DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

DIDACTIC STUDENT PROGRAM GUIDE
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Appendix A: Professional Performance Evaluation Form
What an exciting time as you embark on your studies to be a physician assistant. The faculty and staff of the department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS) are glad you are here. We are sure that you will find the pursuit of your education as a physician assistant both challenging and rewarding. The time you are with us will go quickly and there is a lot to learn. Work hard, be flexible, and enjoy the camaraderie of your future colleagues.

This program guide is intended to provide guidance and assist you regarding compliance with department policy, define the graduate competencies to be achieved, outline student responsibilities, and serve as a resource regarding department procedures. During orientation we will take time to review selected portions of this program guide. However, it is strongly suggested that you read the program guide thoroughly. Although every attempt is made to make the program guide comprehensive, it may not address every possible situation. When confronted with a situation not covered in the program guide, seek guidance from your faculty and use your good judgment in the interim. Students are also reminded to review the Arizona School of Health Sciences (ASHS) Residential Catalog and the A.T. Still University (ATSU) Student Handbook for additional policies that may impact you as a student.

Albert F. Simon, DHSc, MEd, PA-C
Chair
Program Policies and Standards for the Didactic Student

Introduction

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS) Didactic Program Guide describes policies and procedures pertinent to student success during the didactic phase of training. Students are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures as they are defined in the A.T. Still University (ATSU) Student Handbook, Arizona School of Health Sciences (ASHS) Residential Catalog and DPAS Program Guide.

The Program reserves the right to alter, change, add, or delete the content in this program guide. Students will be notified in writing of any changes.

Mission Statement

The A.T. Still University Department of Physician Assistant Studies provides a learning-centered education that develops exemplary physician assistants who deliver whole person healthcare with an emphasis on underserved populations and will be the nation’s leading provider of competent physician assistants who will serve populations in need by providing care to the body, mind and spirit.

The Department advocates and values the following:

- A commitment to service
- Personal honesty and integrity
- Professionalism in practice
- Motivation to excel
- Compassion and Caring
- Teamwork

The Department educates physician assistants with a philosophy that patients come first. We instill in students the concept of addressing the entire patient through the body, mind, and spirit. This philosophy has, at its core, the tenant that healing is more than treatment of a medical diagnosis. Our practitioners recognize the interconnection of the body (physical nature), the mind (psychological and emotional) and the spirit (spiritual and/or religious). Our graduates address the “whole patient” through competent medical treatments, application of educational and preventive strategies, psychological support, and value of each individual’s spiritual beliefs.

PA Definition

Physician Assistants (PAs) are academically and clinically prepared to provide health care services with the direction and responsible supervision of a doctor of medicine or osteopathy. The physician-PA team relationship is fundamental to the PA profession and enhances the delivery of high quality health care. Within the physician-PA relationship, PAs make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive and health maintenance services. The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice.
settings. PA practice is centered on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activities.

Competencies

Graduates from the ASHS department of PA Studies will achieve the following competencies. These competencies were originally adopted by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), and the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA).

Competency I: Medical Knowledge
Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician assistants must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations.

Physician assistants are expected to understand, evaluate, and apply the following to clinical scenarios:

- evidence-based medicine
- scientific principles related to patient care
- etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
- appropriate diagnostic studies
- management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
- interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses

Competency II: Interpersonal & Communications Skills
Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients’ families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the health care system.

Physician assistants are expected to:

- create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
- adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
• demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and
tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
• accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical,
legal, quality, and financial purposes. 3 Competencies for the PA Profession

Competency III: Patient Care
Patient care includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management.
Physician assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable.

Physician assistants are expected to:
• work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to
provide patient-centered care
• demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with
patients and their families
• obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
• make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on
patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and
informed clinical judgment
• develop and implement patient management plans
• counsel and educate patients and their families
• perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
• provide health care services and education aimed at disease prevention and
health maintenance
• use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient
education

Competency IV: Professionalism
Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered.
Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one’s
own. Physician assistants must acknowledge their professional and personal
limitations. Professionalism also requires that PAs practice without impairment from
substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness. Physician assistants must
demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse
patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.

Physician assistants are expected to demonstrate:
• understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the
appropriate role of the physician assistant
• professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care
providers
• respect, compassion, and integrity
• accountability to patients, society, and the profession
• commitment to excellence and on-going professional development
• commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of
clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and
business practices
• sensitivity and responsiveness to patients’ culture, age, gender, and abilities
• self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative
• healthy behaviors and life balance
• commitment to the education of students and other health care professionals

Competency V: Practice-based Learning & Improvement
Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which physician assistants engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self- and practice-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices.

