semester II</b> (Summer 2021)	<b>April 26 – August 13, 2021</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 202	Clinical Medicine II	8
MPAS 212	Pharmacology and Therapeutics II	3
MPAS 222	Behavioral Sciences II	2
MPAS 232	Professional Practice and the Health System II	1
MPAS 242	Clinical Skills II	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Semester III</b> (Fall 2021)	<b>August 23 – December 17, 2021</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 203	Clinical Medicine III	8
MPAS 213	Pharmacology and Therapeutics III	3
MPAS 223	Behavioral Sciences III	2
MPAS 233	Professional Practice and the Health System III	1
MPAS 243	Clinical Skills III	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Semester IV</b> (Spring 2022)	<b>January 3 – April 22, 2022</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 205	Preparation for Clinical Practice	4
MPAS 215, 216, 517, 225, 235, 245,	Rotation 1	4
255, 265, 275, 285, 286, 287	Rotation 2	4
MPAS 219	Advanced Clinical Skills*	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Semester V</b> (Summer 2022)	<b>April 25 – August 5, 2022</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 215, 216, 217, 225, 235, 245,	Rotation 3	4
255, 265, 275, 285, 286, 287	Rotation 4	4
	Rotation 5	4
<b>Totals</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Semester VI</b> (Fall 2022)	<b>August 22 – December 16, 2022</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 215, 216, 517, 225, 235, 245,	Rotation 6	4
255, 265, 275, 285, 286, 287	Rotation 7	4
	Rotation 8	4
	Rotation 9	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Semester VII</b> (Spring 2023)	<b>January 2 – April 22, 2023</b>	<b>Units</b>
MPAS 215, 216, 517, 225, 235, 245,	Rotation 10	4
255, 265, 275, 285, 286, 287	Rotation 11	4
MPAS 218	Rotation 12	4
	Periodic and Summative Evaluations/Capstone*	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>

\*Continuing course

## PROGRAM FACULTY/STAFF DIRECTORY

<b>Mark Christiansen, PhD, PA-C</b> Program Director, Department Chair	916.340.6081	<a href="mailto:mchristiansen@pacific.edu">mchristiansen@pacific.edu</a>
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<b>Michael Kime</b> IT/AV Support Technician	916.325.4645	<a href="mailto:mkime@pacific.edu">mkime@pacific.edu</a>
<b>Isabel Schmitz</b> Data Analyst	916.340.6095	<a href="mailto:ischmitz@pacific.edu">ischmitz@pacific.edu</a>
<b>Martha Soto</b> Course Management/Exam Specialist	916.340.6141	<a href="mailto:msoto1@pacific.edu">msoto1@pacific.edu</a>

## CRIME AWARENESS AND ON/OFF-CAMPUS SECURITY

Pacific makes every effort to ensure student safety on campus and when off campus on clinical rotations. The University and Program recommend that all students be aware of their surroundings at all times and utilize common sense security techniques (i.e., keeping one hand free, locking your car and concealing valuables from view in your car.) Additionally, the University and Program recommend that students utilize any available safety systems present at clinical rotation sites, such as “security escorts to your car.” If at any time a student does not feel safe in a clinical rotation site, the student is to notify the program immediately. *Students are expected to notify the program immediately if a crime occurs.*

### FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 911 OR 9-911 FROM CAMPUS PHONES

#### Important Phone Numbers

Campus Public Safety Department (on duty 24 hours/day).....916.739.7200

Sacramento Fire Department (non-emergency).....916.808.1300

Sacramento City Police Department (non-emergency)..... 916.264.5471

Call 916.217.0896 for 24-hour access to Public Safety when campus phone lines are down or during a campus power outage.

#### Emergency Management

The Campus Public Safety Department is responsible for publishing the Disaster Operations Control Plan, which is the emergency operations plan for the Sacramento Campus. In the event of a non-life threatening emergency/incident, members of the campus community should contact Public Safety. For life-threatening emergencies, contact Public Safety and 911. The Dean or the Dean’s designee is responsible for the coordination of this plan during emergency operations through the Director of Public Safety. A copy of this plan is available in hard copy in the Director of Public Safety’s office.

For questions concerning safety and security issues, please refer to the Sacramento Campus, Department of Public Safety website: [Sacramento Campus Public Safety](#)

For the Annual Security and Fire Safety (Clery) Report, please see the Sacramento Campus, Department of Public Safety website: [Sacramento Campus Public Safety](#)

Public Safety Department  
3981 32<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Sacramento, CA 95817



## HARASSMENT

The University of the Pacific is committed to providing a learning environment free of unlawful harassment. The University abides by federal and state laws that prohibit workplace harassment, including the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, Government Code Section 12940, et. seq., and Title VII of the Civil Rights of 1964, as amended.

The University prohibits sexual harassment, environmental harassment and harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation. All such harassment is unlawful. This policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of Pacific and prohibits unlawful harassment by any employee of the University, including supervisors, coworkers, and preceptors. It also prohibits unlawful harassment based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

- Harassment is any behavior by a person(s) that is offensive, aggravating, or otherwise unwelcome to another person.
- Environmental harassment is any severe or pervasive action that results in a hostile or offensive working environment for the recipient. Environmental harassment is also known as hostile environment harassment.
- Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The conduct need not be motivated by sexual interest, but need only be of a sexual nature to be considered sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is one form of unlawful harassment.

Students experiencing harassment may be removed from the environment during the investigation period. All reports will be submitted to the University for a protocol-based investigation. During this investigation, students and witnesses may be contacted for further information.

<https://www.pacific.edu/campus-life/safety-and-conduct/sexual-assault-/-title-ix-resources-and-support.html>

## TITLE IX – RESPONSIBLE PARTY – TITLE IX COORDINATOR

The University of the Pacific seeks to promote an environment that is free of Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, and Retaliation (Misconduct). Misconduct includes sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, and gender-based harassment, terms that are defined in Addendum A of this Policy. The University seeks to educate students, faculty, and staff about the issue of misconduct and to provide a clear path to

resolution and correction of prohibited misconduct. The University reserves the right to respond with whatever measures it deems appropriate to prevent misconduct and preserve the safety and wellbeing of the University community. The University of the Pacific prohibits misconduct in any form. The University is committed to compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Campus SaVE Act, and state and federal sex discrimination laws. Title IX states,

*“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”*

This policy applies to all University of the Pacific community members, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, consultants, vendors, and others engaged in business with the University. Every community member is responsible for complying with all University policies and procedures. The University’s prohibition of misconduct includes conduct occurring on-campus or off-campus, including online and electronic communication or other conduct, when the University determines it has a substantial interest. University policies and procedures apply to conduct that takes place once a person becomes a student or employee of the University, including periods during academic breaks and between semesters/academic terms. This policy applies to and protects visitors to the University. Visitors may file a complaint for alleged violation(s) of University policies and procedures committed by members of the University community. University community members may be held accountable for the conduct of their guests. University of the Pacific’s full Title IX Policy, with appendices, is available at:

<https://webshare.pacific.edu/sites/policies/Pages/Policy%20Prohibiting%20Sexual%20Misconduct%20Discrimination%20and%20Retaliation.aspx>

## SECTION 7

# UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC STUDENT CONDUCT AND HONOR CODE

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### **Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards**

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards manages the general student conduct process for students on the Stockton and Sacramento campuses. Pacific has developed policies and procedures to clarify the expectations and standards for students. Each student is responsible for knowing and adhering to all University policies and procedures. The policies are outlined specifically in the Tiger Lore Student Handbook and on the web site at [Student Conduct/ TigerLore Handbook](#)

### **CONDUCT STANDARDS**

#### **Student Code of Conduct, University Policies and/or Local, State or Federal Laws**

The violation of established policies or procedures and/or local, state, or federal laws may constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and University policies. Such violations may include conduct occurring off-campus when students are participating, attending, or in some manner connected to a University-related activity.

Violations of the Student Code of Conduct and University policies will be referred to the Division of Student Life for disciplinary action. If the violation also violates Program policy for professionalism, the student may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for disciplinary action in place of or in addition to the Division of Student Life.

#### **Campus Standards**

Rather than publish in this handbook a complete and detailed code of the laws, rules, and regulations that students are required to follow, the University and Program declare the intention to uphold all federal, state and municipal laws applicable and expects all students to abide by the Student Code of Conduct and University policies. At the time of admission, each student agrees to follow such standards. Accordingly, any conduct not consistent with responsible and/or lawful behavior may be considered cause for the University to take appropriate administrative, disciplinary, or legal action.

Additionally, the University acknowledges and actively upholds the adult status of each student with all the rights pertaining thereto and, in accordance with that status, considers each student responsible for his/her actions.

University policies, regulations, and student rights are published in the Tiger Lore Student Handbook and available online: [Student Conduct/ TigerLore Handbook](#)

## **Honor Code/Academic Integrity**

The Honor Code at the University of the Pacific calls upon each student to exhibit a high degree of maturity, responsibility, and personal integrity. All students are required to sign an honor pledge appropriate to the objectives and relationships of the University. Students are expected to:

- act honestly in all matters;
- actively encourage academic integrity;
- discourage any form of cheating or dishonesty by others; and
- inform the instructor and appropriate University administrator if she or he has a reasonable and good faith belief and substantial evidence that a violation of the Honor Code has occurred.

If the violation also violates Program policy for professionalism, the student may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for disciplinary action instead of, or in addition to, the Division of Student Life. If a student is found responsible, it will be documented as part of her or his permanent academic record. A student may receive a range of penalties, including failure of an assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University. [Pacific Honor Code](#)

**University General Guidelines**

The Office of Communications reserves the right to review and approve profile photos and graphic and identity elements of any University-affiliated site.

**Profile Photo:** The "P" graphic is reserved for social media accounts administered by the Office of Communications.

**Pacific seal:** The seal should not be used as an identity element on social media sites.

**Naming:** Refer to the university as "University of the Pacific" or "Pacific." "UOP" is not an authorized variation on the university's name.

**Hashtags** Use the general hashtag #UOPacific where appropriate.

Groups that are not officially connected to the University may not use Pacific logos or wordmarks on their social media sites, including student organizations that are not recognized by the Office of Student Life. Members of the Pacific community are expected to act with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights, privileges, privacy, and property of others when using social media.

