

# **Physician Assistant Program Policies and Procedures Handbook**

**School of Medicine  
& Health Sciences**

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**THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

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**Department of Physician Assistant Studies**

**Revised March 2023**



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## I. Welcome

Welcome to the PA Program and congratulations on being selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants for enrollment in our nationally recognized PA Program. You should be very proud to be a GW PA student and in the next two or three years, you will join a growing legacy of graduates spanning over four decades. You will be taught by a cadre of highly qualified faculty who will be instrumental in preparing you both academically and professionally to be excellent clinicians. We have no doubt your commitment to your PA studies is high. The journey ahead will be challenging; PA education is rigorous and requires full commitment of your time. We look forward to guiding you on the path to becoming the best PA you can possibly be. Your success is our ultimate goal!

## II. Introduction and Purpose of the Handbook

The policies and standards established in this Handbook help assure that this goal (your academic success) is achieved. The Handbook serves as a reference for informing GW PA students and others about formal administrative policies, rules and regulations implemented by the GW University, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and GW PA Program. Academic and professional standards, procedural policies for promotion and progress, and student rights and responsibilities are also included in the Handbook. These policies and regulations are to be considered an addendum to those outlined in the current [School of Medicine and Health Sciences \(SMHS\) Bulletin](#), the [Code of Student Conduct](#), and the University [Code of Academic Integrity](#). In the case of any inconsistency or ambiguity between these Regulations and University- wide rules, regulations, and policies, the PA Program may place additional restrictions and expectations as outlined in the current version of the Handbook. **All students, principal faculty, and the program director must abide by the policies and procedures at all locations.**

These policies and procedures are reviewed a minimum of one time per year and are revised as needed to facilitate the mission of the Program, the School, and the University. The Program reserves the right to revise the policies and procedures outlined in the Handbook as needed to facilitate the goals and mission of the PA program. Students will be notified via the listserv of any substantial changes to the policies and procedures as needed. The most updated version of the Handbook will be posted on the program website. The George Washington University reserves the right to withdraw a course at any time, change fees or tuition, rules, calendar, curriculum and any other requirement that may have an impact on students.

Students are expected to remain current in all policies and procedures. Please read the Handbook carefully and sign the acknowledgement form found at the end, stating that you agree to follow these policies and procedures while you are enrolled as a student in the GW Physician Assistant Program.

The form is to be signed, dated, and returned to the Program's office during orientation. Please contact program officials with any questions you may have concerning the information contained herein or any other university publication. Failure to sign the acknowledgement form may impact course registration.

## III. Mission and Vision of the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences

The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences is dedicated to improving the health of our local, national, and global communities by:



- **Educating** a diverse workforce of tomorrow's leaders in medicine, science, and health sciences
- **Healing** through innovative and compassionate care.
- **Advancing** biomedical, translational, and health services delivery research with an emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration.
- **Promoting** a culture of excellence through inclusion, service, and advocacy.

As a globally recognized academic medical center, GW embraces the challenge of eliminating health disparities and transforming health care to enrich and improve the lives of those we serve.

## **IV. Mission and Values of the GW Health Sciences**

The Health Science programs are a center of excellence in interdisciplinary education, clinical training, community service learning, scholarship, and leadership. Faculty members are recognized as leaders in their fields and are dedicated to scholarly activities and educating students to improve the health and well-being of local, regional, national, and international communities. The mission of Health Sciences is to drive innovation and quality in health and health care delivery through education, scholarship, and service. Health Sciences values diversity and inclusion, collaboration, and innovation. It is championing innovation and facilitating continuous improvement in health and health care delivery locally, nationally, and globally. Its areas of focus are investing in people; living its social mission; influencing health professions education, health care policy, and practice; and catalyzing innovation and entrepreneurship.

## **V. Mission, Vision, Goals and Accreditation of the GW PA Program**

### **A. Mission**

The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program's mission is to prepare physician assistants who demonstrate clinical excellence; embrace diversity, equity and inclusion; advocate for their patients; lead and advance the profession; and serve their communities.

### **B. Vision**

The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program will be a preeminent leader in physician assistant education. Through shared transformative experiences and discovery, our students, alumni, and faculty will emerge as leaders committed to health equity and quality care for all.

### **C. Goals**

- Educate future PAs who possess superior knowledge and skills.
- Recruit and matriculate a diverse class of highly qualified students.
- Foster an awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of communities.
- Encourage professional involvement, leadership, and service.

### **D. Accreditation**

The George Washington University is accredited by its regional accrediting agency, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Physician Assistant Program is accredited through

the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC- PA). The Program faculty is responsible for ongoing reports to ARC-PA and continuously maintaining compliance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standards.

A PA graduate is not eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) unless the PA graduated from a program that is accredited by the ARC-PA. A PA graduate must pass the national certifying exam in order to practice in all states, the District of Columbia, and all American territories.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the George Washington (GW) University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences since receiving provisional accreditation in 1972. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA *Standards*.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the *Standards*. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **September 2023. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA Policy.**

In the event of program closure or loss of accreditation, the program would continue its commitment to currently matriculated students by teaching out in accordance with federal law, University policy, and the ARC-PA and/or the Middle States Commission on Higher Education requirements.

## E. Degree Requirements

The traditional PA Program is a six-semester sequence taken on a full-time basis. Students must complete a total of 104 credit hours of course work in the program of study as described in the [SMHS Bulletin](#). Graduates of the two-year program earn a Master of Science in Health Sciences (MSHS).

The joint degree program culminates with a Master of Science in Health Sciences (MSHS) and a Master of Public Health (MPH). Due to cross-crediting of courses between programs, students must complete both degrees before receiving either degree. The program of study credit requirements varies by track. The program of study for each MPH track is described in the [University Bulletin](#).

## VI. Traditional PA and Joint Degree Programs of Study

### A. Traditional 2-year PA Program of Study

#### YEAR 1

#### SUMMER SEMESTER

Course Number	Title	Credits
PA 6101	Clinical Assessment I	4

PA 6104	Integration into Clinical Concepts I	2
PA 6109	Foundations of Medicine	5
PA 6110	Evidence-Based Practice for PA Students	3
PHYL 6211	Physiology for Health Sciences Students	3
ANAT 6215	Anatomy for Health Science Students	3

**Total 20**

### **FALL SEMESTER**

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PA 6102	Clinical Assessment II	1
PA 6105	Integration into Clinical Concepts II	2
PA 6112	Clinical Medicine I	7
PA 6116	Clinical Skills I	2
PA 6118	Health, Justice and Society I	2
PA 6120	Human Behavior	2
PA 6122	Role of PA in American Health Care	2
PHAR 6207	Basic Principles of Pharmacology	2

**Total 20**

### **SPRING SEMESTER**

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PA 6103	Clinical Assessment III	1
PA 6106	Integration into Clinical Concepts III	2
PA 6113	Clinical Medicine II	7
PA 6117	Clinical Skills II	1
PA 6119	Health, Justice and Society II	1
PA 6121	Clinical Specialties	6
PHAR 6208	Pharmacology in Dis. Pathophysiology	2

**Total 20**

### **YEAR 2 CLINICAL YEAR**

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
PA 6259	Introduction to Clinical Education	2
PA 6261	Inpatient Medicine Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6262	Primary Care Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6263	Surgical Inpatient Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6264	Women's Health Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6265	Pediatrics Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6266	Emergency Medicine Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6267	Behavioral Medicine Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6268	Elective Clinical Practicum	5
PA 6300	Introduction to Professional Practice	2

**Total 44**

**Program Total Credits**

**104**

## B. Joint Degree 3-year PA/MPH Program of Study

The joint degree program currently offers several tracks of study including Community Oriented Primary Care (COPC), Health Policy, Epidemiology, Environmental Health Science and Policy, Global Environmental Health, Maternal and Child Health, and any additional tracks as approved by the School of Public Health and Physician Assistant Program.

The majority of courses taken in the first year of the joint degree program are contingent upon the specific [track of study](#) in which the student is enrolled. In addition to MPH coursework, there are PA courses that students must also take in the first year; these are listed below. Refer to the traditional 2-year PA Program of Study for courses taken during the second year of matriculation (minus those courses already completed). Courses taken during the third year of the joint degree program include those delineated in the clinical year (see above). Please note that sometimes there may be time conflicts between the PA and MPH courses, where the resolution requires the joint degree student to take PA 6122 or PA 6119 during their second year of study.

### YEAR 1

#### SUMMER SEMESTER

Course Number	Title	Credits
ANAT 6215	Anatomy for Health Science Students	3

#### FALL SEMESTER

Course Number	Title	Credits
PA 6122	Role of PA in American Health Care	2

#### SPRING SEMESTER

Course Number	Title	Credits
PA 6119	Health, Justice, and Society II	1

**Program Total Credits** (varies depending on MPH track selected)

PA/MPH students must complete their **Applied Practical Experience (APEX)** also known as the Practicum prior to the start of their clinical year. In the event that the practicum is not completed at this time, the student cannot complete the APEX during the clinical year and will have to complete the work after completion of the clinical year. This does not apply to students who have chosen the option to use their elective clinical rotation to fulfill their practicum if enrolled in the Environmental Health Science and Policy or Global Environmental Health tracks. If this is the case, both programs must approve the elective rotation. In January of their first year (MPH1) year, they must notify by email, their track advisor, the PA/MPH Director, and the PA Program Director of Clinical Education that they have chosen this option.

PA/MPH students are expected to complete their Culminating Experience (CE) within the first 2 to 4 semesters of their matriculation depending on their public health track course of study. In the event that a student has not completed their work by the start of the clinical year, they must meet with the PA/MPH Director and the Director of Clinical Education by March 1 of their second year of the program (MPH2

year). The student may not be permitted to complete their CE during the clinical year.

Completion of the Applied Practical Experience and/or Culminating Experience after the completion of the clinical year will delay program completion, and students will incur additional tuition and fees charged at the University's prevailing graduate per credit rate.

## VII. Non-Academic Standards

### A. List of Essential Functions and Technical Standards

The Health Sciences Programs at the George Washington University have established [Technical Standards and Essential Functions for Admission, Continuance, and Graduation](#) for all programs, regardless of specific discipline of study. Students within GW Health Sciences must demonstrate competency in the intellectual, physical, and social tasks that cumulatively represent the essential functions of professional practice within health science-related careers.

The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program considers it essential for all physician assistant students to have the knowledge and skill to function in a variety of clinical settings and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care as required by the curriculum. Therefore, every physician assistant student must master a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, and procedures of the clinical clerkships. This requires that every student have sufficient capacities and abilities in: **Communication, Observation, Motor/Tactile Function, Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities, and Behavioral and Social Attributes.**

Completion of this program requires that each student independently demonstrate these capabilities continuously throughout enrollment. Surrogates cannot be used to accomplish the essential functions as outlined below. Students may not have undue dependence on technology or trained intermediaries to meet these standards.

**Communication** includes the ability to speak, hear, read, and write sufficiently to achieve adequate exchange of information with other healthcare professionals, patients, and their support network.

- The student must have the ability to receive and process auditory information and speak and write clearly for all communications with patients, their families, and other healthcare professionals.
- The student must communicate effectively through written and electronic media.
- The student must be able to communicate sensitively with patients and their families.
- The student must be able to read sufficiently to comprehend complex medical literature and convey this information in easy to understand terms.
- The student must be able to perceive forms of non-verbal interpersonal communications including facial expressions, body language, and affect.

**Observation** includes the ability to perceive, using senses and mental abilities, information presented in both educational and clinical settings. Educational information will be presented through lectures, team-based learning, laboratory sessions, interprofessional sessions, small groups and one-on-one interactions, as well as written and audiovisual materials.

- The student must possess sufficient sensory (visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory) and mental abilities to accurately perceive information provided in the educational

settings. This includes written and audiovisual materials, laboratories, diagnostic images, microscopic, and physical examination.

- The student must be able to accurately observe (using visual, auditory, tactile, and/or olfactory senses) a patient's medical condition, including patient affect, up close and at a distance, with and without medical instrumentation. This includes but is not limited to radiography, electrocardiograms, sonograms, monitors, and other graphic images.

#### **Motor/Tactile Function**

- A student must have sufficient motor function to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers.
- A student must be able to reasonably execute movements required to provide general and emergency medical care to patients. These skills require coordination of fine and gross motor skills, equilibrium, and functional sensation.
- A student must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities.
- A student must have the capability to manipulate equipment and instruments for the performance of basic laboratory tests and procedures.
- A student must have the ability to move her/himself from one setting to another and negotiate the patient care environment in a timely fashion.
- A student must have sufficient physical stamina to perform the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study. This includes long periods of sitting, standing, and moving which are required for classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

#### **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities**

- A student must be able to demonstrate cognitive and problem-solving skills in an efficient and timely manner in order to meet the Program Competencies (see [Section VII.D](#)). Problem solving is one of the critical skills demanded of physician assistants. It requires all of these intellectual abilities:
  - Comprehending visual-spatial relationships.
  - Reading and understanding the medical literature and the patient's chart.
  - Learning, measuring, calculating, retrieving, prioritizing, analyzing, organizing, assimilating, integrating, and synthesizing technically detailed and complex information and applying this information appropriately.
  - Comprehending three-dimensional relationships, the spatial and functional relationships of structures, and analyzing and applying this information for problem solving and decision making.
  - Effectively participating in educational activities online and in person as an individual and in groups in all learning environments and activities.