Physician assistants are expected to:
• analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
• locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients’ health
• apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
• utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
• recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others

Competency VI: Systems-based Practice
Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient. PAs should work to improve the health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:
• effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
• understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and use the systems effectively
• practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
• advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
• partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of health care and patient outcomes
• accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
• apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide effective, efficient patient care
• recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities
• apply the concepts of population health to patient care
PA 500 Anatomy (5 credit hours)
Anatomy is a comprehensive review of human anatomy using a regional approach. Lecture and laboratory components of this course emphasize the clinical relevance of each anatomical area considered. Normal radiological anatomy is also reviewed. Students are required to study human cadavers.

PA 501 Introduction to Patient Assessment (4 credit hours)
Introduction to Patient Assessment provides fundamental methods for obtaining and presenting a comprehensive medical history and basic physical examination. Techniques for conducting a physical examination are covered. Instructional methods include lecture, group discussion, role-playing, and labs. Students conduct interviews and physical examinations under supervision. Students are expected to spend additional time outside of class performing physical exams, and preparing for presenting case information and findings.
PA 502 Medical Physiology (5 credit hours)
Medical Physiology provides an advanced review of cellular, organ system and whole body physiology. Emphasis is placed on the importance of homeostasis and how the body maintains optimal functioning, how physiological functions deteriorate as a consequence of pathological processes and the subsequent impact on the body, and discussion of the clinical relevance of physiological facts, concepts and principles.

PA 503 Healthy Community (2 credit hours)
Healthy Community presents content on aspects of health promotion and disease prevention in the primary care setting. A wide range of variables are discussed that include lifestyles, nutrition, cultural diversity and social-economic factors. Current strategies (tests, evaluations, and examinations) used in preventive medicine are reviewed by age group and gender.

PA 504, 515, 524, 560 History and Physical Examination I-IV (5 credit hours per course / 20 credit hours total)
History and Physical Examination is a four course series that provides physician assistant students with techniques of taking a patient history and performing a physical examination. This course will also teach the PA student the proper use of medical diagnostic equipment, selected clinical procedures and effective skills for communicating with patients, their families and other health professionals. Students will learn and practice basic counseling and patient education skills. The courses will include classroom activities, laboratory sessions and clinical experiences.

Topics will be arranged on a systems basis and complement coursework in the clinical medicine lecture series to the extent possible by the logistics of scheduling. It is important for the student to understand the relationships between material presented in this course and that presented in other courses and experiences in the curriculum. Material presented in one area should be recognized as complementary to and not apart from that presented in other arenas.

The course will present the student with opportunities to accomplish the stated objectives through a variety of methods that may include but are not limited to: lecture, discussion, simulated patient encounters, writing the details of a complete history and physical examination, writing problem specific history and physical examinations in the SOAP note format, and performing case presentations and actual clinical experiences. Collaborative and individual exercises will be used to promote retention of presented course material and also to simulate clinical situations to increase critical thinking skills.

PA 551 Introduction to Pharmacology (2 credit hours)
This course is the first of a five-class sequence in clinical pharmacology & pharmacotherapeutics. PA 551 will cover basic principles of pharmacology including pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and pharmacogenetics. A review of the autonomic nervous system will be carried out as they pertain to pharmacotherapeutics, and autonomic nervous system drugs will be covered. Also, analgesics and antipyretics will be discussed. Students will have the opportunity to practice the utilization of prescription reference guides.
PA 506, 514, 523, 559 Pharmacology I-IV (2 credit hours per course / 8 credit hours total)
Pharmacology I-IV is designed to teach the major principles of pharmacology including concepts of drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination. Medications covered include those most commonly used in care and treatment of the conditions presented in the clinical medicine sequence.

PA 562, 553, 555, 557, 561 Body, Mind and Spirit Seminar I-V (2 credit hours per course / 8 credit hours total)
The Body, Mind and Spirit Seminar series is a five course series (Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer) that exposes the student to seminal material germane to the role of the practicing physician assistant. Foundational topics in the following areas will be presented over the five terms in this course series: Professionalism (including intellectual honesty); Cross Culturalism and Care of Diverse Patient Populations; Interprofessional Team Concepts; Health Care Delivery Systems; Evaluation of the Medical Literature; Concepts of Public Health; Patient Safety and Prevention of Medical Errors; Ethical Practice; PA Professional Issues; Development and History of the PA Profession and Spirituality in Medicine.