**[Pacific Social Media Guidelines](#)****Registered Student Organizations**

Social media accounts that represent registered student organizations should be included in the University's social media directory. To list an account in the directory, complete the social media directory form: [Student Association Social Media Registration](#)

User names and passwords should be available to an advisor or other college administrative staff member or an advisor, or administrative staff member should be made an administrator on social media accounts of recognized student organizations.

Recognized student organizations are important ambassadors of the University and are expected to represent Pacific responsibly in all of their activities and communications, including social media.

**Personal Accounts**

Each of us is responsible for what we post on our personal accounts and the accounts of others. Our reputations are best served when we make ethical and career-conscious choices about how we use social media. We should be cognizant that if we identify ourselves as members of the Pacific community on our accounts, our posts and images reflect on the institution.

## **Program Social Media Policy and Guidelines**

Social media are internet-based tools designed to create a highly accessible information highway. They are powerful and far-reaching means of communication that, as a physician assistant student at the University of the Pacific, can have a significant impact on your professional reputation and status. Examples include, but are not limited to, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, SnapChat, TikTok, and Instagram.

Students are liable for anything they post to social media sites, and the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines must be maintained as if they were interacting in person. The following guidelines have been developed to outline appropriate standards of conduct for direct personal communications, social media posts, and on-line communication, for your future and the reputation of our program:

1. Take responsibility and use good judgment. Incomplete, inaccurate, threatening, harassing posts or use of profanity on postings are strictly prohibited, including but are not limited to written posts and emoji symbols.
2. It is inappropriate to use social media sites as a venue for venting. Written or photographic posts directed toward institutional or clinical faculty/staff as well as environmental surroundings are strictly prohibited. Example: A student posts on Facebook about his frustration with a course instructor (or preceptor) after he is given feedback. The instructor is not identified by name but is identified by title (my course instructor, or my preceptor), with negative or derogatory comments. Another example is posting photographs of facilities or any component within a facility with or without comments.
3. Negative or derogatory posts that may affect the Program's ability to operate are strictly prohibited.
4. Think before posting something as the internet and email archives can permanently affect your reputation.
5. Anonymous posts will be thoroughly researched to identify the corresponding IP address.
6. Social networking during class, program activities, and clinical hours is strictly prohibited
7. HIPAA laws apply to all social networking, so it is the utmost priority to protect patient privacy by not sharing information or photographs. Example: A student posts heartfelt concern on her Facebook page for a patient she is caring for. The patient is not identified by name, MR number, or date of birth. However, the type of treatment, prognosis, and the time of treatment are provided, and/or personal characteristics of the patient are described making the patient identifiable.
8. Protect your privacy by using privacy settings to prevent outsiders from seeing your personal information, as you may be held liable for postings from other individuals as well
9. If you state a connection to the University or the PA program, you must identify

- yourself, your role in the program, and use a disclaimer stating that your views are that of your own and do not reflect the views of the University or the PA program
10. All laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material must be followed
  11. Consult the Associate Program Director or the Program Director if you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of social networking use.

Failure to follow the above-stated guidelines may be considered a breach of appropriate professional behavior and subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from the Program.

The Program reserves the right to review social media before admission to the Program and throughout enrollment.

## SECTION 9 PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### **Introduction**

This section contains policies and requirements that govern academic performance and professional conduct for all University of the Pacific Physician Assistant students who are enrolled in any phase of the Program. These policies are unique to the Program and are designed to promote standards for academic competence, professional behavior and integrity, conduct, and personal responsibility necessary for practice as a physician assistant. They represent the parameters of achievement and behavior the Program faculty expects of its students as future health practitioners who will be serving the public and consumer. It is the responsibility of all students to be knowledgeable about Program policies. The policies will be applied to all aspects of the student's academic progress and conduct for as long as the student is enrolled in the Program. Continuation Program enrollment implies student agreement to comply with all provisions listed in this handbook and any future amendments, without needing an additional attestation page.

The Program has a responsibility to safeguard the patient and the public by educating competent physician assistant students. As such, the Program maintains the right to refuse to matriculate or graduate a student, as well as the right to remove a student from a clinical experience or rotation who is deemed by the faculty to be academically, clinically or professionally incompetent, or otherwise unfit or unsuited for continued enrollment in the Program. Additionally, students are required to undergo criminal background and toxicology screening prior to and during enrollment. Negative findings on either may result in dismissal or rescinding of an acceptance offer.

The Program-specific policies are in addition to and might be more stringent than, University of the Pacific policies. Please read this section carefully and thoroughly. Students are expected to refer to these policies as needed.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

#### **Attendance**

The Program requires students to be available to attend class and instructional activities from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Monday through Friday regardless of the posted class schedule. Educational experiences at the anatomy lab may be scheduled until 9:00 pm. Interprofessional educational and practice is vital for professional development. Community related activities are required and may occur on the weekend. Due to the nature of the Program, courses, lectures, and exams may need to be moved on short notice. Students are expected to check the Program calendar frequently. Occasionally, students may be required to attend educational events on the weekends. Should this be required, a notification will be provided in advance. Additionally, students may be required to attend remediation or retest on academic content during the inter-semester



breaks. Students may also be required to attend disciplinary meetings during the inter-semester break.

The Program's curriculum is designed to provide the medical education and professionalism training required to be a competent physician assistant (PA). Reliability and punctuality are expectations of professionals in the workplace. Attendance at all classes is considered an aspect of professional responsibility and individual dependability. The Program is fast-paced and builds upon previous instruction. In addition, class discussions and other interactions aid in the development of the PA role. Important information may only be presented once; therefore, the Program requires students to attend all lectures (in-person or remote-synchronous), laboratory activities, clinics, and other scheduled functions. Attendance includes arriving on time and remaining until the class, clinic, or another function has ended. Since attendance is required of all students, formal attendance will be taken. Attendance during laboratory class sessions is required until completion of faculty instruction. Once faculty instruction has completed, students may choose to depart lab sessions early, unless otherwise instructed. Students will be required to "sign out" before departure.

### **Tardiness**

Punctuality and attendance are markers of professional behaviors and attitudes. Tardiness, early departures, and absence from classes are not conducive to optimal learning for any student in the Program. It is your responsibility and an expectation of professional behavior to arrive on time, be prepared for class on time (with your gear stowed before class begins), and remain for the entire class period.

Arriving on time demonstrates respect for instructors and peers. Tardiness in the didactic phase of training has been linked to tardiness and other unprofessional behaviors in the clinical phase of training and as a licensed clinician. Therefore, repeated tardiness is considered a professionalism issue. Repetitive tardiness or early departure may result in a referral to the SPC for disciplinary action.

Note: Most state licensure boards request information on student professionalism issues on the official program completion verification paperwork. The Program must document when a student has been cited for unprofessional behavior. Additionally, this information is often requested by credentialing agencies, and therefore, it may impact your ability to obtain employment clearance.

Late students are fully responsible for the material covered during the time missed.

The Program tracks tardiness across all courses. Two episodes of tardiness shall result in a meeting with the student's faculty advisor. Three episodes of tardiness shall result in an unexcused absence. Two unexcused absences may result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee.

## **Absences**

While it is the Program policy that students attend all classes, labs, and other Program-related functions, the Program understands a student may have exceptional events that might keep them from classes or Program activities. Students are not permitted to take “vacations” during instructional times while enrolled in the program. Students are responsible for all material and examinations missed during their time away. Assignments that are due during an approved absence must be submitted before departure unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with the course coordinator. Refer to [Examination Protocol](#) for information regarding missed examinations.

Students in the clinical year must attend all rotations and adhere to the rotation’s schedule. Absences during the clinical year are addressed separately in the Clinical Education Handbook.

## **Planned Absences**

Planned absence requests will be submitted to the student’s faculty advisor. The faculty advisor shall determine if an absence is approved as excused or is unexcused.

## **Unplanned Absences**

Illness and family emergencies (i.e., not routine activities that can be scheduled to accommodate a PA student’s education and career) are generally the only acceptable reasons for unplanned absences.

## **Program Notification of Unplanned Absences**

Students are required to notify the Program of any absence and the reasons for the absence via email ([PAprogram@pacific.edu](mailto:PAprogram@pacific.edu)) or phone (916.739.7365) if the absence is anticipated 24 hours in advance. If 24 hours advance notice is not feasible (e.g., the student got sick during the night), notification by phone and/or email as soon as possible is acceptable. Sending messages through classmates is not an acceptable form of notification.

## **Excused/Unexcused Absences**

The Program monitors student absences. Two unexcused absences may result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee. Students with excessive absences, excused or unexcused, may be referred to the Student Progress Committee for disciplinary action.

## **Dress Code**

Students must maintain a neat and clean appearance befitting students attending a professional school. While casual attire is acceptable during didactic training, professional attire may be required for certain situations. Special clothing may be required for specific courses. Scrubs and close-toed shoes are to be worn in the anatomy lab. Hair should be neatly groomed, and students must be conscious of personal hygiene.

Fragrances (perfume/cologne or aftershave) should not be worn. Nails should be short and clean. Clothing having caricatures, messages, symbols, etc. that can be construed based on societal norms to be vulgar, offensive, or contribute to the creation of a hostile learning environment is considered to be unacceptable attire. Such attire demonstrates inappropriate professional judgment that is subject to review and action by the Program.

### **Dress Code for Clinical Activities**

On clinical rotations, students must maintain a professional appearance. Expectations include clean, pressed, conservative attire and good personal hygiene, including short and clean nails. Male students should wear collared shirts with ties. Female students should wear slacks/skirts with dress shirts or dresses. Closed-toed shoes are required. Specialty rotations or specific training sites may designate other prescribed clothing such as scrubs and/or tennis shoes. Any clothing, hair color, fragrances, jewelry, or body piercing that may cause concern with affiliated faculty, hospitals, or patients should be avoided. Students may be asked to change their appearance to conform to the dress code of rotational sites. Short student white coats with University issued identification badges are required.