#### **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

- The student must possess emotional stability for full utilization of her/his intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibility's attendant to both didactic studies and patient care.
- The student must be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and their family members, staff, and colleagues.
- The student must be able to work collaboratively and effectively as a small group member as well as a health team member.

- The student must have sufficient interpersonal skills to relate positively with people across society, including all ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, gender, gender identification, sexual orientations, disabilities, and belief systems.
- The student must possess compassion and concern for others; interest in and motivation for service and integrity.
- The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under mentally and emotionally stressful situations.
- The student must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.
- The student must behave in an ethical and moral manner that is consistent with professional values.
- The student must be able to accept constructive criticism and appropriately respond through modification of her/his behavior.

#### **Assessing Compliance and Technical Standards and Essential Functions**

Applicants are required to attest at the time they apply and accept an offer to matriculate that they satisfy these technical standards and requirements and thereafter must attest on an ongoing basis that they continue to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations. **At a minimum, PA students are required to acknowledge that they meet these technical standards prior to entry into the Program and prior to beginning the clinical phase.** The student must notify the PA Program Director if there is any change in his/her ability to meet the Technical Standards. Further detail regarding Assessing Compliance with [Technical Standard and Essential Functions](#) can be found in the [School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin](#).

### **B. Ethical and Legal Standards**

Candidates must meet the legal standards to be licensed to practice medicine. As such, candidates for admission must acknowledge and provide written explanation of any felony offense or disciplinary action taken against them prior to matriculation in the Program. In addition, should a student be convicted of any felony offense while in the Program, the student is required to immediately notify the Program Director as to the nature of the conviction. Students must verify that all information and documents submitted with their admissions application was accurate and complete. Submission of false information or documents, knowingly making false statements, or concealing material information on application materials will be grounds for denial of admission, withdrawal of admission offer, or dismissal. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses and/or falsification of admission or program-related documentation is subject to the [Code of Academic Integrity](#). The Student Progress Committee will refer the violation to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for review. Potential disciplinary action may include dismissal from the program.

### **C. Reasonable Accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities who can meet the essential functions and technical standards noted above. These accommodations must be accomplished without altering the essential requirements of the PA curriculum. Inability to meet the technical standards throughout Program enrollment will necessitate further review, which may delay or terminate progression and/or enrollment in the Program.

Students seeking reasonable accommodations are individually responsible for contacting the University's Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at (202) 994-8250 or [dss@gwu.edu](mailto:dss@gwu.edu); there is no automatic referral from Admissions or other GW offices. Furthermore, the University has no legal obligation to recognize any student as having a disability until that student has established eligibility with the Office of Disability Support Services. All information regarding the [registration process](#) can be found on their website. Students are responsible for supplying the required documentation at their own expense.

Upon approval of accommodations, the student is responsible for submitting documentation to the program and/or relevant faculty in order to receive accommodations. This must be done each semester for each course in accordance with DSS procedures.

A student receiving a testing accommodation must request such accommodations for scheduled examinations in every course for which they are registered according to the procedures set forth by DSS. If a student fails to submit a timely request for testing accommodations prior to a scheduled test, the approved accommodations may not be available for that scheduled test.

## D. PA Program Competencies

Entry-level physician assistants must demonstrate competency in performing a variety of functions and tasks. According to the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), competencies are defined as "the knowledge; interpersonal, clinical, and technical skills; professional behaviors; and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for physician assistant practice." These competencies are essential to preparing graduates to provide preventive, emergent, acute, and chronic care across various health care settings. Upon **completion** of the George Washington University Physician Assistant Program, *graduates* are expected to meet the following competencies:

### Medical Knowledge

- Describe the pertinent anatomy, pathophysiology, etiology, epidemiology, risk factors, clinical presentation, differential diagnoses, diagnostic workup, treatment plan, and prognosis of medical and surgical conditions. (MK1)
- Integrate core knowledge from the biomedical and clinical sciences with patient data to provide appropriate patient care. (MK2)
- Apply an evidence-based and analytical approach to clinical situations. (MK3)

### Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, their families, physicians, professional associates, and other members of the health care team. (ICS1)

### Patient Care

- Elicit appropriate patient histories and competently perform physical examination as well as other clinical and technical skills considered essential in the area of practice. (PC1)
- Demonstrate the ability to work effectively with physicians and other members of the health care team to provide patient-centered care. (PC2)
- Plan and administer care that is effective, age-appropriate, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of wellness. (PC3)



### **Professionalism**

- Recognize professional and personal limitations and exhibit a commitment to on-going professional development. (PR1)
- Employ responsible and ethical practices, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements in the delivery of patient care. (PR3)

### **Practice-Based Learning and Improvement**

- Critically analyze the medical literature and individual practice experiences in order to improve patient care. (PBL1)

### **Systems-Based Practice**

- Demonstrate an understanding of and responsiveness to societal, organizational, and economic factors that impact the provision of optimal patient care within the larger health care system. (SBP1)

## **E. Comportment and Professionalism Standards**

As members of the George Washington University community, students are required to be familiar with and abide by the provisions of the [Code of Student Conduct](#). The Code of Student Conduct sets the minimum standards for non-academic conduct and comportment (that is not covered by any other university policy, such as the Title IX Sexual Harassment and Related Conduct Policy) and defines the rights of students charged with a non-academic disciplinary violation. As Health Sciences students, students must also abide by the [Ethical Behavior and Professionalism Policy](#).

Additionally, as members of the health care community, Physician Assistant students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the principles and obligations inherent in professional practice. While medical knowledge and skill mastery are essential to clinical practice, professionalism, and comportment (see definitions below) are equally as important. Professional maturity, integrity, and competence are expected of students in every aspect of the educational and clinical setting with preceptors, instructors, coworkers, and patients. Students are obliged to practice diligence, loyalty, and discretion in all endeavors.

**Comportment:** behavior in a manner conformable to what is right, proper, or expected.

**Professionalism:** adherence to a set of values comprising statutory professional obligations, formally agreed codes of conduct, and the informal expectations of patients and colleagues.

Health Science professionals, including students in training, are expected to adhere to a high standard of behavior. These individuals are expected to demonstrate the following behaviors or characteristics of **professional comportment**, in clinical, academic, and related settings:

### **1. Excellence**

- a. Strives for the highest standards of competence in skills and knowledge.
- b. Accepts responsibility for educational challenges and self-learning.
- c. Demonstrates insight into own learning needs and actively seeks resources to address them.
- d. Accepts correction and guidance graciously and corrects shortcomings.

### **2. Respect for Persons**

- a. Shows respect, compassion, and empathy for others.
- b. Honors the choices and rights of others.
- c. Is sensitive and responsive to culture, gender, age, disabilities, and ethnicity of others.
- d. Establishes cooperative relationships with those who have differences in opinion, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, and language.
- e. Respects all instructors and their teaching and evaluative endeavors.
- f. Engages university, program, and clinical staff with respect.

### **3. Accountability**

- a. Is honest and forthright in all respects.
- b. Acknowledges errors and accepts correction.
- c. Is punctual and prepared for all obligations.
- d. Dependably completes assigned tasks.
- e. Appears neat in grooming, dress, and hygiene.
- f. Attends all required academic and clinical activities.
- g. Meets established deadlines.

### **4. Altruism**

- a. Places the needs of others ahead of his/her own needs.

### **5. Ethical and Legal Understanding**

- a. Maintains confidentiality.
- b. Is truthful to patients, colleagues, preceptors, faculty, and staff.
- c. Upholds ethical principles of the PA profession.
- d. Possesses personal and academic integrity.

### **6. Communication**

- a. Is able to effectively relate to patients, peers, and instructors.
- b. Establishes positive rapport with others.
- c. Effectively identifies patient concerns.
- d. Maintains composure during challenging interactions or situations.
- e. Uses language appropriate to others' level of understanding.
- f. Responds promptly to communication requests.

### **7. Clinical Competence**

- a. Demonstrates ongoing professional and educational development.
- b. Provides the highest quality of care to patients.
- c. Promotes the emotional and physical well-being of patients.
- d. Uses a holistic approach to patient care.

### **8. Professional Behavior**

- a. Shows initiative.
  - 1. Does not need excessive direction.
  - 2. Engages in self-directed learning.
- b. Demonstrates appropriate self-confidence.
  - 1. Performance not limited by self-confidence.

2. Does not display attitudes of superiority or self-importance.
- c. Demonstrates good judgement and awareness of limitations.
  1. Evaluates a situation and determines an appropriate course of action.
  2. Does not overestimate his/her abilities and knowledge.
  3. Seeks help when needed.
- d. Respects others.
  1. Does not make demeaning comments.
  2. Avoids sarcasm and bullying behaviors.
  3. Demonstrates sensitivity to power inequalities in professional relationships.
- e. Demonstrates appropriate use of electronics and social media.
  1. Recognizes that her/his social media presence reflects on herself/himself, George Washington University, the PA program, and the medical profession as a whole.
  2. Avoids harassing, demeaning, discriminatory, vulgar, or defamatory posts on all electronic platforms.
  3. Engages others in a respectful manner while using electronic media.
  4. Strictly adheres to the [GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences Social Media and Email Policy](#).
  5. Uses computer/iPad appropriately when in class.
- f. Displays self-control.
  1. Avoids impulsive behaviors.
  2. Demonstrates appropriate behavior when frustrated or angry.
- g. Exhibits appropriate classroom behavior.
  1. Avoids disrupting class.
  2. Is punctual.
  3. Engages in appropriate computer use.
  4. Is quietly attentive.
- h. Demonstrates cooperation.
  1. Works effectively with others.

## VIII. Academic Standards

### A. Academic Integrity

Since the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for the degree, it is imperative that a student maintain a high standard of individual honor in his/her scholastic work. To encourage and support such an environment, the University has adopted a [Code of Academic Integrity](#) based on the recommendations of the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate. All students are entitled to the benefits of the Code of Academic Integrity. It is the student's responsibility to know, understand, and conform to this code. Matters involving academic integrity proceedings will be handled in accordance with the procedures found in University's Code of Academic Integrity. In addition, the Office of Health Research, Compliance and Technology Transfer, provides oversight for [integrity in research](#).

## B. Attendance, Timeliness and Participation

Attendance, punctuality, and participation are expected from every student. This includes, but is not limited to, all classes, examinations, labs, standardized patient encounters, OSCEs, small group sessions, clerkships, meetings/conferences, and patient presentations.

## C. Grading

Grading scales may vary amongst courses. Grading scales for each course are published in the course syllabus. All *final* course and clerkship grades are entered into Banner according to the approved standard University grading scale. Banner is the administrative suite of applications that manages the University's core functions such as registration, grades, and financial aid processing.

Grade	Quality Points
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
F	0.0

At the discretion of the instructor, a grade of Incomplete (I) may be used in reporting a student's standing in a semester's work if the instructor has received a satisfactory explanation for the student's inability to complete the required work of the course. The grade may be used only if the student's prior performance in the course has been satisfactory. Refer to the ["Academic Standing"](#) section of the "Regulation" tab of the Health Sciences Programs Bulletin for further information on grade assignment.

## D. Examinations

Students are expected to take all examinations on the scheduled date and time. The rescheduling of an examination is determined by the course director or authorized designee if circumstances warrant (e.g., documented illness, previously identified religious holiday, or death in the family). If a student fails to take a scheduled examination without obtaining permission from the course director or authorized designee prior to the examination, the student will receive a score of "zero" on that scheduled examination. Students who arrive late to an examination will not be granted additional time to complete the examination. Exceptions to this examination policy are at the discretion of the course director or authorized designee.

### 1. In Person Examination Proctoring

#### a. Personal Belongings:

Students are permitted to bring a laptop and a pen or pencil with them into the testing room. Personal belongings such as cell phones, tablets, paper, books, study materials, bags (book bags, purses, etc.), outerwear, blankets, food and beverages must remain outside the testing room. Students may not have smart watches, activity trackers (e.g.,

Fitbit), or any other electronic or communication devices on their person or at their desk during written or practical exams or during exam reviews. These items should be secured in assigned student lockers prior to taking assessments. Students will not be permitted to take the exam until prohibited items are removed from the testing room.

**b. Noise-Canceling Devices:**

Headphones or other noise-canceling devices are not permitted in the testing room. Only GW PA Program issued ear plugs may be used.

**2. Remote Examinations:**

The academic and clinical phases of the program have distinct policies and procedures related to remote examinations.

**a. Didactic Phase:**

In the event that students complete an examination outside of Ross Hall or any other designated GW campus location, proctoring will be conducted remotely. To ensure the integrity of the exam, students must do the following:

- After selecting “start” to begin the exam, complete a 360 scan of the testing area, including the surface of the desk.
- The student cannot leave their testing area once the examination has begun
- If the student chooses to use a blank scratch sheet (no larger than 8.5x11”), they must show the front and back of the scratch sheet to their webcam. They must also show the writing implement used to the camera. This must be done after selecting “start” to begin the exam.
- At the conclusion of the examination, and before time expires, students must rip up the scratch sheet on camera.

**i. Personal Belongings:**

If the examination is completed remotely, personal belongings are permitted within the room in which an exam is taken. However, these items should not be in the immediate testing space. For example, it is permissible to have textbooks, notebooks, etc. on a bookshelf within the same room in which a student is taking an exam provided the contents of those items are not visible from where the student is seated during the exam. The same applies to water bottles, mobile devices, etc. Smart watches are not permitted during remote testing.