Topics will be arranged on a systems basis and complement coursework in the clinical medicine lecture series to the extent possible by the logistics of scheduling. It is important for the student to understand the relationships between material presented in this course and that presented in other courses and experiences in the curriculum. Material presented in one area should be recognized as complementary to and not apart from that presented in other arenas. The course will present the student with opportunities to accomplish the stated objectives through a variety of methods that may include but are not limited to: lecture, discussion, simulated patient encounters, and performing case presentations. Collaborative and individual exercises will be used to promote retention of presented course material and also to simulate clinical situations to increase critical thinking skills.

PA 552, 554, 556, 558 Clinical Medicine I-IV (12 credit hours total / 48 credit hours total)
Clinical Medicine is a four course series that provides physician assistant students with clinical preparatory instruction. Building upon the material that is presented in PA 500 Anatomy and PA 502 Medical Physiology, the clinical medicine series will provide instruction covering all organ systems including cardiovascular, dermatologic, EENT (eyes, ears, nose, and throat), endocrine, gastrointestinal/nutritional, genitourinary, hematologic, infectious diseases, musculoskeletal, neurologic, psychiatry/behavioral, pulmonary, and reproductive. In addition to the pathophysiologic basis of disease, including genetics and molecular mechanisms of disease. The clinical medicine series will provide instruction in patient evaluation, diagnosis and management across the life span.

This instruction in patient assessment and management will include caring for patients of all ages from initial presentation through ongoing follow-up. This instruction will prepare physician assistant students to provide preventive, emergent, acute, chronic, rehabilitative, palliative, and end-of-life care to prenatal, infant, child, adolescent, adult, and elderly populations. Material on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention will be included. Building upon the material that
is presented in PA 501 Introduction to Patient Assessment and the History and Physical Examination series, the clinical medicine series will provide instruction on generating differential diagnoses and ordering and interpreting diagnostic studies. Additionally, the clinical medicine series will provide instruction in technical skills and procedures based on current professional practice and will include case simulations to develop problem solving and medical decision-making skills. In many cases skills will be presented with opportunities for interprofessional collaboration.

The Clinical Medicine series has been carefully organized to present material system by system to promote interaction of material from parallel courses in the curriculum, i.e. History and Physical, Pharmacology and Body, Mind, Spirit.

**ACADEMIC POLICIES**

**Academic Progression and Course Remediation**

Progression in the Program is contingent on continued mastery of program objectives, course content, and demonstration of behaviors consistent with a healthcare professional as outlined in the Professionalism section of this program guide.

**Definitions:**

Failing grade: A failing grade shall be defined as earning less than 70% of all possible points on an assessment.

Major unit assessment: a major unit assessment is a high-stakes assessment of student learning for a defined portion of the program. This may include, but is not limited to, written examinations and Objective Structured Clinical Encounters (OSCEs). All major unit assessments for a given course shall be identified in that course’s syllabus.

**Major Unit Assessments**

Students who fail three (3) major unit assessments in the didactic year must go before the Student Progress Board for review. For every three successive major unit assessment failures, the student will be recalled to the Student Progress Board for review.

**Course Grades**

Course grades are issued at the end of each term for each course. Students who earn a failing grade in a course will be required to undergo remediation as determined by the course instructor in consultation with the director of didactic education. An individualized student remediation plan will be formulated for each course failure. Upon successful remediation, the failing grade for the course will be replaced with a grade of 70. Unsuccessful remediation will result in course repetition at the student’s expense, which may have financial aid implications and cause a delay in beginning clinical rotations as well as graduation.
Students who fail two courses must go before the Student Progress Board for review. Students who fail three or more courses must go before the Student Progress Board for review and will be recommended for dismissal. Every attempt will be made to hold Student Progress Board meetings within 10 working days of the course director’s notification to the student of course failure. Students dismissed from the Program may wish to consult the ASHS Catalog to review the appeal process.

While each case is reviewed individually the following table establishes general guidelines for the Progress Board to follow in review of student performance. The term course in the following chart refers to either didactic courses or clinical rotations. Specific circumstances may require modification of these guidelines as determined through the Progress Board’s deliberation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Example of Possible Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two course failures</td>
<td>Academic probation or dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three course failures</td>
<td>Likely dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism violations</td>
<td>Academic probation or dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each case is judged individually by the respective Progress Board based on general guidelines and the specific circumstances of the case.