### **Participation in Clinical Activities**

Students are not allowed to participate in clinical activities, including observation, as a representative of the University of the Pacific, University of the Pacific Physician Assistant Program, or as a physician assistant student at a clinical site during enrollment unless the experience is authorized and arranged by the Program. Participation in unauthorized clinical experiences, while enrolled, is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the Program.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **Expectations of Students**

Students are responsible for their own learning and behavior, the parameters of which include, but are not limited to:

- Abide by the Honor Code at the University of the Pacific
- Follow Program policies as outlined in this handbook
- Preparedness. Laptop computer. Smart-Phone with Cellular and/or Wi-Fi abilities
- Punctuality and attendance
- Lecture/Lab attendance and engagement in active learning
- Participation in group discussions and group/team projects and presentations
- Timely completion of course assignments
- Participation in interactive educational activities, including procedures on each other

## Distance Learning Expectations

- Students must be in a private space and plan for uninterrupted time
- Students should do their best to be in an area with a strong internet signal
- Students must use a laptop to participate in class. Cellphone use reserved for emergencies
- Students are expected to be actively participating for duration of educational session
- No pausing live feed, taking unscheduled breaks or leaving the educational session early
- Keep your microphone muted until called upon
- Keep camera on, unless strains bandwidth and audio quality
- Mechanism for asking questions is at the discretion of the lecturer

## Use of Wireless Devices in the Classroom

Laptops, tablets/iPads, and smart-phones may be used in the classroom at the discretion of the course coordinator for educational purposes only. The use of these and other electronic equipment in a manner not consistent with classroom topics often creates unacceptable disruptions when used during class. Instructors will notify students if electronic equipment is required for an in-class activity.

Disruptions in class are considered a professionalism issue and will be addressed individually by the course coordinator or referred to the SPC for disciplinary action. The following activities are examples of disruptions:

- Texting
- Cell phone use
- Web surfing
- Checking email
- Playing games

## Recording of Lectures

### Remote Curriculum Delivery

All live remote class presentations and discussions during this course may be recorded. As a student in this class, please note that your participation in live class discussions may therefore also be recorded. By participating in a live class discussion, you are giving your consent to this recording. Access to these recordings will be limited to faculty and the students enrolled in the class and to assist enrolled students who cannot attend the live session. Lecture recordings will be available via the CANVAS learning management system.

### On-Campus Curriculum Delivery

The Program may record live class presentations and discussions to assist students with knowledge acquisition and concept clarification. Recording of lectures is solely at the discretion of the instructor of record and lecturer. Lecture recordings will be available via the CANVAS learning management system.

## Personal Recording

Permission to individually record lectures is solely at the discretion of the instructor of record and lecturer unless the recording is a University-approved accommodation. Otherwise, prior approval must be obtained. The instructor of record's approval is voluntary and as such a privilege, which may be withdrawn at any time. Group discussions and exam reviews may not be recorded.

## Intellectual Property

Students will be provided copies (electronic or printed) of instructional lecture materials for individual student use only. Such materials are the intellectual property of the University. Distribution or alteration of original lecture content without prior approval of the lecturer constitutes academic dishonesty.

## COMMUNICATION POLICIES

### Communication with the Program and the University

Students must retain a means of viable phone communication with the Program. Voicemail systems must remain active and able to receive messages. Outgoing messages must include your name in a professional tone. Unprofessional ringtones, wait-time tones, or ring back tones are a violation of the professional code of conduct and may result in disciplinary action if not changed.

Students are assigned a University (u.pacific.edu) email address. PA Program and University personnel will only respond to correspondence from the student's official University email address. Forwarding your University email to another email account is discouraged. These accounts can lack the security, capability, or sufficient space necessary for downloading important attachments.

The following are additional information for email communication:

- Students are expected to check their University email accounts at least once every 48 hours
- Students are expected to respond to Program emails within 48 hours or the first business day following a holiday
- Email responses and forwarded emails should include the original message, when appropriate
- Students are responsible for maintaining access to their email account if the student moves during their time in the educational program
- Signature line requirements:

Joe Smith, PA-S  
University of the Pacific  
PA Program/Class of 2023  
123.456.7890

## **Change of Address, E-mail Address, or Phone Number**

Students are required to keep the Program, and the Registrar informed of any changes to a mailing address, e-mail address, or phone numbers within one business day of the change.

To make changes for official University records, go to <http://insidepacific.pacific.edu> and access Academic Services under the “Academic” tab.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

Student advising is an important component of the educational process. Regular meetings with advisors keep communication channels open and enable mentoring relationships to develop. Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. The Program has an open-door policy allowing students to consult with faculty as desired for academic, psychological, and/or psychosocial issues. Students may also self-refer to University student support services for academic, psychological, and/or psychosocial issues. Students are required to meet with their faculty advisor at least once each semester to review and address academic, psychological, psychosocial, and professionalism issues. Scheduling this meeting is the student’s responsibility. When possible, time will be allocated in the schedule to allow for routine advisor meetings. Non-routine advising appointments can be requested by students at any time, under the Program’s open-door policy. Additionally, faculty may request additional meetings with a student for academic, psychological, psychosocial, or professional issues. Advising is particularly important when a student encounters academic or clinical difficulty. Therefore, students are advised to meet with a faculty advisor or course instructor in the event of an exam or course failure.

Psychological support of enrolled students is important to the Program and University. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize the University’s counseling services, located on the Sacramento and Stockton campuses. Online and after-hours resources are also available. The University counseling services are adept at helping students with both personal and academic psychological issues, including testing anxiety and stress management. Students are advised to contact the counseling office early in the educational experience for support and guidance. The Program may also initiate or recommend student referrals for observed academic, psychological, and/or psychosocial issues.

The Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) department {209-946-2315, ext. 2}.

<https://www.pacific.edu/campus-life/student-services/counseling-and-psychological-services.html>

**Crisis Intervention/Psychological Emergencies:** During school hours: Call the number above and ask for an emergency appointment or call 911. After hours: 209-946-2315,

extension 2, option 4 – this will transfer you to a psychologist for an immediate consultation or call 911.

Additional information regarding University student support services can be found on the University website.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Employment**

The Program strongly discourages outside employment. The Program curriculum is rigorous and requires the presence of the student at all classes and rotations. Many hours are committed to classroom work with additional hours dedicated to self-study. If a student feels that it is necessary to work while in the Program, the student should inform his/her faculty advisor of this. Program expectations, assignments, schedules, deadlines, and responsibilities will not be altered to adjust or accommodate working students. It is expected that employment will not interfere with a student's learning experience.

Students may work within the institution while participating in the Federal Work-Study Program as long as such work will not interfere in their academic pursuits. Students must not be employed by or be required to perform clerical and administrative work for the Program. Also, students must not be substituted for clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical experiences. Furthermore, no student will substitute or function as instructional faculty or as the primary instructor for any component of the curriculum.

### **Student Service Work**

To avoid practices that might conflict with the professional and educational objectives of the Program and to avoid practices in which students are substituted for regular staff, the following shall be in effect concerning service work:

1. Students may not be hired as employees for any private or public practice, clinic, or institution to perform medical services during any time they are part of the PA Program under the sponsorship of that specific practice, clinic, or institution. An example of this would be if a student were working at a clinic on the weekends and a student there during the week.
2. Students may not take the responsibility or place of qualified staff.
3. Students may not be given any payments, stipends, or other remuneration for medical services performed as part of the PA Program.

### **Volunteer Activities**

Community service is an important component of the physician assistant philosophy. Volunteer work shall not interfere with a student's academic responsibilities or be conducted at the same time, a scheduled classroom or clinical instruction unless prior Program approval has been granted. Students are still required to adhere to all curricular requirements. Students who wish to volunteer in health-related extracurricular activities

(i.e., health tent at a race) must not represent themselves as a physician assistant student or as a representative of the University of the Pacific Physician Assistant Program.

### **Student Activities Related to the PA Profession**

Leadership development is an essential component of the educational process. It may require that students attend relevant off-campus activities during class/clinical time. Off-campus activities must be in accordance with students' professional development. It is the responsibility of the student or approved student organization to coordinate the event and receive approval from the Program. Students requesting permission to attend an off-campus conference or program must be in good academic standing. Students must obtain Program approval from their Faculty Advisor to attend any off-campus events. Students attending off-campus events are responsible for making up any missed classes/laboratories or other course assignments. Assignments that are due during the approved absence must be submitted before departure unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with the course coordinator.

Refer to the examination policy for information regarding missed examinations. Attendance at these events will be the fiduciary duty of the student.



**COURSE GRADING**

At the end of each course, a grade for each student will be submitted to the Registrar. The Program uses the following grading system. The Program does not round grades nor utilize a (+/-) system.

**Grading Scale**

A = 90.00 – 100

B = 80.00 – 89.99

C = 70.00 – 79.99

D = 65.00 – 69.99

F = < 65.00

W = Withdrawal = Authorized withdrawal from courses after the prescribed period.

I = Incomplete = Inability to complete assigned coursework within the term.

**Didactic Course Requirements**

- An overall course grade of 70% or higher, while maintaining a cumulative GPA of 2.75
- A passing score on a majority of the exams and major assessments, on the first attempt.

Failure to meet any of the above requirements will result in failure of the course, referral to the Student Progress Committee, and may result in placement on academic probation (see the section on [Probation](#)). If a student is already on academic probation, the course failure will meet the criteria for dismissal (see the section on [Criteria for Dismissal](#)).

A student meeting the criteria for course failure before the end of the term must continue to attend all classes and complete all assignments and exams to be eligible for future remediation of the course.

**Clinical (Rotation) Course Requirements**

Please refer to the Clinical Education Handbook for further information.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE/WITHDRAWAL****Voluntary Leave of Absence**

Voluntary leave of absence (LOA) is a form of temporary program withdrawal. The Program advises all students considering an LOA to speak with the Associate Program Director or their faculty advisor. Students requesting a LOA must take a LOA from all

courses; a part-time enrollment option is not available. An LOA can be requested for medical or personal reasons. To be eligible for an LOA, a student must be in good academic standing. The LOA request must be submitted in writing to the program BEFORE initiating the withdrawal process with the university. Generally, LOA requests are submitted to the Office of the Registrar prior to the beginning of a semester. If this is not possible, the Program requires that all LOA requests be submitted a minimum of two weeks before the first course final examination for the semester. LOA requests will be reviewed by the SPC prior to acceptance. The Program reserves the right to implement criteria for reinstatement to the program and may require a student to restart the program.