**ii. Noise-Canceling Devices:**

If the examination is completed remotely, GW PA Program-issued ear plugs will not be available for student use. In this instance, students may provide their own ear plugs (e.g., soft foam, silicone, or other ear plugs available for purchase over-the-counter) at their own expense. Ear buds, earphones, or other audio headsets may not be worn during the examination.

**iii. Flagged Results Protocol**

If an exam is flagged, the proctor will investigate the issue with the student and report findings to the program. It is at the discretion of the program to determine if the student lacked academic integrity, in which case, proceedings will be handled in accordance with the procedures found in the University's [Code of Academic Integrity](#).

**b. Clinical Phase:**

In the event that students complete an examination outside of Ross Hall or any other designated GW campus location, proctoring will be conducted remotely. The PA program is providing live remote proctoring services currently through MonitorEDU. For this process, a mobile phone with a working camera is required. The camera will connect to the service which will be monitoring your exam progress. It is also permissible to use a second device with an internet connection and camera, such as a laptop, iPad, or tablet if preferred.

You will be asked to show your ID and are permitted to use scratch paper. Both sides of the paper will need to be visualized by the proctor prior to exam start, and scratch paper must be torn up at the end of the exam as the proctor watches. Students can find additional information on remote proctoring at <https://monitoredu.com/faq>.

**i. Flagged Results Protocol**

If an exam is flagged, the proctor will investigate the issue with the student and report findings to the program. It is at the discretion of the program to determine if the student lacked academic integrity in which case proceedings will be handled in accordance with the procedures found in the University's [Code of Academic Integrity](#).

## **IX. Evaluation**

The faculty of the George Washington University Physician Assistant Program is charged with the responsibility to determine the clinical and professional capacity of every student. Throughout the Program, formative and summative evaluations are performed to measure the student's competence (using cognitive and non-cognitive measures), identify areas of weakness, and recommend whether or not the student should continue in the Program.

Faculty assigned as course directors have the ultimate decision-making authority concerning the assignment of course grades, which is guided by principles of criterion-referenced grading. All PA Program faculty members and advisors are involved in continually evaluating student conduct and professionalism.

### **A. General**

In general, the student's achievement in departmental and program courses is determined by:

- a.** course participation;
- b.** written examinations;

- c. demonstration of professionalism and comportment;
- d. clinical performance evaluations; and
- e. other written and/or oral assignments.

## B. Advanced Placement Policy

Advanced placement is defined as a waiver of required coursework included in the PA curriculum for currently enrolled students in the program which results in the student advancing in the curriculum without completing required curriculum components of the program.

The program offers advanced placement for the PA 6110, Evidence-Based Practice for PA Students. Students must request advanced placement in writing to the Program Director. If approved by the Program Director, a PA student enrolled in the MSHS program may be waived from taking PA 6110 (3 credits) and allowed to enroll in PA 6111 (1 credit) if the student:

- earned a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from a CEPH-accredited institution; and
- earned grades of B or better in MPH graduate level courses in Epidemiology (3 credits) and Biostatistics (3 credits) prior to enrollment in the PA program.

The program offers advanced placement for the PA 6111, Evidence-Based Practice for PA/MPH Students (1-credit). Joint degree students must request a waiver for PA 6111. If approved by the Director of PA/MPH, the student may enroll in PUBH 6242, Clinical Epidemiology and Decision Analysis (2-credits). In order to meet program requirements, the student must successfully pass the PUBH 6242 course with a grade of B or better.

The PA Program does not provide advanced placement for any other program required coursework or transfer credit for experiential learning activities.

## C. Letter-Graded Evaluation

### a. Written Examinations/Quizzes

Web-based and/or written course specific examinations are required in most courses. Specific grading criteria are described in course syllabi.

### b. Clinical Skills Testing

PA students have their clinical skills assessed in various courses. The student's competency in medical knowledge, communication, and patient care is assessed with this modality. Students are required to pass each clinical skill assessment. Clinical skills may be evaluated through various assessments including but not limited to written patient encounters, standardized patient (SP) encounters, or oral presentations. Specific grading criteria are described in course syllabi.

## D. Non-letter Graded Evaluation

### a. Professionalism Evaluations

Professionalism Evaluations are conducted each semester and as needed. Professionalism evaluations are based on a series of designations which include "Skill Demonstrated," "Skill Developing," "Skill Underdeveloped," or "Unsatisfactory." For other assignments, a student may earn either a "Pass/Fail" or "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" evaluation. Professionalism

evaluations are described in further detail in Section X.D of this Handbook. Assignments using non-letter grades are described in the Method of Evaluation section of the applicable course or clerkship syllabus.

**b. PACKRAT™ Examinations**

The PACKRAT™ Examination is a multiple-choice examination that allows for student self-assessment. The examination was created by PA educators and exam experts using an extensive blueprint and topic list. The web-based examination is administered twice; once at the end of the didactic year and no more than four months before graduation. Students and faculty use performance data to assess overall knowledge and identify areas requiring greater focus.

**c. Formative Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)**

Over the course of the clinical year, students are required to complete formative OSCEs. Formative OSCEs, aimed at preparing students for the summative OSCEs, consist of standardized patient (SP) encounters. Students are expected to conduct focused histories and physical examinations, develop differential diagnoses, and formulate plans for diagnosis, evaluation, and management. The student may be required to write patient encounter notes. Students are evaluated on technique in performing history and physical examinations, interpersonal and communication skills, clinical decision making, technical skills, and formulation of appropriate plans for evaluation and management. This is a Pass/Remediate activity. Remediation may include a repeat of the formative OSCE encounters after thorough review and plan for correction developed by the student and PA Program faculty.

## **E. Clinical Clerkship Evaluation**

During the clinical phase of the Program, PA students are evaluated using a number of instruments to assess knowledge, clinical skill development, professionalism, and overall competency to practice as a physician assistant.

**a. Preceptor/Instructor Evaluations**

The primary preceptor(s) and/or instructor for each rotation is required to evaluate the student's performance based on specific competency areas. In each area, student performance is rated as "High Pass," "Pass," "Low Pass," or "Needs Remediation." "Needs Remediation" equates to performing below acceptable knowledge and performance levels. Scores in each of the areas are converted to a numerical score which is included as a percentage of the final clerkship grade. Students must pass the final preceptor evaluation with an overall grade of 70% or higher. If a student receives "needs remediation" in more than 50% of any major evaluation category, they will be referred to SPC. Any violation of the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) while on clinical rotations can result in the failure of a final preceptor evaluation no matter the final numerical score. Qualitative data are also collected on the evaluation form.

In most circumstances, the primary preceptor/instructor of record will be the person completing the preceptor/instructor evaluation. A student may petition the course director and the primary preceptor/instructor to request a second preceptor/instructor evaluator or an alternative preceptor/instructor evaluator if the student feels the primary preceptor's/instructor's evaluation is not representative of his/her performance for the



entire rotation. A maximum of two evaluations will be accepted per rotation and averaged to calculate the final preceptor evaluation grade. At the discretion of the Director Clinical Education, a third evaluation may be sought due to extenuating circumstances.

If a student fails the clinical preceptor/instructor evaluation component or receives a final rotation grade of less than 70%, a grade of F will be assigned as the final rotation grade. Failure of a course for any reason is an academic deficiency. Students with an academic deficiency will be referred to the Student Progress Committee. In addition to recommendation of the Student Progress Committee, the student must repeat the rotation. The student must successfully pass all of the components of the respective repeat rotation including the end-of-rotation exam. A student is only allowed to repeat one (1) clinical rotation during the entire clinical year. A student who fails more than one clinical rotation will be recommended for dismissal by the Student Progress Committee.

## **b. Student Documentation Grade Components**

### **a. Mid-Rotation Evaluation**

Mid-rotation evaluation forms are completed at the mid-point of each rotation. The form is completed by both the student and preceptor/instructor to assess whether the student is meeting expectations for each rotation. The evaluation is used to inform discussion about performance and allow the student the opportunity to improve his/her performance if necessary. The evaluation is a component of the student documentation grade that is used to calculate the final clerkship grade. The mid-rotation evaluation must be submitted by a specified deadline for each rotation.

### **b. Rotation Patient Encounter Logs**

Each clinical rotation requires rotation-specific logging requirements. Logging of rotation-specific patient encounters are to be submitted at a specified time during each specific clinical rotation.

Students must have documented the following patient encounters in the specified programmatic database for the clinical phase:

#### **Patient Encounters by Age:**

- i. Five (5) **INFANT** encounters (patients less than 1 year of age)
- ii. Ten (10) **CHILDREN** encounters (patients > 1 year of age but < 12 years of age)
- iii. Five (5) **ADOLESCENT** encounters (patients > 12 years of age but < 18 years of age)
- iv. One hundred (100) **ADULT** patient encounters (patients > 18 years of age but < 65 years of age)
- v. Thirty (30) **GERIATRIC** encounters (patients > 65 years of age)

#### **Patient encounters by Type:**

- i. Thirty (30) **ACUTE** encounters: related to a medical condition with a rapid onset and short course (e.g., Upper respiratory infection, ankle sprain)
- ii. Thirty (30) **CHRONIC** encounters: related to a medical condition that is persistent and long lasting (e.g., hyperlipidemia, HTN, DM)
- iii. Fifteen (15) **EMERGENT** encounters: related to a medical condition requiring immediate intervention (e.g., stroke, respiratory distress, asthma exacerbation, chest pain, MI, appendicitis)
- iv. Thirty (30) **PREVENTATIVE** encounters: related to promoting health and reducing

disease (e.g., Immunizations [adult and pediatric], well-child check, colonoscopy, well women exams, pap smears, annual physical exams, breast exams, sports physicals)

**Patient encounters by Setting:**

- i. Thirty (30) **INPATIENT MEDICINE** encounters
- ii. Thirty (30) **OUTPATIENT** encounters
- iii. Thirty (30) **EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT** encounters
- iv. Five (5) **PRE-OPERATIVE** encounters
- v. Ten (10) **INTRA-OPERATIVE** encounters
- vi. Five (5) **POST-OPERATIVE** encounters
- vii. Five (5) **PRENATAL** encounters
- viii. Five (5) **GYNECOLOGIC** encounters

The PA program faculty will monitor student encounter logs for compliance. Students progressing through the clinical phase who are not on target for achieving the patient encounters will be contacted by PA program faculty who will arrange alternative learning experiences, which may include changes to the rotation and elective placements, simulation exercises, or other experiences to ensure compliance with the above requirements which may delay the student's graduation. At least fifty percent of patient logging requirements must be met through direct patient care.

**c. End-of-rotation Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and active participation at end-of-rotation (EOR) activities is mandatory and monitored carefully. In rare exceptions and with the Director of Clinical Education's approval, a personal day may be used for one missed EOR within the clinical year. All examinations, journal club activities, and administrative sessions must be attended without exception. If you have two consecutive away rotations outside of the DMV, you are expected to attend all EOR sessions virtually.

**c. Course-Specific Assignments**

Course-specific assignments are required for each rotation. Each assignment is graded and is included as a percentage of the final clerkship grade. Additional assignments may be required at the discretion of the preceptor or clerkship director. Requirements for the course-specific assignments and additional assignments are described in the clerkship syllabi.

**d. End-of-Rotation Examinations**

Students are required to complete and pass end-of-rotation examinations for all clinical rotations with the exception of the Elective rotation which has an alternative form of summative evaluation (see course syllabus). These web-based, objective examinations were developed by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). Each examination evaluates competency in relevant content specific to each rotation. The numerical score is included in the calculation of the final clerkship grade.

The student must achieve a passing grade for all EOR examinations. Criteria for EOR examinations are outlined in each of the clerkship syllabi. A grade of "0" (zero) is initially assigned to any score less than passing. The student must repeat the exam within seven (7) calendar days of exam grade notification. If the student successfully passes the retake opportunity, the lowest passing grade will be documented as the weighted component for

the EOR examination.

If a student fails both attempts of the EOR exam, a grade of “0” is assigned as the final grade for the EOR examination. A grade of “F” will also be assigned for the final rotation grade. The student will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for disposition. In addition to recommendation of the Student Progress Committee, the student must repeat the rotation. The student must successfully pass all of the components of the respective repeat rotation including the end-of-rotation exam. A student is only allowed to repeat one (1) clinical rotation during the entire clinical year. A student who fails more than one clinical rotation will be recommended for dismissal by the Student Progress Committee.

## **F. Graduation Specific Evaluations for Program Competencies**

### **a. Summative Evaluation**

Within the four (4) months prior to program completion, students will complete a summative evaluation. The aim of the summative evaluation is to verify that each student meets the program competencies required to enter clinical practice. Assessment of a) clinical and technical skills, b) clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, c) interpersonal and communication skills, d) medical knowledge, e) professional behaviors, f) practice-based learning and improvement, and g) systems-based practice are conducted.