**Student Progress Board**

This board is composed of DPAS faculty members with a minimum of four members to constitute a quorum. The Academic Progress Board will be convened by the Program Chair to consider PA students who do not meet standards for progression (beyond failure of one course). The student is invited to submit a written statement to the board. The board may require the student to attend the meeting via conference call or in person to clarify issues or answer questions. After consideration of the individual case, the board will render a decision. The board’s decision may include recommendations in excess of the current program expectations for and requirements of the student, placing the student on academic probation, or recommending the student for dismissal from the program. The Program Chair will notify the student of the board’s decision via written communication.

**Academic Standing**

A student who is in good standing in the DPAS will have met the following criteria:

1. Maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher and achieve a “C”/passing or better letter grade in all didactic and clinical courses required by the ASHS DPAS.
2. Meet the defined DPAS Professionalism Expectations and be in compliance with all DPAS and University policies and procedures.
Academic Probation

Students who fail to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0, or who fail a PA Program course, or do not meet Professionalism Expectations will be placed on Academic Probation. In written notification, the Program Chair will specify the reason(s) for academic probation, the requirements for restoration of good standing (if applicable), and the deadline for completing requirements. A pro-rated tuition fee will be charged for repeat courses.

Academic Assistance

Faculty members will offer assistance and guidance to students in reviewing and assessing their competency. Students may be offered and referred for tutorial assistance through services provided by the University. Following is the DPAS policy and procedure for assisting students at academic or behavioral risk.

DPAS Student at Academic or Behavioral Risk Policy

**Background**

This policy will provide the basis for the systematic and early identification of students who are at academic risk and provide a pathway for directing appropriate resources to assist those students. A team-centered approach will be utilized to provide any needed academic support with the DPAS advisor as the centerpiece of the effort. While it is the DPAS’s intent to provide all available support to students who are experiencing academic difficulty, this policy is not intended to undermine the basic tenant that it is ultimately the learner’s responsibility to seek out and utilize the resources made available to meet School standards. Individuals who choose not to avail themselves of prompts for assistance should recognize that this information will be noted in their file and could adversely affect any letter of recommendation.

**Methodology**

A. **Identification**

Students experiencing academic difficulty may be identified as “at risk”. Factors used to identify at-risk students may include one or a combination of the following:

1. Students experiencing a failure in a DPAS course.
2. Students achieving a grade 1.5 standard deviations below the mean or lower on more than one DPAS course regardless of their alphanumeric grade.
3. Students failing any required standardized test.
4. Students failing one or more examinations including practicals or OSCEs in any DPAS course.
5. Students failing to meet program defined professionalism expectations.
6. Students not necessarily meeting above criteria, but of significant concern to the current course director(s).
B. Process
Once a student has been identified as being at risk, the director of assessment, technology and research will track the progress of the student and relay the information to the program director, director of didactic education and appropriate faculty members. The director of assessment, technology and research will also notify the student’s faculty advisor who will contact the student to establish a meeting with the student within ten days. At this meeting a plan will be developed, using all appropriate resources (i.e. student services) that contains objectives, timelines and tasks to address the academic concerns and provide for more intensive academic support and counseling. Documentation of each visit will be kept by the faculty advisor and placed in the student’s file. The faculty advisor will keep the program director and appropriate faculty members updated on the progress of the student. Documentation of students who “drop out” or do not respond to initial contacts will be entered into the student’s file and could adversely affect any recommendation. Nothing in this “Assisting Students at Academic or Behavioral Risk” supersedes or otherwise invalidates any portion of the “Academic Progression & Course Remediation” policy above or other catalog requirements regarding student status.

Academic Dishonesty
The Code of Academic Conduct is outlined in detail in the ATSU Student Handbook. Students are advised to be familiar with this code. Additionally, the ATSU Student Handbook outlines the procedure for reporting and investigating violations of the code to the Peer Review Council (PRC) of the Student Government Association (SGA).

Student Evaluation
There are many characteristics that are desirable in a PA. These include comprehensive medical knowledge, skill in applying knowledge through the provision of medical care, and professionalism in conduct. A PA must possess attention to detail, reliability, punctuality, and the ability to work as a team player.

In the didactic component of study, PA students are expected to demonstrate these traits, and at progressively higher levels, as they move towards completion of didactic training. Thus, the evaluation of PA students includes consideration of knowledge, skill, and professionalism. Knowledge is assessed through oral, written and practical testing. Skill is assessed via DPAS faculty evaluation. Professionalism is assessed through cooperation with the program faculty and staff, attendance at mandatory functions, participation in conferences and group exercises, and adherence to the guidelines of this handbook.

DPAS students are evaluated by a number of methodologies to insure they are meeting the expected competencies. The following are examples of methods that may be used to provide either formative or summative evaluation of student performance.