The university does not have a formal LOA process. Students are considered either enrolled or not enrolled. Students who intend to take an LOA must initiate the withdrawal process in the Office of the Registrar. The withdrawal date used by Financial Aid for return in the Return of Title IV Aid calculation and the effective date used by Student Accounts for tuition refunds are based on the date of your notification to the Office of the Registrar. Additional policies govern requests made during the semester, and the timing of such will affect housing, financial aid, tuition charged, health insurance, and progress toward the degree. Courses the student was registered for after the last day to drop appear on that student's transcript with the notation "W" but do not count in the units earned or in the calculation of the grade point average.

An official withdrawal from the university is the termination of rights and privileges offered to currently enrolled students.

### **Medical Leave of Absence**

There are times when a student may require time away from the Program and University due to physical or psychological illness. Under these circumstances, a student may request a Medical LOA/Withdrawal from the Office of the Registrar. With written consent from the student, the medical or mental health provider providing treatment will provide written confirmation that the LOA is necessary due to the student's health. Documentation must be provided to the University **and** the Program within 14 days of the request for Medical Leave. The University may request a review of the medical or mental health documentation by a University healthcare professional or other appropriately trained professional identified by the University. This consultation may include a conversation between the treating provider and the designated University healthcare professional or representative. Students returning from a Medical Leave of Absence must be able to meet the Program Technical Standards.

### **Returning from a Leave of Absence**

The Student Progress Committee (SPC) will review each student's ability to meet the Program Technical Standards. The SPC will also evaluate the student's preparedness to resume participation in the Program's curriculum. The SPC may recommend a student

restart the program. Additional tuition and/or fees may be applied upon returning from an LOA.

Students returning from a Medical LOA will be required to provide the Program and University with a written “Statement of Readiness to Return” from the healthcare providing treatment before submitting a Petition to Return.

### **Withdrawal from Program**

Students who intend to withdraw from the University must initiate the process in the Office of the Registrar.

The withdrawal date used by Financial Aid for Return in the return of Title IV Aid calculation and the effective date used by Student Accounts for tuition refunds are based on the date of your notification to the Office of the Registrar. An official withdrawal from the University is the termination of rights and privileges offered to currently enrolled students; therefore students who withdraw may not use any University facilities. Students must immediately vacate University housing.

Students who permanently withdraw from the Program, and later desire to return, must complete the same application and interview process as other applicants during a subsequent admissions cycle.

### **Suspension from the University**

Suspension is an involuntary temporary separation from the University for a specified period, with or without conditions that must be satisfied before the reinstatement of student status is permitted. This enrollment standing may be implemented by the University or the Program dependent on policy violations. The record of suspension shall appear on the student’s academic transcript. The student cannot participate in any University activities and will be barred from entering the campus unless otherwise notified in writing. Suspended time does not count against any time limit requirements for completion of a degree. Suspension may be converted to dismissal if it is determined that the specified conditions have not been satisfied. The SPC will also evaluate the student’s preparedness to resume participation in the Program’s curriculum, including the student’s ability to meet the Program Technical Standards. The SPC may be denied reentry or recommend a student restart the program.

## SECTION 11      STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

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### METHODS OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT/EVALUATIONS

#### **Evaluation of Student Performance**

The modalities listed below are used to evaluate student performance in the PA Program.

- Written examinations and quizzes (subject-specific and comprehensive)
- Class/Lab/Seminar assignments, papers, and oral presentations
- Class/Lab/Seminar attendance and/or participation
- Case presentations/activities (individual and team-based)
- Professionalism assessments
  - Practical examinations
  - Objective Structured Clinical Evaluations (OSCEs)
  - Simulation encounters
  - Clinical site visits
- Clinical year assignments
- Typhon patient tracking
- Academic faculty observations
- Clinical Preceptor (or designee) observations/evaluations

#### **ASSESSMENT GRADING DURING DIDACTIC SEMESTERS**

Failure of any three (3) exams or major assessments (written and/or practical) within a single course may result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee and placement on Academic Probation.

Failure of three (3) or more exams or major assessments (written and/or practical) across multiple courses within the academic term may result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee and placement on Academic Probation.

#### **Written Examinations**

A score of 70% or greater is required to pass each evaluative assessment. If a student fails an assessment, the following will apply:

- Completion of a retake exam during the Retesting Period
  - A score of 70% or greater is required to pass the retake exam.
  - If a score of 70% or greater is achieved on the retake exam, the recorded score is 70%.
- Failure to obtain a minimum score of 70% shall result in:
  - Failure of the exam
  - The recorded score is the higher of the two scores

- A “Program Warning”
- Students are advised to meet with the student’s faculty advisor and/or course instructor of record (IOR).

### **Practical Examinations**

A score of 70% or greater is required to pass each evaluative assessment. If a student fails an assessment, the following will apply:

- Completion of a retake practical
  - A score of 70% or greater is required to pass the retake exam
  - If a score of 70% or greater is achieved on the retake exam, the recorded score is 70%.
- Failure to obtain a minimum score of 70%:
  - Failure of the exam
  - The recorded score is the higher of the two scores
  - A “Program Warning”
  - Students are advised to meet with the student’s faculty advisor and/or IOR.

### **Objective Structured Clinical Evaluations (OSCEs)**

A score of 70% or greater is required to pass each OSCE. The opportunity to retake an OSCE is not always offered. If a student fails an OSCE, and a retake is offered, the following will apply:

- Completion of a retake practical
  - A score of 70% or greater is required to pass the retake exam
  - If a score of 70% or greater is achieved on the retake exam, the recorded score is 70%.
- Failure to obtain a minimum score of 70%:
  - Failure of the exam
  - The recorded score is the higher of the two scores
  - A “Program Warning”
  - Students are advised to meet with the student’s faculty advisor and/or IOR.

### **Didactic Year Comprehensive Exams**

At the completion of the didactic year, all students will be required to complete a comprehensive written exam and OSCE. These exams will cover material from all didactic courses. Students must pass the Didactic Comprehensive Examinations before starting clinical rotations. A score of 70% or greater is required to pass the Comprehensive Exams. If a student fails, the following will apply:

- Completion of a retake exam during the Retesting Period
  - A score of 70% or greater is required to pass the retake exam

- If a score of 70% or greater is achieved on the retake exam, the recorded score is 70%.
- Failure to obtain a minimum score of 70%:
  - Failure of the exam
  - The recorded score is the higher of the two scores
  - Inability to progress to clinical rotations
  - Remediation required

Failure of a Retake Didactic Comprehensive Exam shall result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee and a delayed start to the clinical curriculum, which in turn will delay a student's completion of the Program and may result in additional tuition and/or fees.

### ASSESSMENT GRADING DURING CLINICAL SEMESTERS

Please refer to the Clinical Education Handbook for further information regarding rotation and clinical year course grading.

### PROGRAM COMPLETION SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

During the four (4) months before Program completion, all students will be required to complete summative assessments. Students must pass the summative assessments before program completion. Summative assessments include a written examination, OSCE, capstone project, technical skills testing, and a team-based learning activity. A score of 80% or greater is required to pass the Summative Assessments. If a student fails, the following will apply:

- Completion of a retake assessment during the Retesting Period
  - A score of 80% or greater is required to pass the retake assessment
  - If a score of 80% or greater is achieved on the retake assessment, the recorded score is 80%.
- Failure to obtain a minimum score of 80%:
  - Failure of the assessment
  - The recorded score is the higher of the two scores
  - SPC referral for remediation
  - Delay in Program completion

Failure of a Retake Summative Comprehensive Assessment(s) shall result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee. This may, in turn, delay a student's completion of the Program and may result in additional tuition and/or fees.

## SECTION 12 EXAM PROTOCOL AND EXAM INTEGRITY

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### EXAMINATION PROTOCOL

The following are the procedures regarding the administration of an examination. Both the student and proctor are responsible for adhering to the examination protocol. Exams may be given outside of the regularly scheduled class time. Check your schedule for dates and times.

Students are responsible for the course's instructional objectives, whether or not they are covered in lectures. Exam questions may be from the text, lectures, and/or handouts. All questions will be based on both the general course and any specific lecture objectives.

#### **Attendance**

- Attendance and on-time arrival are required for all scheduled examinations unless the student has obtained prior approval. Students arriving late, by no more than 15 minutes, must take the exam as scheduled within the time remaining for the scheduled exam period. For students arriving greater than 15 minutes late, the determination of the student's ability to take the exam is at the discretion of the course instructor of record or the proctor.

#### **Exam Download**

- Students receive an email notification when exams are available for download. Students must download an exam a **minimum of 1 hour** before the scheduled exam start time. To minimize technological difficulties, the Program recommends downloading the exam the night before.
- Delayed initiation of an exam due to failure of the student to download the exam as instructed may result in reduced time for exam completion.

#### **Exam Administration – In Person**

- Students must stow all belongings **prior** to the scheduled exam start time.
- Students receive the password to access an examination at the scheduled start time for the exam.
- Students must have the examination software open and ready to receive the password prior to the scheduled start time to avoid delay in exam administration. Failure to do so may result in reduced time to complete the examination.
- Students are required to follow the instructions of the testing administrator/proctor at all time.
- No talking is allowed once an examination starts
- The Program reserves the right to assign seating
- Earplugs may be used and will be provided. Earphones/earbuds are prohibited
- Pencils and scratch paper are allowed for written examinations only, and both must be returned to the proctor at the completion of the exam. Placement of the student's name on the scratch paper is required. Should other writing materials be

required, all materials must be returned to the exam proctor at the completion of the exam. No outside writing materials are permitted.