The summative evaluation addresses the following program competencies (See Section VII.D; PA Program Competencies of this Handbook):

Summative OSCE: MK2, MK3, ICS1, PC1, PC3, ICS1

Comprehensive Knowledge Based Exam: MK1, MK2, PC3

Professionalism: ICS1, PR1, PR2

Practice Based Learning and Improvement: PBL1

Systems Based Practice: SBP1

The summative evaluation includes five components:

### **a. Summative OSCEs**

The summative OSCEs consist of a series of standardized patient encounters and technical skills stations. Students are evaluated on technique in performing the history and physical examination, technical skills, interpersonal and communication skills, clinical decision making, and formulation of an appropriate plan for diagnosis, evaluation, and management. The summative OSCE is a Pass/Fail activity and must be passed successfully as a requirement for graduation. Students who are unsuccessful during the first summative OSCE evaluation will have a second opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency. If the student fails the summative evaluation on the second attempt, they will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for further action.

### **b. Comprehensive Knowledge-Based Examination**

A comprehensive examination is administered upon completion of all coursework. This is a comprehensive examination that reflects knowledge gained during the course of the PA Program with an emphasis on the areas covered in the required rotations (general inpatient medicine, primary care medicine, pediatrics, women’s health, surgery, emergency medicine, elective, and behavioral medicine). The examination is mapped to the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) blueprint in terms of organ system and task areas. Failure to pass the Comprehensive

Knowledge-Based examination is considered an academic deficiency (see Section XI.B.7) and will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for review and recommended action.

The program uses the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) Summative Examination for the end of program comprehensive knowledge-based examination. The minimum passing grade for the examination will be determined by 1 standard deviation (SD) below the national mean for the previous year.

A student who fails the Comprehensive Knowledge-Based Examination will have the opportunity for a repeat examination within 7 calendar days (including weekends and holidays) of exam grade notification. If the student successfully passes the retake opportunity, the student passes the competency knowledge-based examination. A student who fails a second offering of the Comprehensive Knowledge-Based Examination will be referred to the SPC for disposition, which may result in a recommendation for dismissal.

**c. Professionalism Evaluation**

Evaluation of professionalism is assessed over the duration of enrollment in the PA program, however, a final professionalism assessment requiring a rating of “Skill Demonstrated” for all professionalism parameters is conducted during the final two rotations to demonstrate the student has met the program competencies. Refer to Section X.D Professionalism Performance Students for consequences should a student not achieve the required ratings.

**d. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement**

Evaluation of Practice-Based Learning and Improvement is assessed over the duration of the clinical phase, however, a final Practice-Based Learning and Improvement assessment requiring a rating of 3.0 or higher on the Preceptor Evaluation of the Student is conducted during the final two rotations to demonstrate the student has met the program competency.

**e. Systems-Based Practice**

Evaluation of Systems-Based Practice is assessed over the duration of the clinical phases, however, a final Systems-Based Practice assessment requiring a rating of 3.0 or higher on the Preceptor Evaluation of the Student is conducted during the final two rotations to demonstrate the student has met the program competency.

## **G. Program and Course Evaluation**

The PA Program is committed to delivering a curriculum that will prepare students to deliver optimal health care in an ever-changing environment. In our commitment to the process of continuous quality improvement, students are involved in course evaluations, supervised clinical practice evaluations, and faculty evaluations at the conclusion of each semester. Students are strongly encouraged to complete these evaluations for didactic courses and supervised clinical practice experiences.

At the conclusion of the clinical year, students are asked to evaluate the entire curriculum through an anonymous survey.

## **X. Satisfactory Performance and Progress**

### **A. General**

Student grades, academic integrity, professionalism, and ability to meet the technical standards are factors in student progression. The student must meet all of these program requirements to remain in the Program.

### **B. Faculty Advisor**

Each student is assigned a member of the faculty as his or her academic advisor. The role of the Faculty Advisor is to monitor student progress in the Program and to serve as the student's mentor, guide, and advocate. Each student is encouraged to meet with his or her Faculty Advisor at a minimum of once every semester. However, when an academic or professionalism issue arises, students are required to promptly meet with their Faculty Advisor.

If a personal problem arises, students are advised to meet with their Faculty Advisor at their discretion; particularly if the problem is impacting their academic performance. Students may be referred to on-campus services including, but not limited to, the [Colonial Health Center](#) for medical care or counseling services or [Disability Support Services](#), depending on the problem. Short-term counseling is available for students through [Counseling and Psychological Services](#). Faculty may also make referrals to the [GW Care Team](#) who will work with students to identify and the most appropriate interventional services to address their personal issue(s).

Students can directly access the [SMHS Office of Student Support which provides academic and mental health support](#). Students can also self-refer to the GW Care Team.

### **C. Academic Performance**

#### **1. Satisfactory Academic Performance**

Due to a hierarchical and highly integrative curriculum, all coursework is built upon the foundation of previous coursework.

Satisfactory performance and progress are defined as:

- a. Obtaining a passing grade (C and above) in all PA Program required courses;
- b. Maintaining a cumulative PA grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher measured over all courses in the Physician Assistant Program curriculum. Courses taken toward an MPH or other GW degree are not included in this measure;
- c. Demonstrating clinical competence commensurate with the level of training required in the Program. Clinical competence includes, but is not limited to, clinical judgment, technical and psychomotor skills, interpersonal skills and attitudes, and professional comportment.
- d. Achieving a "Pass" or "Satisfactory" evaluation on all non-letter graded assignments and projects designated as "required."

It is the responsibility of any student who is underperforming to seek the assistance of the course instructor and his/her advisor.

#### **2. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

[Satisfactory academic progress](#) is monitored by the Office of Student Financial Assistance; federal financial aid may be impacted when a student's academic progress falls below the federal standard.

## **D. Professionalism Performance**

Each student is monitored for professionalism performance by the faculty on a continuing basis throughout his or her enrollment in the Program. A written evaluation is completed at the end of each semester and at other times when deemed necessary. The parameters of the Professionalism Evaluation are listed in Section VII.E, Comportment and Professionalism Standards.

If, on any occasion, a student is given a "Skill Underdeveloped" rating, the student will be given up to 6 weeks (and no less than 3 weeks) in which to make necessary corrections. The student will work with his/her faculty advisor, who will consult with full faculty, to develop a plan for remediation of this professionalism deficiency. After the aforementioned period of time, the student will be re-evaluated and must have improved to the point of receiving a "Skill Demonstrated" or "Skill Developing" rating as determined by the faculty advisor. If the student fails to achieve a "Skill Demonstrated" or "Skill Developing" rating by the designated time, an "Unsatisfactory" rating will be assigned.

Any action, behavior, or incident at any time during a student's enrollment that results in a student receiving a rating of "Unsatisfactory" in one or more categories of the Professionalism Evaluation will require the student to meet with the Student Progress Committee to determine if Professionalism Probation (see Section XI.D1), or immediate disciplinary dismissal from the Program is indicated.

A rating of "Skill Demonstrated" for all professionalism parameters must be obtained by the end of the program of study. Students who do not achieve a rating of "Skill Demonstrated" on all parameters by the end of the program of study will be delayed in graduating and will be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for consideration of professionalism remediation or dismissal from the program.

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

The PA Program established a Student Progress Committee to manage processes related to student progress, academic performance, and professional development. The SPC is an advisory committee appointed by the PA Program Director that informs the director on all matters related to student progress, deceleration, remediation, and dismissal. The SPC is comprised of a PA faculty chairperson and at least three (3) additionally appointed PA faculty.

### **1. SPC Charge**

To monitor academic and professionalism performance throughout a student's enrollment in the PA Program by:

- a. identifying academic and professional deficiencies in collaboration with other faculty members;
- b. reviewing and approving the progress and promotion of all PA students in the curriculum;
- c. monitoring attainment of all PA program graduation requirements;
- d. reviewing and making recommendations to the PA Program Director regarding students with unsatisfactory academic or professional performance.

## 2. SPC Procedures and Actions

At the end of each semester, and as necessary, the SPC will review the academic and professionalism records of each PA student and make recommendations as necessary. When the SPC needs to meet with a student, the student will be notified via email by the SPC chair or designee to meet with the SPC to discuss their academic standing and/or professional behavior. The PA student is required to confirm via email receipt of the invitation to meet within three (3) calendar days. Failure to respond in a timely manner may impact the student's professionalism evaluation. After meeting with the PA student, the SPC will determine if further action (see Section X.E3 below) is necessary. The student may invite their assigned PA program advisor to attend and advocate for them at the meeting.

The SPC will present their recommendations in writing to the PA Program Director within three (3) business days after meeting with the student. The Program Director will review the SPC recommended action(s), make the final determination of recommended action(s), and communicate the final decision/outcome to the student.

## 3. Possible Recommended Actions by the SPC

Actions the SPC may recommend include, but are not limited to: no further action, remediation, deceleration, suspension, and/or dismissal. With the exception of "no further action," the Program Director will review the SPC recommended action(s), make the final determination of recommended action(s), and communicate the final decision/outcome to the student. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Program Director, the student is first obligated to make a serious effort to resolve the issue with the Program Director. Students who believe that an evaluation is arbitrary or capricious should use the appeal procedure outlined in the [School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin](#).

## F. Remediation

Remediation is a process to address deficiencies of a student's knowledge, skills, or behavior in order to assist in achieving academic or professionalism competency(ies) and/or standards. The process allows the student the opportunity to demonstrate successful achievement of knowledge, skills, or behavior in a program course, clerkship, competency, or professional behavior.

Remediation through formal reassessment of knowledge and skills, such that the correction of these deficiencies is necessary for the student to continue in the Program (excluding course failure which results in deceleration) occurs under the following circumstances:

### Didactic Year

- Failure of the first-administration of the Head-to-Toe examination in Clinical Assessment I (Refer to course syllabi).
- Failure of a section exam in either Clinical Medicine I or II (Refer to course syllabi).
- Failure of the first-administration of the Cumulative exam in either Clinical Medicine I or II (Refer to course syllabi).
- Failure of a clinical medicine section on the Cumulative exam in either Clinical Medicine I or II when the student previously failed the section exam (Refer to course syllabi).
- Placement on Professionalism Probation (Refer to Section X.D of this Handbook).
- To avoid course failure, being placed on academic probation, or to avoid dismissal while on academic probation, a student may retake a maximum of two (2) failed assessments during the

didactic year. The highest score a student will be able to earn on the retake will be a 70% or the lowest “C” on the grading scale.

#### Clinical Year

- Failure of the first-administration of an EOR exam up to a maximum of two (2) failed EOR exams (Refer to Section IX.E.4 of this Handbook).
- Failure of the course-specific assignment for the Elective Clinical Practicum (Refer to clerkship syllabi).
- Failure of a preceptor evaluation (Refer to Section IX.E.1 of this Handbook).
- Failure of the first-administration of the Formative OSCE (Refer to Section IX.D.3 of this Handbook).
- Failure of the first-administration of the Summative OSCE (Refer to Section IX.F.1a of this Handbook).
- Failure of the first-administration of the Clinical Phase Comprehensive Knowledge-Based Examination (Refer to Section IX.F.1b of this Handbook).
- Placement on Professionalism Probation (Refer to Section X.D of this Handbook).

### **G. Advancement to Clinical Phase**

A student may begin the Clinical Phase when all of the following conditions have been met:

- a. All didactic course work in the PA Program curriculum has been completed with a grade of “C” or better;
- b. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in PA Program coursework has been achieved;
- c. Student Health Clearance, including documentation of immunizations and annual TB screening and influenza vaccination, is completed;
- d. Successful completion of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training is documented;
- e. Drug screening and criminal background check clearance is obtained prior to the start of the clinical phase;
- f. Successful completion of all competency skills (e.g., BLS, ACLS, etc.) with an expiration date that surpasses the date of program completion;
- g. Verification that he/she meets the Technical Standards; and
- h. Documentation of continued enrollment in a health insurance program.

## **XI. Unsatisfactory Academic and Professionalism Performance**

### **A. Academic and Professionalism Deficiencies**

All PA Program students are required to adhere to the Academic Standing Policies as outlined in the most current [School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin](#). Signing of the PA Program Handbook Student’s Acknowledgement page verifies that the student has received copies or has access to these materials and agrees to adhere to the policies within.

### **B. Identification of Academic Deficiencies**

Any member of the PA Program Faculty may identify a student having difficulty meeting requirements in a course. All academic deficiencies (see below) will be reviewed by the Student Progress Committee (SPC). The SPC Chair or their designee will report on academic deficiencies at regular program meetings. The advisor of record will meet with the student regarding the academic deficiency and document the meeting and discussion within the student file.

An Academic Deficiency exists if any of the following are identified:



1. failure of two (2) or more examinations or major assessments (worth more than ten (10) percent of the course grade) in a semester;
2. failure of a clerkship within a semester;
3. failure to demonstrate academic progression\*;
4. failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 in all PA Program coursework;
5. receipt of "Needs Remediation" in more than 50% of any major evaluation category (e.g., Medical Knowledge, Patient Care, Professionalism) on the final preceptor evaluation;
6. preceptor indicates on the mid-rotation evaluation that the student is at risk of rotation failure;
7. failure of any component of the summative evaluation (see section IX.F.1);
8. failure of any first offering of an end-of-rotation examination; or
9. a running end of rotation examination average below 70% throughout the duration of the clinical phase<sup>§</sup>.

\*Failure to demonstrate academic progression applies to any student who has a grade of C+ (or below) in three (3) or more courses at the midpoint of a semester (week five for the summer semester; week seven for the fall and spring semesters).