- Textbooks, notes, study aids, coats, and personal possessions must be placed at a site away from the student testing area
- All electronic devices, including laptops, tablets, phones/smartphones, and smartwatches, must be turned off, stowed, and kept away from the student testing area. This rule applies to the entire testing period, including any breaks.
- Hats/caps may not be worn during any examination except for the wearing of a headpiece for religious reasons. Any student wearing a hat will be asked to remove it. Failure to comply with this or any other reasonable request of a proctor will result in the immediate dismissal of the student from the examination and may result in a zero (0) for the exam
- Food and drinks are not allowed during exams and must be stowed with other belongings. An exception may be made at the discretion of the exam proctor in extreme circumstances. This request must be made before the exam day.
- If a restroom break is desired, students must inform the proctor and temporarily turn in the exam before leaving the room. Students will be required to sign out/in of the exam. Only one student at a time will be allowed to exit the room. Exam time continues to run while a student is out of the room.
- In consideration of other classmates, students must quietly leave the classroom upon completion of the exam. Students may not return until the exam is complete for all students
- Students are required to upload the computer-based exam(s) before exiting the room.

### **Exam Administration – Remote**

- Students are responsible for selecting a reduced distraction environment for the exam.
- Noise reduction devices (head phones, ear plugs) are prohibited.
- Students must stow all belongings **prior** to the scheduled exam start time.
- Students receive the password to access an examination at the scheduled start time for the exam.
- Students must have the examination software open and ready to receive the password prior to the scheduled start time to avoid delay in exam administration. Failure to do so may result in reduced time to complete the examination.
- Students must ensure the computer camera is uncovered.
- Examination software will be used to lock a students computer preventing access to information stored on the hard drive and prevent the running of any additional programs in the background. Keystroke and program analysis is monitored and reviewed during the audit process.
- Students are required to follow the instructions of the testing administrator/proctor at all time.



## **Clinical Year Exam Administration – Remote**

- Refer to the Clinical Education Handbook

*Violations of the Exam protocol shall result in a referral to the Student Progress Committee.*

## **Time Provided for Written Exams**

Consistent with timing used by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE), the Program utilizes a one (1) minute per question time allotment. Timing for exams containing medication calculations, prescription writing, and short answer type questions is determined at the discretion of the course coordinators.

## **Retesting Failed Exams**

Should a student fail a written examination, the student must complete a retest on the material. Exams must be taken during the Retest Period or at the course instructor's discretion. Students are responsible to contacting the Testing Specialist to schedule the retake examination based on the Specialist's availability.

## **Testing Periods**

Testing occurs on an ongoing basis throughout the semester. Students should expect to have multiple assessments within a single day and/or week. The Program is cognizant of student workload and monitors the assessment schedule. The Retest Period is within three (3) days after scores are released. The Retest Period may be extended at the Program's discretion. Exams occurring in the Retest Period may utilize a different format than the original exam. Students may not postpone or request a modification in a testing or retesting schedule to accommodate for other previously scheduled examinations.

## **Missed Exams**

Should a student miss a written examination, regardless of the reason, the missed examination must be taken within three (3) days of returning to classes or at the course instructor's discretion. The student is responsible for contacting the Testing Specialist to schedule the examination. The maximum score recorded for any make-up exam is 70%, regardless of the actual exam score. There are no make-up exams for OSCEs. Should a student miss an OSCE exam, a grade of zero (0) will be recorded.

## **In-Class Quizzes**

The Program utilizes in-class quizzes for formative and summative assessment of student preparation for class. Therefore, there are **no make-up quizzes**. Students who arrive within the first five minutes of class will be required to take the quiz, but will not

receive any additional time to complete it. Students arriving more than five minutes late to class are not allowed to complete the quiz, and a zero will be recorded.

### **Exam Review**

Individual student reviews of any examination are prohibited. The examination software allows for a limited review upon exam submission. A general review of difficult examination material is at the discretion of the course instructor of record.

### **Exam Question Inquiry**

Students may provide comments and feedback about specific questions on a written examination at the completion of the exam. Comments must be in writing and submitted at the time of the exam. The Program will supply paper for comments at the start of the exam. Papers must be submitted with the exam. The Program will review submitted comments prior to the finalization of exam grades. Placement of the student's name on the paper is required.

### **Examination Grading**

The Program retains sole authority for the finalization of grades. Prior to the finalization of grades, the Program shall review exam statistics. The Program reserves the right to make grading modification until grades are finalized. The timing for finalization of grades varies upon exam type.

- Written examinations: 2 business days
- Standardized patient encounters or OSCEs: 5 business days

**The Program reserves the right to modify the Examination Policy at any time.**

## **EXAMINATION INTEGRITY POLICY**

Exam integrity is vital to the assessment of the academic knowledge of students. It is, therefore, essential that academic and professional standards be maintained at all times to ensure fairness and validity of exams. The practice of medicine requires the highest standards of personal and social responsibility. These standards should be fostered during your professional training as well as throughout practice. Exams are given with these principles in mind.

Students accept responsibility for these high standards by neither receiving nor providing unauthorized assistance during exams, by not using unauthorized materials during an examination nor condoning these actions by others. Further, students will not copy the exam material, as this is a violation of the honor code. [Pacific Student Conduct](#)

The Program is in alignment with the NCCPA Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (“PANCE”) and Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) policies regarding examination integrity. All examinations, examination components, including examination grading sheets or station content for practical/OSCE exams, will remain confidential and in possession of the Program.

Students are not to discuss the content of any exam. Do not discuss practical exam or OSCE encounters. Although it is common for students to want to discuss the exam (written or practical) content they felt were hard or that they might have missed, do not do so. This is in violation of the NCCPA Principles. To do so may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Program.

Violation of exam integrity may be defined as any method noted in the NCCPA or PAEA Policies, or by any other form of cheating, such as but not limited to, obtaining a copy of or reconstruction from memory any portion of a current or prior exam(s); question/checklist/OSCE content or concepts (this includes recalling concepts of examination questions and generation of “practice” questions/exams using the recalled information); getting help from another student during the exam; describing exam content, passages, or graphics from the exam; identifying terms or concepts contained in the exam; sharing answers; referring others to information seen during the exam; reconstructing a list of topics on the test; and discussing exam questions, answers, passages, graphics, or topics.

### **NCCPA Policy Regarding Exam Integrity**

The content of the NCCPA Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination ("PANCE"), and each of its items, is proprietary and strictly confidential, and the unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion, or receipt of any examination question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral or other form of communication, including but not limited to e-mailing, copying or printing of electronic files, and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, before, during, or after an examination, is strictly prohibited. In addition to constituting irregular behavior subject to disciplinary action such as revocation of certification, revocation of eligibility for future certification, and disciplinary fines, such activities violate the NCCPA proprietary rights, including copyrights, and may subject violators to legal action resulting in monetary damages.

### [NCCPA Examination Policies and Procedures](#)

### **NCCPA Principles of Conduct Regarding Examinations and Exam Content**

Certified or certifying physician assistants shall protect the integrity of the certification and recertification process. They shall not engage in cheating or other dishonest behavior that violates exam security (including unauthorized reproducing, distributing, displaying, discussing, sharing or otherwise misusing test question(s), any part of test question(s) or any question concept) before, during or after an NCCPA examination.

As noted in the NCCPA Principles of Conduct above, discussion of PANCE/PANRE exam questions is considered a breach of the Principles. The Program also adheres to this principle for program examinations, practical examinations, checklists, and OSCEs.

Students agree to honor the legal rights of the Program, University, NCCPA, and PAEA and the integrity of the student testing process. Students will not discuss or disclose any student assessment content orally, in writing, on the internet, or through any other medium. Students agree not to copy, reproduce, adapt, disclose or transmit exams, exam content or exam concepts, whole or in part, or assist anyone else in doing the same, for any reason. Students further agree not to reconstruct exam content from memory, photographic image, by dictation or by any other means, for the purpose of sharing that information with any other individual or entity.

## SECTION 13      GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY

#### **Student Academic Grievance Policy and Procedures**

The following describes the grievance procedures available to students of the Department of Physician Assistant Education in the School of Health Sciences(School). These procedures address issues that arise from, relate to, or have a direct impact on the academic activities or performance of the student, such as assignment and evaluation of academic work in the course of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a particular course or degree. These procedures afford students and the School an opportunity to resolve grievances in an equitable manner.

#### **Definition of a Grievance**

A grievance is a complaint in writing filed with the Program or the Dean of the School of Health Sciences concerning a decision or action made by University faculty or staff that directly and adversely affects the student as an individual in his or her academic capacity. A grievance is not a means to challenge dissatisfaction with a University policy on the grounds that the policy is unfair or inadvisable, nor should a grievance challenge individual school, department, or academic program policies, as long as those policies are not in contravention of general University policy. Additionally, a grievance is not a means to challenge any disciplinary action taken by the Program or School. (Refer to [Appeal Process](#))

A grievance regarding an academic matter usually falls into one of the following general categories:

1. Those that derive from the application of, or decisions affected by a Program policy, such as the assignment of a grade and attendance.
2. Those that derive from matters addressed by policies, procedures, or practices of a department, school, or comparable University administrative unit.

NOTE: If a PA student believes that behavior in violation of the University's policy against sexual and other unlawful harassment has occurred, the student should notify the Director of Human Resources as soon as possible. Additionally, there are grievance procedures to resolve alleged acts of discrimination outlined in the University's policy statement on prohibited discrimination. Any person having a complaint of a violation of this policy statement should contact the Director of Human Resources. The University's policy against sexual and other unlawful harassment is available in the Department of Human Resources and through Campus Life. <http://www.pacific.edu/Campus-Life/Safety-and-Conduct/Sexual-Assault--Title-IX-Resources-and-Support.html>

## **Right to Participate in Grievances without Retaliation**

No student, student's representative, or another member of the University community who assists or participates in these procedures shall be subject to adverse action by the University, based on their activity in good faith in the course of filing or participating in the grievance procedure.