<sup>§</sup>An end of rotation exam average will be calculated after a student has completed two end of rotation exams; a running average will be calculated thereafter. If a student fails an end of rotation exam but passes the same exam as part of the exam retake process, only the original exam score will be included in the running exam average; the retake exam grade will not be incorporated into the exam average.

## C. Consequences of Academic Deficiencies

### 1. Potential Consequences of Academic Deficiencies

When an Academic Deficiency occurs, depending upon the frequency, nature, and extent of the deficiency(ies), the following actions may be recommended by the Student Progress Committee (SPC). A student may be:

- A. placed on Academic Warning (cumulative GPA falls between 3.0 and 3.2);
- B. placed on Academic Probation (cumulative GPA < 3.0);
- C. required to remediate the deficiency;
- D. required to repeat the course(s)/clerkship(s);
- E. decelerated (See Deceleration Policy)
- F. subject to a change in clinical year clerkship assignment and/or sequencing;
- G. placed on a learning contract which delineates specific requirements for student progress; and/or
- H. recommended for dismissal.

### 2. Academic Warning

After semester grades are posted, a student whose cumulative PA GPA falls between a 3.0 and 3.2 will receive a letter of warning.

### 3. Academic Probation and Dismissal

After semester grades are posted, a student whose cumulative PA GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on Academic Probation. For details on academic probation and dismissal, consult the [School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin](#).

A student must have a PA cumulative GPA of 3.0 to progress to the clinical year. If a student does not meet this requirement, the student will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for evaluation and disposition.

A cumulative PA-only GPA of 3.0 or higher is required to graduate from the Program. Any student with a PA cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at the conclusion of Semester 5 (or 8 if enrolled in the joint degree program) must be able to mathematically achieve a PA cumulative GPA of 3.0 by graduation. If it is mathematically improbable for the student to achieve a cumulative PA-only GPA of 3.0 or higher, he/she will be counseled to withdraw from the program.

#### **4. Deceleration Policy**

ARC-PA defines deceleration as “the loss of a student from the entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the physician assistant program.” Deceleration results in a change of expected graduation year. A student within the GW PA Program may be decelerated for the following reasons:

1. A student takes a leave of absence from the PA Program (see Leave of Absence Policy).
2. A student fails a didactic course and must repeat the course the following year.
3. A student is suspended from the PA Program.

A student who is decelerated may be required to repeat all or selected parts of the curriculum. Any student required to repeat a course or rotation must anticipate a delay in the timing of his/her graduation and will incur additional tuition and fees necessary to repeat coursework at the University’s prevailing graduate per credit rate. Current graduate per credit rates can be found on the [SMHS Tuition & Student Loans website](#). A student who receives a failing grade in any course (i.e., less than a “C”) may not be allowed to progress within the curriculum until that course or a comparable course approved by the Program is satisfactorily completed. Provided that the student has not failed any other courses and is not currently on probation, he or she may be given one (1) opportunity to retake the failed course when it is offered next. Most courses in the didactic phase are only offered one time per year; therefore, the student may be required to take a leave of absence for up to one year and repeat the failed course at that time. If the student successfully completes the failed course, he or she may be given permission to progress.

A plan for deceleration/re-entry is developed by the PA Program Director in consult with the PA faculty. The plan includes identified courses, as well as other program requirements/competencies that the student must satisfy along with associated deadlines. Additionally, the student may be required to relinquish any student leadership or committee membership and will be advised to reconsider participating in any extracurricular activities so the student may focus on resolving the identified deficiency.

The student is required to sign the designated deceleration/re-entry plan and a copy is maintained in the student file. Upon re-entry, students are monitored by the Student Progress Committee. Failure to meet the terms of the deceleration/re-entry contract or program academic progression will result in the student being referred to the Student Progress Committee for review which may include a recommendation for dismissal. A student who fails the same course more than one time or who fails two different courses across the curriculum—either academic or clinical courses—will be referred to SPC who will recommend dismissal to the Program Director regardless of the cumulative GPA. A student recommended for dismissal will receive further communication from

the Program Director in accordance with procedures outlined in the “Academic Standing” section of the School of Medicine and [Health Science Programs Bulletin](#).

Regardless of deceleration, the maximum length of time for completing the Program of Study, including a leave of absence(s), is 40 months total, from the initial day of matriculation (MSHS students) and 52 months from the initial day of matriculation (MSHS/MPH).

## **D. Identification of and Consequences of Professionalism Deficiencies**

### **1. Professionalism Probation**

A professional deficiency is any rating other than “Skill Demonstrated” or “Skill Developing” on the professional evaluation other than at the end of the program when a student must have achieved “Skill Demonstrated” in all domains (see Section VII.E). A student may be placed on Professionalism Probation for an “Unsatisfactory” rating on the Professionalism Evaluation. The duration of Professionalism Probation is defined by the period of time it takes to remediate the unsatisfactory performance. Failure to achieve a “Skill Developing” or “Skill Demonstrated” rating by the end of the professionalism probationary period defined by the SPC may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the Program.

A student will be allowed only one (1) period of Professionalism Probation throughout the entire enrollment in the Program. Once a student is placed on Professionalism Probation and successfully completes all of the requirements for the probationary period, the student will be returned to “good standing” status in the Program. Any occasion for a second Professionalism Probation will result in the SPC making a recommendation to the Program Director for dismissal.

Students who do not achieve a rating of “Skill Demonstrated” on all parameters by the end of the program of study after a period of professionalism probation will be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for consideration of professionalism remediation or dismissal from the program. Professionalism remediation at the end of the program of study will cause a delay in graduation as the student may be required to complete an Independent Study course. This additional course will be subject to a per credit hour tuition rate.

## **E. Dismissal**

### **1. Grounds for Dismissal**

The following conditions may be grounds for the SPC to recommend dismissal from the Program:

- a. Inability to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 or higher during the probationary period; and/or
- b. A second failure of the same didactic or clinical course; and/or
- c. Failure of a second course, didactic or clinical, at any time during the curriculum; and/or
- d. Placement on academic or professionalism probation for a second time during the curriculum; and/or
- e. A cumulative GPA less than 3.0 prior to entry into the clinical phase; and/or
- f. A cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at the conclusion of Semester 5 (or Semester 8 if enrolled in the joint program) that, based on the quality point-bearing credits in Semester 6 (or Semester 9 if enrolled in the joint program), cannot mathematically

- be raised to a minimum of 3.0; and/or
- g. Failure to pass any component of the summative evaluation; and/or
- h. Inability to achieve a “Skill Demonstrated” or “Skill Developing” in one or more categories of the Professionalism Evaluation in which the student received an “Unsatisfactory” rating by the end of the probationary period as determined by the SPC; and/or
- i. Inability to achieve a “Skill Demonstrated” rating in all parameters of the Professionalism Evaluation by the end of the program of study; and/or
- j. Egregious or unresolved professional abilities or comportment issues.

Recommendations for dismissal by the SPC will be referred to the program director for final determination. Following review, the program director will make the final determination of student academic process, including dismissal from the program. If the recommendation for dismissal is accepted, the student will receive further communication from the Program Director in accordance with procedures outlined in the “Academic Standing” section of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin.

## **2. Dismissal Appeal**

A student who wishes to appeal a program dismissal decision must submit a request, including optional supporting documentation, in writing, within ten (10) calendar days of notification of the dismissal to the Associate Dean for Health Sciences or delegate. All materials must be submitted via email to [hsp@gwu.edu](mailto:hsp@gwu.edu). The student’s written appeal must clearly state which of the following conditions applies and set forth specific facts and relevant supporting materials to justify the merits of the appeal request:

- Procedural error as set forth in policy,
- Evidence is available now that was not available at the time of the dismissal to warrant an appeal, and/or
- Other circumstance or condition (describe in detail).

Upon receipt of a dismissal appeal process that demonstrates at least one of the conditions stated above, the Associate Dean for Health Sciences refers the request to the Health Sciences Student Evaluation Committee, which is a SMHS standing committee. This committee investigates the dismissal decision and applicable policies, in consultation with the student and program faculty.

The student may address the Committee and provide information to support the appeal. The Committee may prescribe, in its sole discretion, the manner, time, and form of any such address and/or information. Should the student choose not to meet with the Committee, the student may submit a written statement and any supporting documentation to the committee chair no later than the date the appeal is scheduled to be heard. The Committee may seek further information, testimony, or witnesses at their discretion during the appeals process. While the student may have advisors, counsel, or other individuals available to lend support throughout the process, only the student who is appealing the dismissal is permitted to meet with and speak to or address the Health Sciences Student Evaluation Committee. Should the student choose not to meet with the Committee, the student may submit an additional written statement and any supporting documentation to the committee chair no later than 2 business days prior to date the

student's address to the Committee is scheduled. The Committee may seek further information, testimony, or witnesses at their discretion during the appeals process. Students who provide testimony at the request of the committee must abide by the Code of Student Conduct and the Ethical Behavior and Professionalism Policy throughout the appeals process.

After adequate investigation, the Committee makes a recommendation to the associate dean, who subsequently renders a decision to uphold or reject the program dismissal decision. The decision of the associate dean is final.

## **XI. Graduation Requirements**

### **A. Graduation Requirements for the Two-Year PA Program**

A candidate for the degree of MSHS in The George Washington University PA Program must meet all the following requirements:

1. The student must achieve all (academic and professionalism) PA Program requirements. The Program's faculty evaluates student achievement through periodic review and summative evaluation of student performance.
2. The student must maintain and graduate with at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in PA Program coursework.
3. The student must be free of all indebtedness to the University. See the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin for graduation requirements.
4. The student must pass all components of the summative evaluation including the summative objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) and the comprehensive knowledge-based examination.
5. The student must have documented the following patient encounters in the specified programmatic database for the clinical phase (see section IX.E.2b for details):
  - Encounters by Age
  - Encounters by Condition Type (acute, chronic, emergent, preventive)
  - Encounters by Setting (inpatient, outpatient, emergency department, operative (pre-, intra-, post))
  - Other encounters: prenatal and gynecologic
6. A student must achieve "Skill Demonstrated" rating for each parameter of the Professionalism Evaluation.

### **B. Graduation Requirements for the Three-Year Joint Degree Program**

A candidate for the joint degrees of MSHS and MPH in The George Washington University PA Program must complete graduation requirements for both the MSHS (see above) and MPH. Degrees will not be conferred until requirements for both degrees have been satisfied.

### **C. Graduation Clearance**

The Student Progress Committee will confirm that all PA Program graduation requirements (except for financial obligations to the University) have been met. The Director of PA/MPH Program will confirm that joint degree students have met the graduation requirements for the conferral of the MPH degree.

## **XII. Student Rights and Responsibilities**

### **A. Policies and Procedures**

**1. Statement of Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination**

The George Washington University does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of protected characteristics or any other basis prohibited by federal law, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, or other applicable law. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, activities, and procedures of the University, including admission to education programs and employment. Reports of discrimination should go to the units outlined in [the policy](#).

**2. Title IX Sexual Harassment and Related Conduct Policy**

The George Washington University is committed to maintaining a positive climate for study and work, in which individuals are judged solely on relevant factors, such as skill and performance, and can pursue their activities in an atmosphere that is free from discrimination, harassment and violence. The university does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs or activities. Sexual harassment is destructive to such a climate and will not be tolerated in the university community.

If students would like to report a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, or other gender discrimination they may visit the [Title IX Office](#) or contact the [Title IX Coordinator](#) in person, by telephone, by email or online at:

Asha Reynolds  
Director and Title IX Coordinator  
The George Washington University  
812 20th Street NW (Building YY)  
Washington, D.C. 20052  
202-994-7434  
[titleix@gwu.edu](mailto:titleix@gwu.edu)

The Title IX [Sexual Harassment and Related Conduct Policy](#) is available online.

**3. Policy on Prohibited Relationships with Students**

The Policy on Prohibited Relationships with Students states that, with few exceptions, sexual or amorous relationships between graduate students and faculty, administrators, or certain other individuals (including staff), who have or may have in the future an instructional, evaluative or supervisory responsibility over the graduate student while the graduate student is at the university is prohibited. [This policy](#) is available for review online.

**4. Mistreatment of Students**

The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences is committed to maintaining a positive environment for study and training in which individuals can pursue their education and professional activities in an atmosphere that is respectful, inclusive, and safe. The mission of the Office of Professional and Respectful Learning (OPRL) is to foster this environment for all members of the GW SMHS Community. The office will accomplish this goal through recognizing those who create a safe and respectful environment, helping to develop educational initiatives for personal development and managing reports of learner mistreatment. The office will manage these reports in a way that respects and protects the personal privacy of all those involved.

To submit a concern about the learning environment, mistreatment report or a teaching accolade, please visit:  
<https://oprl.smhs.gwu.edu/>

There is additional information about what happens to your report on the OPRL website. In addition to the OPRL, there are a variety of other mechanisms to report mistreatment. You could reach out confidentially to the SMHS Ombudsperson.  
<https://smhs.gwu.edu/academics/health-sciences/student-services/office-ombudsperson>

There are student representatives that sit on the Committee for the Learning Environment who are also available to discuss your concerns in a confidential manner.

Please reference the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences [Mistreatment Policy and Procedures](#) for additional information.

## **5. Privacy of Student Records**

The university and its faculty and staff will protect the privacy of students' education records as required by federal law and regulations. The University's policy on the privacy of student records can be found [here](#).

## **6. Safety and Security**

The George Washington University is committed to the safety and well-being of all members of its community. Because security on an open, urban campus such as GW may be a concern, special precautions have been taken to protect students. The University Police Department provides 24-hour police service to the campus community and works to improve conditions related to accident and crime prevention. Emergency telephones are situated throughout the campus, including parking lots, and many campus buildings are accessible only to students holding current GWorld Card. The University reports information to the community about incidents of crime, violence, and fire that occur on campus. To sign up for emergency text messages or for additional information on emergency communication resources at GW, visit [Campus Advisories](#). Visit the [GW Office of Safety and Security](#) to review policies and procedures. Please refer to the [University Police Department](#) (UPD) website for information regarding campus security and personal safety.

Security is provided in Ross Hall and the GW campus police. Guidelines for protecting the property, privacy, and security of SMHS students, faculty, and employees is outlined the [SMHS Security and Access Policy and Procedures](#). Security information flyers/packets are hung on the walls of common spaces in Ross Hall. In addition, course syllabi have emergency preparedness information with contact numbers included.

During the clinical year, safety and security guidelines vary by clinical site. During the site orientation, students should inquire about specific safety and security protocols that must be followed.

GW Alert is the university's notification system that sends emergency text message and email alerts to the GW community. Students are requested to maintain current contact information by logging on to [alert.gwu.edu](http://alert.gwu.edu). Download the GW Personal Alarm Locator (GW PAL), a mobile safety and security application that allows users to alert GWPD of a crime, report crime tips anonymously, provide a safety profile, and identify their location in real time.

Please refer to GW guidelines for addressing exposures to chemical or infectious diseases (see section XII B.12). In case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If your building is affected, follow the evacuation procedures and seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

Please communicate any issues related to security and safety immediately to your faculty advisor or the Program Director.

## **7. Other University Policies**

For all University-related Policies and Procedures including, but not limited to, Alcohol and Other Drugs, please refer to the Division of Student Affairs [Code of Student Conduct](#), [Code of Academic Integrity](#), [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Registrar's Office](#), and the [Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy](#) websites.

## **8. Request for Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities who can meet the essential functions and technical standards noted above. These accommodations must be accomplished without altering the essential requirements of the PA curriculum. Inability to meet the technical standards throughout Program enrollment will necessitate further review, which may delay or terminate progression and/or enrollment in the Program (see Section VII.C for more information about DSS registration and policies).

## **9. Appeal Procedures for Cases of Alleged Improper Academic Evaluation**

A student who has a grievance regarding grades or other academic evaluations is obligated first to make a serious effort to resolve the issue with the instructor. Students who believe that a grade or evaluation is arbitrary or capricious should use the appeal procedure outlined in the [School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin](#).

## **10. Other Grievance Procedures**

If a student believes that they have been discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability or sexual orientation in any of the policies, procedures, programs or activities of or by any individual employed by or acting in an official capacity for the George Washington University, please see [Student Grievance Procedures](#).

## **11. Personal Issues**

If a student believes they are experiencing a personal issue which is affecting their progress in the PA program, students are strongly encouraged to meet with their Faculty Advisor. Advisors may refer the student to on-campus services including, but not limited to, SMHS Office of Student Support (OSS), the [Colonial Health Center](#), [Disability Support Services](#), and/or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#). Faculty may also make referrals to the [GW Care Team](#) who will work with students to identify and the most appropriate interventional services to address their personal issue(s).

In the event, the student does not wish to share their personal issue(s) with the faculty, they may directly access these services.



## B. Other General Guidelines

### 1. GW Identification Badges

While on The George Washington University campus, including its affiliated clinical facilities, students must wear their identification (ID) badge, obtainable from the GWorld Office. Students must not attempt to use another student's ID badge or to permit another student to use their ID badge. In addition, during the clinical phase the student must wear their name tag identifying them as a George Washington University Physician Assistant Student.

### 2. Attendance and Reporting Absences

Attendance at all educational experiences is expected. All absences must be reported to the PA Program office and the appropriate course instructor and/or preceptor. If classes, labs, exams, or clinical rotation days are missed for any reason, the decision as to whether the work or test can be made up is at the discretion of the course director, section director, instructor or clinical preceptor. It is the student's responsibility to contact the course director or preceptor immediately following absenteeism or lateness regarding course work or exam make-up. Excusable reasons for absence are limited to documented: (1) illness, (2) death or illness in immediate family, (3) jury duty, (4) military service, (5) subpoena, and (6) faculty-approved attendance at professional conferences. Not reporting an absence is considered unexcused.

#### University Policy Regarding Religious Holidays:

With respect to policies regarding student absence and [observance of religious holidays](#), the following guidelines apply:

- students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls in the first three weeks of class, the student must inform the faculty within the first week of the semester that they are enrolled in the course;
- to the greatest extent possible, faculty continue to extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasion, including permission to make up examinations;
- faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities;
- prior to each semester, the administration must circulate to faculty a schedule of religious holidays most frequently observed by GW students;
- student members of all religious groups are also entitled to the same courtesies and accommodations;
- the administration conveys this policy to students by including it in the Schedule of Classes and other places deemed appropriate.

Students on clinical rotations must follow the same process of notification. Students are responsible for informing both the program and their clinical preceptor.

### 3. E-mail, Telephone, Cell Phone

**a. E-mail**

All students will be assigned a GW campus e-mail account. All e-mail information from the academic and clinical departments will only be sent to the student's official GW email. **Students are responsible for checking and responding to GW email within 48 hours, as instructed by the program.** It is important to remember that campus e-mail and Internet use are intended for University related purposes only, the same with campus telephones and FAX machines.

Individuals found abusing these office communication methods may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and/or legal action.

**b. Telephones**

Students should provide the Program's main number (202-994-7644) to persons who need to reach them in an emergency. Use of cell phones is not permitted during exams, so students should inform those who need to reach them during such times to contact the Program's main number. In all other instances, students should use other means for obtaining personal messages while they are on campus.

**c. Copiers**

The Department and Program office copy machines are not for student use.

**d. Cell phones**

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class and when guidelines dictate in a clinical facility, according to the policy of the facility. Other arrangements should be made for emergency calls during these times (see Telephones, above).

**4. Attire**

**a. Didactic Phase:** Each student must have their GW identification card with them at all times. In the classroom setting, all students must wear clothing that is neat, clean, and not ripped, torn, stained, or see-through. Clothing that exposes areas of the chest, abdomen, or back are unacceptable. Clothing may not contain inappropriate wording, design, graphics, or pictures. Each course syllabus may outline specific requirements and dress code exceptions/expectations for the particular course. In settings that include patient contact, including standardized patient encounters, clinical phase requirements (see below) will be enforced.

**b. Clinical Phase:** All students must wear: 1) a short white laboratory coat with the Program patch on the pocket; 2) a GW University identification (GWorld) badge; 3) a name tag identifying the student as a Physician Assistant Student from The George Washington University PA Program; and professional attire as described below. If the name tag breaks or is lost, the student must call the Program to order a replacement. Students are responsible for the cost of replacement name tags. Other identification may be mandated by the institution at which they are rotating.

All students must dress in a professional manner. Jeans, shorts, cutoffs, t-shirts, recreational clothing, clothing that obstructs movement required to meet training functions, or clothing that exposes areas of the chest, abdomen, or back are unacceptable attire. Only closed toed shoes are allowed in the clinical setting. Avoid

wearing perfumes, scented lotions, or colognes in all clinical settings. With the exception of small, non-dangling earrings, no body piercings are acceptable in the clinical setting. Preceptors may have site-specific dress requirements that students may be required to abide by.

#### **5. Change of Name, Address and Emergency Telephone Contact**

Students are expected to keep the Program, Health Sciences Student Services and the Registrar's Office informed of correct name, address and emergency telephone contact. If the student changes name, addresses and/or emergency contact information while in school, the Program, Student Services, and Registrar's Office must be notified. **The student must change this information through the [GWEB Info system](#). Additionally, students will be required to update this information in the password protected PA Program database.**

#### **6. Student Employment**

Employment during enrollment in the Program is strongly discouraged. Employment that interferes with the student's academic or clinical responsibilities and performance will be referred to the Student Progress Committee and/or Program Director. PA students must not be required to work for the program at any time. PA students must not substitute for or function as instructional faculty nor clinical or administrative staff.

#### **7. Provision of Health Care**

The program director, medical director, and principal faculty cannot serve as health care providers for PA students in the program, except in the case of an emergency.

#### **8. Inclement Weather**

The George Washington University provides updates pertaining to the University's operating status during inclement weather conditions. If you question whether a specific class has been postponed due to weather conditions, call the GW campus advisory line (202-994-5050) or [visit the website](#).

Due to the variability of supervised clinical practice activities, cancellations will vary depending upon the site. If inclement weather makes it dangerous to travel to the clinical facility, the student must contact the Program and the clinical facility as soon as possible to inform them that they will not be there and to see that any important patient responsibilities are covered. It is recommended that the student speak directly to the supervising preceptor and discuss alternatives for patient responsibilities including attempting to come in later in the day. In making the decision regarding attendance during inclement weather, consider that:

- a. The student has a professional responsibility to the patient/client and the facility to which they are assigned. The individual can best judge the danger to their own safety based on their own transportation situation and other factors.

#### **9. Leave of Absence Policy**

Only one (1) leave of absence per academic or clinical year is permitted. The student may request a leave of absence, from the Program Director, for a defined period of time not to exceed one (1) academic year if requested during the didactic year and not to exceed one (1) semester during the clinical year. All requests beyond this policy due to extenuating circumstances must be forwarded to the Program Director for consideration. The student

may appeal the Program Director's decision to the Associate Dean for Health Sciences or delegate. Requests beyond this policy may require re-application to the Program or repeating components of the academic and/or clinical year.

All students returning from a leave of absence may be required to complete and pass a criminal background check and drug screening. In addition, they may join a new cohort and must acknowledge and adhere to the established policies and program of study for this cohort. Additionally, a leave of absence may affect the tuition rate and possibly the Program of Study.

The maximum length of time for completing the Program of Study, including a leave of absence(s), is forty (40) months total, from the initial day of matriculation (MSHS students) and fifty-two (52) months from the initial day of matriculation (MSHS/MPH).

A medical leave of absence requires written documentation from the student's health care provider stating the anticipated time and duration of the absence. Further, written documentation from the health care provider must document, to the satisfaction of the Program Director, that the student is fit to return to the Program and meets the Technical Standards.

## **10. Liability Insurance**

The University provides professional liability insurance for all students while enrolled as a student in a course involving patient contact. All students are covered for professional liability by the university's comprehensive insurance program. There is no separate charge for this insurance.

Students who choose to volunteer or to be paid employees during the course of their PA training may not use their affiliation with the program in any aspect of such activity. Volunteer or paid activities undertaken by the student independent of program assignment are not covered by liability insurance. The following are two examples that illustrate actions that are not permissible under this policy:

- A didactic phase student who is invited to observe the operating room by a GW-affiliated surgeon; and
- A clinical phase student who is rotating in Pediatrics is invited to shadow a PA in the emergency department.

Liability coverage for the didactic phase student is limited to program sanctioned practical laboratory/clinical sessions. Coverage for the clinical phase student is limited to supervised clinical practice by a licensed clinician at the site of record exclusively.

## **11. Health Insurance**

All students in the Physician Assistant Program are required to have health insurance coverage that is maintained throughout enrollment, including the clinical phase. Information on student health insurance and other services can be found on the [Colonial Health Center](#) website.

## 12. Student Exposure to Blood and/or Body Fluids and Other Occupational Exposures

PA students may be exposed to infectious agents in the course of their education through contact, inhalation, or percutaneous routes. The process through which students should seek evaluation and treatment for occupational exposures is outlined below and in the [Policy and Procedures on Health Science Clinical Student Occupational Exposures](#). Students should carry their health insurance card with them at all times.

If medical attention is required at any point during the Program for injuries and illnesses related to exposure to blood and/or body fluids costs incurred are the student's responsibility, and not that of the PA Program or the University. All injuries and illnesses must be documented on an incident report form (and submitted to the program immediately). Forms are available in the Blackboard community for clinical year students. Please notify your advisor as well.

- Wash hands and any other affected skin area with soap and water. Flush mucus membranes with water as soon as feasible.
- Report the incident immediately to the appropriate person at the classroom, lab or clinical site.
- GW Hospital currently contracts with Medcor (for Employee Health Services) located at George Washington University Hospital, Ground Floor, Room G-1092, phone: (202) 715-4275). As part of this agreement, the university pays GW Hospital to permit Medcor to provide limited services to medical school residents, medical students undergoing clinical rotations and health science students performing clinical duties including physician assistant students.
- Occupational Exposures: Residents, students, or research personnel who sustain an occupational exposure to potentially infectious materials (needle-stick injury, splash exposure, etc.) should be evaluated immediately by Medcor. Walk-in hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-4:00pm. If the injury occurs after hours, they should be evaluated by the GWUH Emergency Department within two hours. If they are unable to reach GW within two (2) hours, they should seek immediate treatment at the closest appropriate facility, and then report the exposure to Medcor at the earliest opportunity. Medcor will manage appropriate follow up care. Baseline labs for HIV, Hepatitis B and C should be obtained. Students should provide their health insurance card to the facility for care provided outside of Medcor.
- All students with an injury and/or exposure must complete an incident report and follow the instructions for submission to the University's:
  - Office of Risk Management Attn: Claims Manager
  - Email: [risk@gwu.edu](mailto:risk@gwu.edu)
  - Phone: (202) 994-3265
  - Fax: (202) 994-0130

## 13. Withdrawals/Adds/Drops

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the University, the Program and the Associate Dean of Health Sciences Programs must be notified in writing. If the notification is not given, and the student fails to register for the next semester, action will be taken to terminate the student's degree candidacy. If it is necessary to withdraw from the University during the semester, the student's advisor, Program Director, and the Associate Dean of Health Sciences Programs must approve an adjustment form. At the time of

withdrawal, the student's GW photo ID must be turned into the Student Services office. Failure to fill out the program adjustment form and receive approval to withdraw will result in grades of Z (unauthorized withdrawal). Refer to the [Student Progress and Records](#) section under the Regulations tab in the Health Sciences Bulletin.