## **INFORMAL (PROGRAM LEVEL) GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

Prior to submitting a formal grievance, the student shall:

1. Consult the faculty member whose action is being appealed. This consultation generally must take place within seven (7) calendar days of the start of classes after the grading period in question. The faculty member is expected to meet with the student and respond to his/her grievance in writing within seven (7) calendar days.
2. If the student and the faculty member are unable to reach an agreement, or if the faculty member is unwilling or unable to meet with the student, the student shall meet with the Department Chair/Program Director. The Department Chair/Program Director will meet with the student and may meet with the faculty member when appropriate. The Department Chair/Program Director will recommend a solution to the student in writing within seven (7) calendar days. This written notification will also include the appropriate School committee for filing a formal grievance if desired. If the Department Chair/Program Director is not available within the given time frame, the student shall contact the Associate Program Director. Should the grievance be with the Department Chair/Program Director, then the student shall contact the Dean of the School of Health Sciences.

## **FORMAL (SCHOOL LEVEL) GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

### ***Filing Grievance with the School of Health Sciences***

A student may submit a formal grievance to the School if the outcome of the informal grievance process is unsatisfactory. A formal grievance contains a concise written statement, identifying the specific actions complained of, the persons perceived to be responsible for such actions, the harm to the grievant, and the information that the grievant believes are relevant to the grievance. The statement should also include the informal efforts taken to date to resolve the matter. It is the responsibility of the grieving PA student to initiate any grievance within seven (7) calendar days of the informal grievance resolution. A delay in filing a grievance may constitute grounds for denial of the grievance.

The corresponding School committee will determine the appropriate method by which the grievance will be resolved, which may, but need not be preceded by the conferring with the grievant, faculty member(s), and/or other individuals by committee members or

other School representatives. Resolution of the matter will be provided by written determination.

The committee's determination will be based on the following issues:

1. Utilization of proper facts and criteria
2. The reasonability of the decision
3. Due process or procedural errors

Normally, no more than 14 days should elapse between the filing of a grievance and the determination. The determination of the committee shall be final and binding.

**Professional Code of Conduct**

Success in the PA profession requires certain professional behavioral attributes in addition to content knowledge. Therefore, these professional behavioral attributes, to include empathy, respect, discipline, honesty, integrity, the ability to work effectively with others in a team environment, the ability to take and give constructive feedback, the ability to follow directions, and the ability to address a crisis or emergency situation in a composed manner, are considered to be a part of academic performance.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education 5th edition states, “The role of the PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills, and the capacity to respond to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. Essential attributes of the graduate PA include an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient’s welfare.” Adherence to these attributes requires that physician assistants and physician assistant students exhibit a high level of maturity and self-control, even in highly stressful situations or in difficult circumstances and situations.

In keeping with these principles, physician assistant students must conduct themselves in a demeanor that is nothing less than professional and consistent with appropriate patient care and adheres to the Professional Code of Conduct. Students will be evaluated not only on their academic and clinical skills, but also on their interpersonal skills, reliability, and professional and behavioral conduct.

**Respect**

Students are expected to treat all patients, Program faculty, University staff, clinical preceptors, health care workers, and fellow students with dignity and respect. Students are expected to be respectful of University and Program policies and procedures. Students shall not display disruptive or obstructive behavior in the classroom, clinical sites, or Program or University functions. Students are expected to be able to follow directions and to express concerns in a professional and respectful manner. Conflicts are to be resolved in a diplomatic and reasoned manner using appropriate communication skills and appropriate Program procedures outlined in this handbook.

Students must be sensitive to and tolerant of diversity in the student and patient population. PA education requires a close working environment with other students and includes completing physical examinations of fellow students and discussion groups that



may reveal personal information. These situations must be approached with respect to the privacy, confidentiality, and feelings of fellow students.

Students should offer constructive feedback in a thoughtful and reasoned manner that fosters respect and trust. Displays of anger, which include demeaning, offensive, argumentative, threatening language/behavior, or language that is insensitive to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability will not be tolerated. Students must be appropriately responsive to lawful requests from their instructors, preceptors, and clinical sites.

## **Communication**

Effective verbal, non-verbal, written, and E-mail communication are required for quality PA practice. Students are expected to develop a rapport with classmates, colleagues, patients, and other healthcare providers. Students shall maintain effective communication in times of stress and/or when faced with complexity, uncertainty, or ambiguity. In alignment with respect, students must maintain professional communication with University, Program, and clinical staff at all times, including times of stress. Any form of communication that impedes the University's or Program's ability to do business, impacts the reputation of the University or Program, or results in the loss of an experiential facility is deemed an egregious violation of the Professional Code of Conduct and is ground for disciplinary action including dismissal from the program.

## **Attendance**

Students must report to all classes, labs, seminars, in-class weeks, and clinical sites at the scheduled time and remain for the entire session. Further details regarding attendance requirements are noted in the [Attendance](#) section.

## **Timeliness**

Students must submit all required assignments by their designated due date. Timeliness is an important aspect of professional behavior. Repetitive tardiness, delay in paperwork/assignment submission in any portion of the Program may result in disciplinary action. Additional information regarding tardiness is noted in the [Attendance](#) section.

## **Attire**

Attire is a component of professionalism. Refer to the [Dress Code](#) section for further information.

## **Identification**

Refer to the PA [Student Identification](#) requirements.

## **Reliability/Accountability**

Students are expected to accept responsibility and consequences for actions, including mistakes and conflicts. Students are expected to fulfill obligations undertaken and manage time appropriately and effectively.

## **Flexibility**

PA education involves instruction from practicing clinicians with unpredictable schedules and various teaching styles. At times, lecture sessions or clinical rotations may need to be adjusted with short notice. The Program believes the advantage of utilizing practicing clinicians outweighs this inconvenience and requires students to be flexible and tolerant of changes. Student schedules in the academic and clinical year may involve night and weekend hours. Students are expected to maintain a positive attitude and appropriate communication skills when changes occur.

## **Self-guided Learning**

Life-long learning is a fundamental component of the PA profession. Students must demonstrate enthusiasm toward learning through participation and assignment completion. Students must take the initiative and commitment to acquire and to maintain knowledge and clinical skills throughout the educational process. Self-assessment and constructive feedback are important components of the learning process. Students are expected to accept constructive feedback without defensiveness or excuses and incorporate the feedback to change behavior.

## **Team Work**

The PA profession is based on the principle of collaboration with physicians. The healthcare team concept has expanded to include a multidisciplinary approach. Learning to work effectively in a group and collaborative environment is key to the PA role. Students are assigned to multiple educational groups throughout the curriculum. Some groups will remain the same for the length of the program. Others will be course or semester specific. Students are expected to contribute, collaborate, and cooperate effectively in a team and small group-based learning environments. Students are expected to provide specific, objective, and relevant constructive feedback to classmates. Students are expected to share information or materials and actively assist classmates/peers.

## **Program Evaluation**

Just as self-assessment is an important component of professional development, student evaluation of the Program is an important component for curriculum development and improvement. Students will be required to complete a course, instructor, and preceptor evaluations. Students are expected to provide professional, constructive feedback regarding the curriculum and curriculum delivery. Evaluations will be completed electronically and will not be anonymous. The Program reserves the right to withhold final grades, block registration, or deduct professionalism points from the subsequent semester's course for non-compliance.

Additional opportunities will be available to provide intermittent general program feedback, as well. Students will be able to discuss concerns with the Program Director and Associate Program Director during *Dialogue with the Program Director* and *Dialogue with the Associate Program Director* meetings, respectfully, which will be scheduled at least once per semester. These meetings may also be utilized to provide information to students regarding previous survey results. In addition to formal methods of evaluation and feedback, the Program believes in an “open door” policy so that students are able to discuss concerns with the Program as desired.

## **Integrity**

PA students are expected to display the highest ethical standards commensurate with work as a health care professional. Students are expected to follow all policies in the Professional Code of Conduct outlined in this handbook, the University Catalog, [Pacific Student Code of Conduct](#), and the Clinical Education handbook including those pertaining to academic honesty. Additional professional expectations are outlined in the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession published by the American Academy of Physician Assistants: [Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for PAs](#)

Infractions such as forgery, plagiarism, stealing/copying tests, cheating, and falsification of medical records will not be tolerated. Honesty in all communications is vital as a health professional. Knowingly providing false information to a University employee, Program faculty, clinical preceptor or clinical rotation representative is deemed an egregious violation of the Professional Code of Conduct and is ground for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

## **Confidentiality**

In accordance with the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession and in compliance with HIPAA Standards, students must respect and maintain the confidentiality of patients. Students are not permitted to discuss any patients by name or any other identifiable means outside the clinical encounter. For academic presentations, encounter documentation assignments, all identifiable information must be removed as per HIPAA requirements. The confidentiality of fellow students should be respected and maintained, as well.

## **Health and Safety**

Any student whose actions directly or indirectly jeopardize the health and safety of patients, faculty, clinical site staff, or fellow students may be immediately removed from the clinical site and/or face disciplinary action. Removal from a clinical rotation may delay the student’s completion of the program.

## **Non-discrimination**

Students shall deliver health care services to patients without regard to their race, religion, gender, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, disease status, legal involvement, or political beliefs.

## **Impairment**

Students shall not appear at the University or clinical sites under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Weapons**

Students are not permitted to carry any firearms or other weapons on campus or to clinical sites.

## **Student Role on Clinical Rotations**

Students must be aware of their limitations as students and of the limitations and regulations pertaining to PA practice. Students at clinical sites must always work under the supervision of a preceptor. They may not function in the place of an employee or assume primary responsibility for a patient's care. The licensed provider retains all legal responsibility and medical duty for all patient care. Students cannot treat and/or discharge a patient from care without consultation with the clinical preceptor. Students should seek advice when appropriate and should not evaluate or treat patients without supervision from, and direct access to a supervising clinical preceptor at all times. A licensed provider must confirm unusual or abnormal physical findings. Students shall perform only those procedures authorized by the preceptor. Students must adhere to all regulations of the Program and the clinical sites. The student is to contact the Program immediately with any questions or concerns about the student's role at a site.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS**

Failure to adhere to the Professional Standards and Professional Code of Conduct will result in the following consequences for unprofessional behavior:

1. The first minor incident of unprofessional behavior:  
Program Warning - The Program will provide the student with a verbal and/or written warning to change the behavior depending on the severity of the offense. The appropriate faculty member (e.g., faculty advisor or Clinical Director) will document the incident in the student file.
2. The second minor violation of unprofessional behavior:  
The student may be referred to the SPC committee for disciplinary review.
3. The third minor incident or any egregious violation unprofessional behavior:  
The student will be referred to the SPC Committee.