Courses may be added or dropped by using the GWeb Registration system. Any changes in course enrollment made after the GWeb registration period, including dropping and/or adding courses, must have the approval of the instructor, faculty advisor, and Health Sciences Student Services. Courses added after the start of a semester will incur a late fee. A Program adjustment or Registration Transaction Form must be completed in accordance with procedures established in the most current School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Health Sciences Bulletin. Tuition refund schedules and deadlines for adds/drops are delineated on the [Office of the Registrar website](#).

#### **14. Use of the George Washington University Logo**

The George Washington University logo mark and logo type, as they appear on official University publications and stationery, are registered trademarks and are protected by trademark laws. Their use on clothing, stationery and publications are governed by [policy](#). Students should review the policy and seek program permission to use the logo prior to embarking upon student activities where the name and/or logo will be prominently displayed. Before submitting artwork to vendors for printing, the [Artwork Approval form](#) must be submitted.

#### **15. Copyright Policy**

The Program encourages its students to carry out scholarly endeavors consistent with applicable law and policy. It is important that students comply with all applicable laws regarding copyright and distribution of materials and intellectual property owned by individuals, organizations, and institutions. The University's [copyright policy](#) should be reviewed when considering printing and or distributing copyrighted materials.

#### **16. Authorship on Scientific and Scholarly Publications Policy**

Scholarly integrity and the responsible conduct and reporting of research are essential for maintaining public trust in the research enterprise. Please review the Health Sciences' [Authorship Policy](#) for more information.

#### **17. GW Smoke Free Policy**

In an effort to provide a healthy, comfortable learning environment and to set high standards of health promotion, this institution has [established a policy that governs smoking on campus](#) and should be reviewed by students. No smoking in any university building is permitted.

#### **18. Social Media Policy**

Students who communicate with others through social networks, blogs, online encyclopedias, and/or video and photo sharing websites should refer to the [University's Social Media Policy](#) for guidance regarding expectations for appropriate behavior and managing the risk associated with such use that may impact the reputation of The George Washington University, the GW PA Program and its faculty, staff, and students.

### **XIII. Miscellaneous Requirements**

#### **A. Criminal Background Checks/Drug Screens**

The George Washington University does not condone violations of law, including violation of those laws that prohibit possession, use, sale or distribution of drugs. All PA students are required to undergo and pass criminal background checks (CBC) and 7 – panel (incoming students) and a 12-panel (continuing students) drug screens (DS) through Certiphi, the agency contracted by the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, at the time of initial matriculation and prior to entry into the clinical year. In addition, clinical affiliates may require additional CBC/DS prior to participation in educational experiences at the site. All CBC and DS expenses are responsibilities of the student. Failure to comply will result in a hold being placed on student registration and the inability to complete the program. This [policy](#) is available on the Health Sciences website. Drug screens and background checks will begin being initiated once the student is accepted into the program and given a GWid.

Students are responsible for any retest they may need due to a failed drug screen (at the permission of the program) or a drug screen returned with a “negative dilute” sample. In some cases, students may be asked to submit to a blood test depending on how many times an unfavorable result is received after submitting a urine sample.

Students are asked to disclose any criminal activity beyond minor traffic stops (e.g., speeding tickets, failure to signal, and improper stop/yield). In instances where the criminal background check discloses information that was not otherwise provided by the student on their admission application prior to enrollment, the application will be reviewed again by the Associate Dean’s office and the admissions decision can be rescinded at the discretion of the Associate Dean and/or their designee. If the student is enrolled and information is discovered in their initial and subsequent background checks, the misrepresentation/omission will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

#### **B. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Standards Requirements**

All students must complete HIPAA compliance training as required by the university. Furthermore, clinical affiliates may impose additional requirements for HIPAA training of students. Violations of HIPAA regulations are considered inappropriate behaviors of professional comportment and are evaluated by the Student Progress Committee.

#### **C. Immunization and Health Assessment Requirements**

Immunization forms are provided to students prior to matriculation and must be uploaded into the Certiphi MyRecordTracker system through the online portal. Student compliance with the PA Program’s immunization policy (see below) will be reported to the Program by MyRecordTracker; students will be expected to update their immunization record and demonstrate compliance as required, during their tenure in the Program. Students who do not have an approved immunization record on file with MyRecordTracker will not be assigned any patient contact responsibilities. Student compliance with the Program’s immunization policy will be documented by the PA Program and becomes a part of their permanent record.

In addition to immunization clearance, all students are required to have the GW Health

Sciences [Student Physical Examination](#) form completed and signed by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider. The form will also be uploaded into the Certiphi system and compliance with this requirement will be reported to the Program and documented in their permanent record. Further, students are required to maintain copies of their health history form and immunizations as they may be required to produce these records by request of their assigned clinical placement.

Students under the age of 26 are required to complete the [GW Mandatory Immunization Form](#) and submit this to the Colonial Health Center upon matriculation, in addition to the above stated procedures. According to [University policy](#), all students under the age of 26 years must have documentation on file with GW the Colonial Health Center that attests to compliance with all required health screening and immunizations. These requirements are reviewed (and updated, if applicable) annually for consistency with current scientific and clinical recommendations from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended vaccines for healthcare professionals and local health authorities.

Students in programs of study with potential for occupational exposure to blood or body fluids must meet additional requirements to support their health and safety as well as comply with clearance requirements set forth by affiliated training sites (e.g., clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, clinical research facilities, etc.) related to their program of study.

The student is responsible for all costs related to immunizations, physical examination, drug screens, and criminal background checks.

### **Immunization Compliance**

All students, regardless of age, are required to submit documentation showing:

1. One dose of the Tetanus Diphtheria Pertussis (Tdap) vaccine given within the last 10 years.
2. Two vaccinations against Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) given after age one and a minimum of 30 days apart, or documented laboratory proof of immunity.
3. Two vaccinations against Varicella (Chicken Pox) given after the age of one and a minimum of 30 days apart, or provide documented history of Varicella (Chicken Pox) disease, or documented laboratory proof of immunity.
4. Three vaccinations against Hepatitis B: dose two given 30 days after dose one, dose three given five months after dose two, or according to the Hepatitis accelerated schedule, or provide documented laboratory proof of immunity.
5. One Meningococcal vaccine given on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, or a signed waiver form.
6. Tuberculin Skin Test (PPD): A student must provide documentation that he or she has not been exposed to tuberculosis (by purified protein derivative skin test or Quantiferon blood test). If positive, the student must provide documentation of a chest x-ray. Records must be updated annually, or before the start of the clinical year.
7. A full COVID-19 vaccination series and booster.
8. **Yearly** influenza vaccination.

## **D. Technology Requirements**



All students must have a personal functioning laptop computer with a working webcam and microphone and a reliable internet connection while enrolled in the program. The minimum technical requirements for this device must satisfy those published by the following software manufacturers:

- **ExamSoft** - Assessments in the first year of the PA Program (exams, quizzes, etc.) will be administered through ExamSoft using a laptop computer (Mac or PC) or with a Surface Pro. Though part of the ExamSoft platform, iPads are not permitted for exam administration in the PA Program. Please check the [system requirements](#).
- **ExamDriver** - Assessments in the second year (end-of-rotation exams) will be administered through ExamDriver, a web-based testing software that is produced by the Physician Assistant Education Association. The only technical requirement for this testing service includes having a laptop that is capable of downloading and installing the latest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome or Apple Safari. A Surface Pro will work with this system though it is not an ideal device as it may not allow for full functionality.

Printed assessments cannot substitute for those that would normally be taken using the ExamSoft/ExamDriver software except in cases of documented accommodation requests for printed assessments as recommended by [Disability Support Services](#).

Students who are required to take computer-based exams remotely during the clinical year may need to purchase and use a remote proctoring system approved by the PA program. Payment of proctoring fees is the obligation of the individual examinee.

Students are expected to follow all remote testing requirements before and during each examination. Each session will be reviewed by the recommended remote proctoring system and PA program faculty/administration for academic integrity violations and/or suspicious activity. All students utilizing remote proctoring systems will demonstrate academic honesty in all academic endeavors, including but not limited to computer-based testing as identified in the [GW Code of Academic Integrity](#).

In an effort to engage in sustainable behaviors, when available, handouts, PowerPoint presentations and other paper resources are delivered to students electronically.

## **XIV. Policies and Procedures Specific to Clinical Education**

### **A. Statement on Reasonable Accommodations**

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability during the clinical phase of training should contact the Disability Support Services office at (202) 994-8250 in Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to Section VII.C.

### **B. Rotation Assignments and Contact Information**

While students are expected to follow the GW PA Program Policies and Procedures, some clinical sites may have policies and procedures that supersede those of the PA program. Students are expected to abide by those specific site policies.

Every student is given a specific rotation schedule for the clinical year. The schedule is

developed by the Clinical Team after a thorough review of site availability and evaluation, student academic performance, and student requests. **The schedule is subject to change during the clinical year for a variety of reasons, some of which may not be controlled by the PA Program. The Program faculty or designated staff also reserves the right to change a student's rotation schedule at any time based upon a student's individual clinical or professional performance, needs, or concerns.** Students will be notified in a timely manner of changes to their specific schedule.

The schedule is maintained within the Program's web-based clinical rotation tracking system. The clinical site contact information including the clinical site address, preceptor's name, and telephone number is also listed and updated through this tracking system. Site specific requirements are available on Blackboard. Students **MUST** refer to the clinical site information and site-specific information at least **EIGHT (8) WEEKS** prior to the start of the next rotation. Site specific requirements, such as fingerprinting, drug screening, and immunization information may be required as early as two (2) months in advance of a rotation start date. In most cases students will be reimbursed for costs incurred by fulfilling site specific requirements. **It is the student's responsibility to fulfill site specific requirements in advance in order to officially start the rotation.** Rotation starts may be delayed if a student has not fulfilled all of the pre-rotation specific requirements. **It is imperative that you confirm your arrival at the site and with the housing coordinator, if needed, no later than two weeks prior to the start of the rotation unless otherwise notified.**

When a change occurs to a student's clinical schedule, the Clerkship Director or Clinical Placement Coordinator will notify the student and make the appropriate changes in the clinical rotation tracking system. Each student should check their clinical schedule on a regular basis. If a student is rescheduled to a different rotation other than what was originally planned (e.g. changing from Emergency Medicine to Primary Care), the student may be required to complete a change of registration form. The clinical team will provide the required registration information and forms.

Students who indicate "Intermediate," "Advanced," or "Native" levels of language proficiency on their CASPA applications may be mandated to complete clinical placements at sites which require the use of that language in patient care.

**All students should expect to complete at least two distant rotations (not including away self-IDs or unique opportunities) per clinical year.** See Section XV.H for the definition of a distant rotation.

### C. MyRecordTracker

Students must upload and maintain a copy of the following documents in Certiphi/MyRecordTracker:

- most current physical examination,
- immunization record including yearly influenza vaccination and PPD information,
- BLS and ACLS certifications,
- health insurance coverage,
- HIPAA training certificate,
- drug screen, and
- criminal background check

These items may be required for review by the clinical site and should always be maintained in MyRecordTracker for easy access. Students are responsible for releasing their personal information to clinical sites. Students may not start clinical rotations until the above information has been submitted to MyRecordTracker. **Students will be required to obtain a second criminal background check and 12-panel drug screen one (1) month prior to the start of the clinical year.** Both items can be accomplished through Certiphi. Students must also obtain an updated PPD test prior to entering the clinical year. The student is responsible for the costs associated with the additional criminal background check, 12-panel drug screen, and PPD test.

Students are responsible for the cost to renew the MyRecordTracker account in order to upload the document listed above.

#### D. Establishing Rotation Sites

The PA Program has established relationships with preceptors and sites for all core rotations and many clinical electives. **Students must not be required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors for any of their clinical rotations during the program.**

Students may make suggestions to faculty for potential sites and preceptors outside of the established PA Program for Pediatrics, Women's Health, Emergency Medicine, and Longitudinal (a 12-week experience in a combination of Primary Care, Pediatrics, or Women's Health) rotation experiences following the guidelines provided to each student. Sites that are suggested by students undergo the same vetting by the PA Program clinical faculty to determine if they meet the expectations for an acceptable clinical experience as program-recruited sites. Students are not permitted to have relatives as their preceptors. The PA Program clinical faculty makes the final determination in regard to establishing an educational affiliation with an individual preceptor or clinical site.