Additional guidelines for conduct specific to the clinical training experiences are outlined in the Clinical Education Handbook, which will be distributed to students prior to the clinical phase of their education.

## ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRESS

### **Academic Progress**

Satisfactory academic progress must be evident and demonstrated by students in order to continue in the Program. Any failure to progress academically up to and including the failure of a course may be cause for referral to the Student Progress Committee (SPC). Students must complete and pass all didactic courses before they can progress to the clinical phase of the Program. Additional academic progress policies associated with the clinical year are located in the Clinical Education Handbook, provided prior to the start of rotations.

### **Professional Progress**

Professionalism is as important as and holds equal importance to academic progress. Students are expected to demonstrate the legal, moral, and ethical standards required of a health care professional and display behavior that is consistent with these qualities.

Professionalism and professional ethics are terms that signify certain scholastic, interpersonal, and behavioral expectations. Among the characteristics included in this context are the knowledge, competence, demeanor, attitude, appearance, mannerisms, integrity, and morals displayed by the students to faculty, staff, preceptors, peers, patients, colleagues in health care, and other educational settings and the public. The Program expects nothing short of respect and professional demeanor at all times.

## STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE AND REVIEW PROCESS

### **Student Progress Committee (SPC)**

The SPC is charged with monitoring the academic and professional progress of PA students, promoting students who have successfully completed a semester, as well as reviewing the cases of students who meet the disciplinary criteria. Additionally, the SPC monitors remediation plans. The committee is comprised of faculty members from the PA program and other University programs/departments that provide instruction to the PA students. Certain circumstances may also require the inclusion of University faculty members from programs not associated with the PA program or its students, as well as the Student Conduct and Community Standards Office. The SPC may review student records and discuss student records with appropriate faculty members and/or preceptors in determining an appropriate course of action for students experiencing academic and/or professional conduct difficulties in the Program. The SPC may choose to request the appearance of the student during an SPC meeting. Disciplinary action decisions are

made by the SPC. The SPC can assign disciplinary action statuses such as, but not limited to, program warning, probation, remediation, suspension, or dismissal. Disciplinary decisions are made on an individual basis after considering all pertinent circumstances. The chair of the SPC will issue a letter of decision to the student regarding his/her status in the Program.

Since the Program only offers courses once a year, if the SPC recommends that a student repeat an entire course or term, the student must take a leave of absence from the Program until the course(s) are offered again. A place will be held for the student to return to the Program at the beginning of the term that must be repeated.

## ACADEMIC STANDING

All students must make satisfactory progress toward curriculum completion within the PA program. Students must meet the minimum standards and requirements set by the Program and University of the Pacific in order to remain in good academic standing. The University and Program have minimum criteria for academic progress, as it relates to grade point average. The Program has additional criteria that define academic progress. Failure to meet any defined criteria may result in disciplinary action and the changing of a student's academic standing.

### **Academic Standing Categories**

#### PROGRAM WARNING

Program Warning is a level of academic standing internal to the Program and is not documented on the official transcript. It is instituted when a student fails a major course exam or has professionalism issues. It serves as a warning that improvement is needed. Students will be advised to meet with the student's advisor. A student must successfully pass reexamination of the failed course material and/or demonstrate improvement in professional behaviors. Failure to successfully remediate the material may result in SPC referral and placement on Academic Probation. Failure to improve professionalism issues will result in placement on Professionalism Probation.

The following are criteria for which a student may receive a program warning:

- Semester GPA < 2.75 for one semester
- Failure of any 2 (initial and/or retake) exams or major assessments within a course
- Failure of any 2 (initial and/or retake) exams or major assessments across multiple courses within the same academic term
- Failure of same curriculum content (module) across courses (i.e., cardiology modules)
- Failure of one End of Rotation Examination on the first attempt
- Two clinical year assignment deficiencies
- One Mid-Rotation evaluation with an area of concern
- Two Mid-Rotation evaluations noting the same deficiency
- First unsatisfactory preceptor evaluation during a clinical year site visit

- Failure of either portion of a final Preceptor Evaluation
- Second violation of the Professional Code of Conduct policies located in this handbook or professional misconduct, behavior and/or attitude inconsistent with the PA profession.
- Verbal or written reports and/or evaluations from academic faculty, clinical preceptor or designees indicating that a student is not progressing academically and/or not demonstrating proficiency to a level as expected for the level of/timing within clinical education

## PROBATION

Probation is a warning that there are deficiencies. Steps to remediate these deficiencies will be provided to the student. During probation, the student's academic/clinical progress and/or professional conduct will be closely monitored. Failure to demonstrate improvement in areas of deficiency may place a student in the category for dismissal. Decisions regarding Academic Probation cannot be appealed.

Academic Probation is the result of unsatisfactory scholarship or professionalism, which may lead to dismissal from the Program. It is documented on the official transcript.

Professionalism Probation is a subcategory of Academic Probation. It is the result of unsatisfactory professionalism, which may lead to dismissal from the Program. It is documented on the official transcript as Academic Probation.

Note: Most state licensure boards request information on academic and professionalism probation on the official Program Completion Verification paperwork. The Program must document when a student has been on Academic and/or Professionalism Probation, and in most cases, the reasons for probation. Additionally, this information is often requested by credentialing agencies and could influence an individual's ability to obtain employment clearance.

### **Criteria for Placement on Academic/Professionalism Probation**

The following are criteria for which a student may be placed on probation:

- Cumulative GPA < 2.75 for one semester
- Semester GPA < 2.75 for two semesters
- Failure of a course
- Failure of any 3 (initial and/or retake) exams or major assessments within a course
- Failure of any 3 (initial and/or retake) exams or major assessments across multiple courses within the same academic term
- Failure of a didactic year comprehensive exam or OSCE and its retake
- Failure of 2 end-of-rotation examinations on the first attempt
- Failure to progress academically, professionally and/or clinically within a remediation plan
- Violation of the University or Program social media policy

- Violation of University of the Pacific’s Code of Conduct policies or any University policies and procedures outlined in the Tiger Lore Student Handbook
- Professional misconduct, behavior and/or attitude inconsistent with the PA profession or second violation of the Professional Code of Conduct policies found in this handbook
- Professional misconduct, behavior and/or attitude, potentially causing the loss of a clinical rotation site, or disparaging comments regarding the Program, its faculty/staff and/or University.
- Failure to adhere to the Program Policies and procedures found in the Student Handbook and/or the Clinical Education Handbook
- Verbal or written reports and/or evaluations from academic faculty, clinical preceptor or designees indicating that a student is not progressing academically, clinically or professionally to the extent that may jeopardize patient safety
- Verbal or written reports and/or evaluations from academic faculty, clinical preceptors, or designees indicating that a student is not adhering to site regulations, site schedule, ethical standards of conduct, and/or limitations of the student role
- Consistently failing to progress academically, clinically or professionally as demonstrated by repetitive failure to demonstrate competency across multiple evaluation modalities, including but not limited to, written examinations, OSCEs, preceptor evaluations, written assignments, faculty observation of clinical skills/decision making, and/or site visits
- Failure to maintain the ability to meet the Program’s Technical Standards
- Failure to follow or comply with requirements set forth by the SPC or Program Director

It is important to remember that some aspects of knowledge integration and clinical judgment cannot be adequately evaluated by examinations alone. Observations from academic and/or clinical faculty are crucial for evaluating these critical skills. Failure to achieve minimum competency in coursework, including clinical assignments and satisfactory progress in professional development, behaviors, and attitudes, may result in probation or dismissal. A pattern of documented evaluator concerns about performance may indicate unsatisfactory progress when the record is viewed as a whole, even though passing grades have been assigned. In such instances, the successful completion of a remediation plan is required to continue in the program.

Clinical Year Handbook lists additional probation criteria specific to the clinical year.



## **Terms of Probation**

### Notification:

- When a student is placed on probation, he/she will be notified in writing by the SPC, and the reasons will be stated. A copy will be placed in the student's academic file. The appropriate University officials will be notified. Probation is noted on the official transcript.
- When the terms of probation have been satisfied, notification of removal from probation will be forwarded to the appropriate University officials, so the necessary documentation on the student's transcript can be made. Documentation will be placed in the student's file.

### Duration of Probation:

- A student will remain on Academic Probation until the terms of probation have been satisfied, as stated in the remediation plan and probation letter. Probation may continue throughout the remainder of the didactic year, clinical year, or until graduation if deemed appropriate.
- A cumulative GPA of  $\geq 2.75$  at the end of the following academic term is required of a student placed on probation.
- A student will remain on Professionalism Probation until the SPC has determined that the student has achieved an acceptable level of professional behavior. Probation may continue throughout the remainder of the didactic year, clinical year or until graduation if deemed appropriate.
  - This information may be gained from professionalism assignments, faculty evaluations, preceptor evaluations, or any other evaluations from individuals the Program deems appropriate.

### Extracurricular Restrictions:

- The primary responsibility of a student is to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become a competent and professional PA. A student on Academic Probation may not serve as an officer of any official Program or University club or organization (including holding a Class Officer position) as it may detract from the time needed to be academically successful. If a student presently serving as an officer/representative is placed on Academic Probation, the other class leaders or the entire class will choose a substitute officer/representative to fulfill the position until the student is removed from probation.

## **Remediation**

Remediation is the opportunity to correct unsatisfactory performance, progress, and/or professional conduct in the Program. The offer of remediation is not automatic or guaranteed. Remediation is to be regarded as a privilege, which must be earned by a

student through demonstrated dedication to learning, and active participation in the educational program to include, but not limited to, overall academic/clinical performance, regular attendance, individual initiative and utilization of all available resources.

#### Determination of Remediation Plans:

- Remediation plans will be proposed by the SPC and will be assigned a specific period for completion.
- Remediation plans/decisions cannot be appealed.