The PA Program reserves the right to alter a student request for a rotation based upon previous academic and/or clinical performance.

Students should not make any travel arrangements until they have received approval from the PA Program regarding self-identified, unique opportunity, or international sites. If the requisite paperwork has not been completed and/or the affiliation agreement has not been signed by all parties **six (6) weeks prior** to the start of the rotation including the elective rotation, students will be assigned to an established GW PA rotation site. Students are responsible for meeting all costs related to travel, lodging, and living expenses. The University and/or the PA Program reserve(s) the right to cancel or suspend travel as well as terminate the rotation early for a variety of reasons should they arise. The University and the PA Program do not refund students for travel that is cancelled, suspended, or terminated early.

#### E. Course Syllabi and Blackboard Courses

Syllabi are located on the respective rotation's Blackboard site. Students are expected to review each syllabus and the Blackboard site prior to the start of each rotation. The Blackboard site contains an abundance of information related to the rotation including the syllabus, evaluation forms, grading rubrics, as well as general and rotation-specific resources and forms.

Syllabi are reviewed prior to the start of each semester and are revised as needed to facilitate the goals of the rotation and the mission of the Program. The Program reserves the right to make changes to syllabi prior to the start of a new semester. Students will be notified of any substantial changes to the syllabus as noted via the respective Blackboard course site.

## F. Communication

Email and Blackboard are the primary means of communication between students and the Program while on clinical rotations. Official course communications are sent through GW email accounts. It is expected that students check email and Blackboard on a daily basis to stay informed of important information from the PA Program and University. A Blackboard community has been established for general announcements and rotation material pertinent to all clinical rotations. Students should check the Blackboard community in addition to rotation-specific Blackboard courses.

## G. Travel

In order to provide students with exposure to a broad range of patients in a wide variety of settings, travel beyond the metropolitan DC area is required. Students are not guaranteed local clinical rotations and therefore are required to have access to a car for travel and should have local housing at all times. Students should expect to travel up to 65 miles either from the GW main campus or from one of the Program-provided student housing locations to their clinical site. Students are responsible for transportation to and from all clinical sites regardless of location. In addition, each student is also responsible for any expenses incurred while rotating at a clinical site including but not limited to parking, gas, tolls, food, and other incidentals.

If assigned to a distant site, a student will be excused from the rotation for either one half or one (1) full day for travel back to the Program for end-of-rotation activities. In general, a student is excused for one half day when travel back to the Program is between 2-4 hours. A student is granted one full day for travel when the rotation site is greater than 4 hours from the Program. Students at Baltimore clinical sites are excused no later than 5 pm EST the day before EOR.

## H. Housing at Distant Sites

Due to the number of students who are required to rotate in Baltimore, Southern Maryland, and the Eastern Shore, student housing is provided by the Program. It is expected that only GW PA students reside in, care for, and respect the housing areas. Any expenses due to damages or neglect caused by a student will result in that student being charged for costs of repairs, replacements, and/or cleaning.

Housing is offered in a variety of settings which range from dormitory style to private homes with rooms available for student use. Only those students who are assigned to housing during a specific rotation are authorized to stay at the site. Students are prohibited from having visitors, pets, or overnight guests at the housing site. **Students who choose to stay in the GW-sponsored housing must sign a student housing agreement and show proof of renters insurance two (2) weeks prior to moving in.** If assistance is needed to obtain renters insurance,

the Program has a list of vendors. Students assigned to housing provided by our clinical affiliates may be required to sign housing contracts and provide room/key deposits to either the clinical site or housing provider. The Baltimore housing requires a criminal background check through a specific vendor. The Program will cover the cost associated with this additional criminal background check. **The Program will not compensate students for parking fees or related expenses if parking violations occur.**

Student housing offered by the Program is optional. Students are not required to use the housing provided by the Program and may find alternative housing options at their own expense. The Program reserves the right to inspect Program-sponsored housing at any time during the clinical year. The Program reserves the right to terminate housing for any student who violates the terms stated in the Student Housing Agreement (available in Blackboard community). In addition, students must abide with the rules and regulations imposed by the housing provider. Violations of the Student Housing Agreement and housing rules as set forth by either the University or landlord are considered comportment issues, and as such will be handled accordingly. In addition, the student will no longer be eligible for Program-provided housing. Any future housing required by the student for the remainder of the clinical year will be at the student's own expense.

#### **I. Additional Coursework during the Clinical Year**

Students must obtain clearance from the Director of Clinical Education before registering for any additional coursework during the clinical year.

#### **J. Employment during the Clinical Year**

Due to the rigors of the clinical year including late nights, overnight call, and weekend call responsibilities, employment that interferes with a student's clinical schedule and responsibilities is prohibited. Students should not ask the Program or clinical preceptors for their rotation schedules to be changed to accommodate outside employment.

#### **K. Prohibition from Receipt of Compensation**

All students on clinical rotations are covered under the University liability insurance for malpractice. Students are not employees of the clinical site and therefore are prohibited from receiving any form of compensation (i.e., money, gifts, or in-kind transactions) for services rendered during any phase of the clinical year. Students are prohibited from engaging in verbal or written contractual agreements with any clinical site. Violations of this policy are considered a comportment issue, and as such will be handled accordingly.

#### **L. Supervision on Clinical Rotations**

Students are to be supervised by clinical preceptors while caring for patients in the clinical environment. Supervision is defined as on-site physical presence in the clinical setting so that immediate consultation and support can be offered to the student when necessary. If a student is concerned about the level of supervision being provided at a clinical site, he/she must contact the Course Director of the rotation to discuss the matter immediately.

#### **M. Use of Students as Staff**

At no time during the clinical rotation should a student be called upon or used to substitute for regular clinical or administrative staff. If a situation arises where a student is asked to perform in a role other than that of a student or to substitute for a staff member, the student should contact the Program immediately for guidance and intervention.

## **N. Use of Preceptors as Health Care Providers**

At no time during the clinical rotation should a student use their assigned preceptor as a health care provider. Students should notify the Program if they have been assigned to a preceptor who provides them with ongoing medical care or if the preceptor previously served as their medical provider.

## **O. Compliance with Standard Precautions**

Safety is an important objective for both students and patients. Each student receives training on Standard Precautions and also learns the appropriate methods to prevent exposure to infectious and environmental hazards including blood, tissues, other bodily fluids, as well as managing communicable diseases. Each student must successfully complete OSHA training. This training is conducted prior to undertaking any educational activities which would place them at risk. It is expected that these practices are incorporated into the daily routine of caring for patients. See Section XIII.B.12 for more information on student exposure to blood and/or body fluids.

## **P. Clerkship and End of Rotation (EOR) Attendance and Punctuality**

### Clinical Rotations

Students are expected to be on-time and present for all clinical rotation experiences. Excusable reasons for absence are limited to:

- documented medical illness;
- death of an immediate family member;
- jury duty;
- military service;
- subpoena; and
- faculty-approved attendance at the AAPA annual conference or other professional activities.

Routine medical, dental, business, and personal appointments are NOT considered as acceptable absences.

Students will be given three (3) “personal days” throughout the entire clinical year to use for absences not considered excusable as outlined above. Guidelines for “personal days” include the following:

- Students cannot use “personal days” during EOR or during the first or last week of a rotation.
- In rare circumstances, and with director of clinical education approval, 1 personal day may be used for an EOR
- No more than two (2) “personal days” can be taken consecutively.
- Students may use a maximum of two (2) “personal days” during any rotation.
- Students must get preceptor and Course Director approvals for “personal days” at least

two (2) weeks in advance of the requested absence.

- Students must make-up “personal days” taken if requested by the preceptor.
- One (1) “personal day” during rotations 6, 7, or 8 can be requested with less than two (2) weeks in advance for job interviews only. This request must be approved by the Director of Clinical Education.

The Program may require a student to make up days missed. **Students are not to request days off for studying during the clinical year.**

#### Reporting of Absences/Tardiness during a Rotation

All absences (excused/unexcused/“personal day”) or tardiness during a clinical rotation must be communicated immediately to the Clinical Preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education prior to or, in times of acute illness or emergency situations, immediately following the absence/tardiness. A **Notification of Absence/Tardiness Form** (found in the Blackboard community and rotation specific Blackboard classrooms) must be completed and submitted to the designated Clinical Placement Coordinator. More than one unreported absence from clinical rotations may result in forfeiture of two (2) personal days per one (1) unexcused absence.

The clinical preceptor has the discretion to require a student to make-up all absences prior to the end of the rotation. Repeated absences/tardiness may jeopardize a student’s successful completion of a rotation.

With the exception of a Covid-related illness, if a student misses more than **three (3) days** of a rotation (including excused, unexcused or personal day(s) and/or is late **more than three (3) times** during a rotation, he or she may be required to repeat the rotation in full. The decision for a student to repeat a rotation will be determined by the PA Program Director after discussion with the Director of Clinical Education, the Course Director, and Clinical Preceptor.

#### EOR Activities

Attendance, punctuality, and active participation at end-of-rotation (EOR) activities is mandatory and monitored carefully. In rare exceptions, and with the Director of Clinical Education approval, a personal day may be used for one missed EOR within the clinical year. All examinations, journal club activities, administrative sessions and the Introduction to Professional Practice course activities must be attended without exception. If you have consecutive away rotations outside of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV), you are expected to attend all EOR sessions virtually. Students are required at all EOR activities throughout the clinical year.

It is expected that students arrive on time, be present and remain until the conclusion of all EOR sessions. In general, students should plan to be on campus from 8am-5pm. Excusable absences from and EOR are the same as for clinical rotations. Routine medical, dental, business and personal appointments are NOT considered excusable absences. Students should notify the Assistant Director of Clinical Education of an absence from the EOR session. If a student does not notify the Assistant Director of Clinical Education, it is considered unexcused and may result in the forfeiting of 2 personal days per one unexcused absence.

#### Absences due to Religious Holiday Observance

With respect to policies regarding student absence and [observance of religious holidays](#), the

following guidelines apply:

- students must notify faculty during the **first week** of the semester as early as possible, but no more than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls in the first three weeks of class, the student must inform the faculty within the first week of the semester that they are enrolled in the course;
- to the greatest extent possible, faculty must continue to extend to these students the courtesies of absence without penalty on such occasion, including permission to make up examinations;
- prior to each semester, the administration must circulate to faculty a schedule of religious holidays most frequently observed by GW students;
- student members of all religious groups are entitled to the same courtesies and accommodations;
- according to several schools of Islamic law which are followed by many of our Muslim students, attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is a required religious duty; although the precise time of observance varies from year to year, it always remains within the time period of 12 noon and 2pm; and
- the administration conveys this policy to students by including it in the schedule of classes and other places deemed appropriate.

## Q. Rotation Duty Hours

Student work hours will vary depending on the clinical rotation and practice facility. Students are expected to be at the clinical site a minimum of 32 hours per week. This schedule is set by the preceptor and site. In addition to the minimum work hours, some sites may require overnight and weekend call. PA students should not work more than 80 hours consecutively. Call responsibilities should not be more often than once every third night and every other weekend. Students should direct questions and concerns about rotation hours to the respective Course Director.

A student may leave a clinical rotation without prior approval from the program director or a clinical educator of the PA program unless there is threat to their health or safety. If a student is experiencing any form of mental health distress, sexual harassment, verbal abuse or any other form of mistreatment, they are encouraged to contact the program director or a clinical educator of the PA program immediately for an intervention. Any other departure will be treated as abandonment of the rotation and is subject to sanctions by the Student Progress Committee, including possible dismissal from the Program.

## R. Student Visits at Clinical Sites

At the discretion of the PA faculty, a student visit at a clinical site (scheduled or unscheduled) may be performed with the student and/or the clinical preceptor to discuss progression and other issues related to the student clinical experience and performance. During the student visit, the faculty may have the student give an oral presentation on an interesting patient and/or evaluate the student's performance interacting with patients.

Any of the following situations may prompt a student visit by the PA faculty to the clinical site:

- Early transition to the clinical year student visit;
- Routine site/preceptor retention visit;
- The preceptor calls to express a concern regarding student performance;



- The student calls to express a concern regarding the preceptor and/or site;
- Student evaluations of the clinical site or preceptor are not meeting programmatic benchmarks; and/or
- The student is on academic warning, academic probation, or has a professionalism issue.

## **S. Inclement Weather Policy**

Health Sciences students on clinical rotations are expected to meet their clinical responsibilities and to stay in touch with their respective preceptor/clerkship directors regarding their attendance on-site. Due to the geographic variability of rotation sites, cancellations will vary depending upon the site. If inclement weather makes it dangerous to travel to a clinical site, the student must contact and speak to the preceptor directly as soon as possible. If a student is instructed not to report to their assigned site, this information must be communicated to the Course Director. Students are responsible for making up all days missed due to inclement weather.

## **XV. Acknowledgement Form**

### **Student Acknowledgement**

I understand that the contents of this Student Policies and Procedures Handbook are provided for my information as a student in The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program.

By signing this statement, I acknowledge receipt of the Physician Assistant Program Student Policies and Procedures Handbook and understand my responsibility to access the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin and Student Handbook for Health Sciences Programs.

I accept my responsibility to follow the regulations outlined in this Handbook.

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Student's Name (PRINT)

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Student's Signature

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Date

To be retained in your program student file

RETURN TO:

PA Program ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20037

**This handbook is effective as of March 2023.**