#### Plan Implementation:

- The SPC chair(s) will work with an assigned faculty member to implement the proposed remediation plan. The SPC proposed remediation plan and assigned faculty member may be amended by the Associate Program Director if needed to facilitate the remediation process.
- Meetings with student
  - Initial meeting to develop a contract/plan that outlines and defines the remediation program, successful completion criteria, and responsibilities of the student. A summary of this meeting will be documented and retained by the program.
  - A student's self-assessment of weaknesses and deficiencies that resulted in current academic or professionalism status. When appropriate, this self-assessment may precede remediation plan development.
  - The frequency of student meetings during the remediation process will vary depending on the duration and the components of the remediation plan.

#### Plan Monitoring:

- Remediation plans are monitored by the assigned faculty member and/or the SPC chair(s).
- Remediation Monitoring Form will be completed as needed throughout the remediation process summarizing the student's progress and compliance with remediation requirements. The frequency of form completion will vary depending on the duration and components of the remediation plan.

#### Post Completion Reevaluation:

- At the completion of the remediation period, the student will be referred back to the SPC for re-evaluation. Failure to meet the requirements of a remediation plan in the stipulated period shall result in a referral to the SPC and will meet the criteria for dismissal.

### Documentation:

- Documentation of the remediation requirements, implementation process, and outcome will be placed in the student's file.

The SPC may recommend a remediation plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A remediation exam of failed subject material and/or the entire course
- Repeating the course(s)/rotation(s) failed the next time the course(s) is offered
- Delay the start of the clinical curriculum
- Content-specific remediation
- Repeating an entire academic term, with or without previously passed courses.
- Restarting the program with the next student cohort, waving any waiting period and admissions process
- Reenrollment only through the normal admissions process
- Complete additional assignments/examinations of the failed subject material
- Complete additional assignments as deemed appropriate
- Required meetings with faculty
- Auditing previous courses or laboratory classes. If a student is advised to audit a class, he/she is expected to follow the attendance policy for registered students, unless otherwise specified. Students may be required to sit for all course exams or may choose to do so. If a student takes exams, he/she must meet the same criteria as registered students in order to pass the remediation (e.g., a score of  $\geq 70\%$  on exams)
- Demonstrating continued competency in previously learned material by passing re-entry competency requirements for students with a remediation plan that includes extended time away from studies
- Complete additional clinical rotation(s)
- Requiring corrective action for unprofessional behavior and/or misconduct. This may include but is not limited to direct apologies, letters of apology, professionalism assignments, additional clinical rotation(s), ongoing monitoring, and reports of professional behavior corrections by faculty, preceptors, etc.

In addition to the programmatic remediation plan, the Program recommends students utilize all available resources within the University's Student Academic Support Services, Student Health, and Psychological Support Services.

## DISMISSAL

The Program, after due consideration and process, reserves the right to dismiss/disqualify any student at any time before graduation if circumstances of a legal,

moral, behavioral, ethical, patient safety concerns, health, or academic nature justify such an action.

### **Criteria for Dismissal**

Any of the following may place a student in the category for dismissal:

- Cumulative GPA < 2.75 after being on Academic or Professionalism Probation in the prior academic term
- Cumulative GPA < 2.75 for any two semesters
- Semester GPA < 2.75 for any three semesters
- Failure of 2 or more didactic courses
- Failure of 2 or more clinical rotations
- Failure of 1 or more didactic courses and 1 or more clinical rotations
- Failure of 3 or more end-of-rotation examinations on the first attempt
- Failure of a repeated or remediated course
- Failure by a student on probation to comply with, or satisfactorily complete, a remediation plan within the defined period
- Failure of any 5 (initial and/or retake) exams or major assessments within a course
- Failure of any 5 (initial and/or retake) exams or major assessments across multiple courses within the same academic term
- Meeting Academic Probation criteria for 2 or more semesters
- Meeting 2 or more criteria for Academic and/or Professionalism Probation
- Meeting criteria for disciplinary action while on Academic Probation
- One egregious or  $\geq 3$  other occurrences of professional misconduct, behavior, and/or attitude inconsistent with the PA profession or in violation of the Professional Code of Conduct Policies
- Violation of the Professional Code of Conduct that impedes the University's or Program's ability to do business, impacts the reputation of the University or Program, causes the loss of a clinical rotation site, or disparaging comments/social media posts about the Program, its faculty/staff, and/or University
- Violation of University of the Pacific's Code of Conduct policies or any University policies and procedures outlined in the Tiger Lore Student Handbook, while currently on Academic Probation or any egregious violations that are determined to be qualification for Criteria for Dismissal
- Verbal, written reports from academic faculty, clinical preceptors or designees indicating that a student who is already on probation is not adhering to site regulations, site schedules, ethical standards of conduct, and/or limitations of the student role
- Verbal or written reports and/or evaluations from academic faculty, clinical preceptor or designees indicating that a student, who is already on probation, is not progressing academically, clinically or professionally to the extent that may

jeopardize patient safety

- Consistently failing to progress academically, clinically or professionally as demonstrated by repetitive failure to demonstrate competency across multiple evaluation modalities, including but not limited to, written examinations, OSCEs, preceptor evaluations, written assignments, faculty observation of clinical skills/decision making, and/or site visits
- Failure to maintain the ability to meet the Program's Technical Standards
- Two or more occurrences of failure to follow Program policies and procedures as defined in this Handbook, as well as those defined in the Clinical Education Handbook
- Unprofessional conduct due to failure to comply with requirements set forth by the SPC and/or Program Director

Decisions regarding dismissal are made on an individual basis after considering all pertinent circumstances and extenuating circumstances relating to the case. Other University departments may review dismissals for violations of the University Code of Conduct.

### **Notification of SPC Decision for Dismissal**

The SPC shall notify the student in writing via University email. The student must acknowledge receipt of the letter within 24 hours. The student shall have 48 hours from the time the letter is sent to notify the Program of the student's acceptance of the dismissal or the plan to appeal. Failure to meet either deadline shall result in immediate dismissal. If a student accepts the dismissal, the dismissal is effective immediately. If a student intends to appeal the decision, the student shall remain enrolled until a final decision is determined.

While the appeal is pending, the enrollment status of the student will not be altered. The student must follow the Program and University policies for enrolled students. The Program reserves the right to remove the student from clinical rotations until the appeal decision is rendered. Removal from a clinical rotation may delay the student's completion of the program should the appeal be granted. Delayed Program completion may result in additional tuition and/or fees.

If a student is dismissed, his/her registration will be voided, and tuition will be refunded per University policy. Notification will appear on the student's academic transcript.

## **APPEAL PROCESS FOR PROGRAM DISMISSAL**

### **Initial Appeal to Program Director**

The student has five (5) **calendar days** from the date on the dismissal letter to submit a formal written appeal to the Program Director. The written appeal must be received via email or hard copy by the Program Director within this period. The narrative should fully explain the situation and substantiate the reason(s) for advocating a reversal of the

dismissal. Failure to submit an appeal within the deadline will cause the student to lose his/her right to appeal, thus resulting in immediate dismissal.

The Program Director may perform the following review methods:

1. Independent review of the student record with or without individual interviews.
2. Convene an ad hoc committee consisting of three members to review the SPC's decision. The ad hoc committee will present its findings to the Program Director for consideration.

The Program Director may grant an appeal only on the showing of one of the following:

1. The bias of one or more of the members of the SPC
2. New information not available to the SPC at the time of its initial decision, as determined through a secondary review.
3. Procedural error

The Program Director may choose any of the following options when an appeal to dismiss a student is under consideration:

1. Concur with SPC decision
2. Amend the SPC decision with or without referral to the SPC for approval
3. Repeal the SPC decision

### **Secondary Appeal to Dean of the School of Health Sciences**

If the Program Director, during the primary appeals process, upholds the SPC decision for dismissal, the student has the right to submit an appeal to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences. The student has 48 hours to notify the SPC chair of the intention to submit a secondary appeal. The student has five (5) **calendar days** from the date of the Program Director decision letter to submit a petition to appeal to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences. Amended decisions, by the Program Director, are not eligible for secondary appeal. SPC decisions based on recommendations referred back to the SPC for reconsideration are eligible for secondary appeal. Failure to submit an appeal within this period results in the loss of his/her right to appeal, resulting in immediate dismissal.

The Dean may grant an appeal only on the showing of one of the following:

1. The bias of one or more of the members of the SPC or Program Director
2. Procedural error

The Dean may choose one of the following options when an appeal to dismiss a student is under consideration:

1. Concur with the SPC and Program Director decisions
2. Repeal the SPC and Program Director decisions

The appeal decision of the Dean shall be final and binding.

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A student will be recommended for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Degree provided he/she has fulfilled the following:

1. Completion of all prescribed academic requirements with a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 or higher in the PA Program with no incomplete or unsatisfactory grades.
2. Successful completion of the Summative/Capstone Project course.
3. Demonstration of no deficiencies in ethical, professional, or personal conduct, which would make it inappropriate to award the degrees and receipt of a final overall satisfactory rating on the Professional Evaluation.
4. Compliance with all legal and financial requirements of the University of the Pacific.
5. Completion of the academic requirements within the required 150% of the time-frame following matriculation.
6. Timely completion and submission of the “Application for Graduation” to the Office of the Registrar.

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC  
MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES  
DEGREE PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK  
SIGNATURE SHEET

Class of 2023

I have read, understand, and agree to follow the policies and procedures set forth by the University of the Pacific and University of the Pacific Physician Assistant Program as outlined in the Tiger Lore student handbook and this handbook. As a student, I am responsible for referring to this Handbook for specific policies and procedures governing my status as a Physician Assistant student to include Program requirements, goals, and objectives, satisfactory academic and professional progress, disciplinary action criteria and process, graduation requirements, and grievance policies.

Every attempt is made to provide a complete handbook that provides an accurate overview of the Program policies and curriculum. However, circumstances and events may make it necessary to modify the handbook during enrollment. Any amendments shall supersede those sections of the original handbook. I understand that amendments may be made to the policy and procedures noted within. With my continuation of Program enrollment, I agree to comply with all provisions listed in this handbook and any future amendment, with or without further signature attestation.

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Student Name (Print)

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University ID Number

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Student Signature

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Date