- Examinations (either written or computer based), quizzes and assignments
- Observation of Head-To-Toe Physical Exam
- Observation of Problem Specific Physical Exams
Performance of Clinical Procedures
Performance at Clinical Experiences
Discussion with Preceptors at Clinical Sites
Behavioral Performance Evaluation
Comprehensive End of Year Examinations
Faculty Advisory Reviews
Evaluation of Medical Documentation
Observation of Patient Presentations
Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)
Clinical Examination Exercise (Mini-Cex)

Objective Structured Clinical Encounters (OSCEs)
These proctored graded simulations, during the History and Physical courses, focus on aspects of patient encounters and may include: history taking, physical exam skills, critical thinking, developing differential diagnoses, developing management plans, patient education, and oral communication skills.

Comprehensive Examination
Students will be required to successfully complete a summative examination which will assess mastery of program competencies including didactic knowledge, clinical skills, and professionalism prior to graduation. For formative assessment, students will take the Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) examination at the end of the didactic training component. This statistically referenced exam will be used by students for self-assessment purposes.

Requirements for Completion of Didactic Component
1. Follow all rules and regulations published by ATSU and the DPAS
2. Complete with a passing grade (C or better) all didactic courses
3. Submit documentation of compliance with the ATSU Health and Immunization policy
4. Maintain BLS and achieve ACLS certification prior to beginning clinical rotations
5. Comply with the Professionalism section of this program guide
6. Attend all program designated activities

Students must complete standardized examinations as identified by the program and perform to accepted standards on said exams.

Students who do not perform to program standards on required examinations and exhibit a pattern of below standard performance may be required to complete a structured remedial experience prior to beginning clinical rotations. The structured experience will delay graduation or may effect progression if not completed to satisfactory standards.
PROFESSIONALISM

An important aspect of any professional educational curriculum is the development of professional behaviors and role identity. Evidence shows that unprofessional behavior exhibited during training is a predictor of future problems with state regulatory boards and the need for disciplinary actions (Papadakis, Hodgson, Teherani and Kohatsu, 2004). Unprofessional behavior presents a potential danger to the provision of good patient care and relates to the credibility of the profession. Professionalism therefore shares equal importance to content knowledge and manual skills at ATSU. The DPAS considers violation of professional conduct a significant deficiency.

Recognizing the responsibility for professional behavior, the DPAS sets expectations for and evaluates students on their professional conduct. Students must demonstrate acquisition of these important behaviors. Students will be evaluated using the form and procedure found in Appendix A twice during the didactic year and once during the clinical year to assess progress in meeting professionalism standards established by the program. These evaluations will complement the regular assessments completed by the student’s advisor. Please note that the assessment of professionalism is an ongoing component of the summative evaluation that is required of the program by the ARC-PA.

In order to satisfy the program’s expected outcomes for professionalism, the learner must receive ratings of satisfactory or better to graduate.

The National Board of Medical Examiners has identified behaviors consistent with professionalism. These behaviors are listed below. As a mechanism to assist students in the acquisition of these professional skills, a monitoring system has been established to identify unprofessional behaviors and to provide mentoring and guidance. Students identified as exhibiting unprofessional behavior will be provided with corrective guidance. Students who reflect a pattern of unprofessional behavior (deficiencies identified in two or more courses or clinical experiences) will be placed on academic probation and will receive documentation of these deficiencies. Severe infractions of professional behavior may be grounds for academic dismissal.

Professionalism Expectations

Altruism
1. Helps colleagues and team members
2. Takes on extra work to help the team
3. Serves as a knowledge or skill resource to others
4. Advocates for policies, practices and procedures that benefit patients
5. Endures inconvenience to meet patient needs

Honor and Integrity
1. Admits errors and takes steps to prevent recurrence
2. Deals with confidential information appropriately
3. Does not misuse resources (i.e. school or clinical site property)
4. Attributes ideas and contributions appropriately for other’s work
5. Upholds ethical standards in research and scholarly activity
6. Requests help when needed

**Caring and Compassion**
1. Treats patients as individuals, and considers lifestyle, beliefs and support systems
2. Shows compassion to patients and families
3. Maintains appropriate boundaries in professional relationships
4. Responds to patient needs appropriately
5. Optimizes patient comfort and privacy when conducting examinations

**Respect**
1. Respects institutional colleagues, faculty, and staff
2. Demonstrates respect for patients
3. Participates constructively as a team member
4. Adheres to institutional and departmental policies and procedures
5. Adheres to dress code

**Responsibility and Accountability**
1. Presents self in an appropriate manner
2. Completes assignments and tasks in a timely manner
3. Responds promptly when notified
4. Intervenes when unprofessional behavior presents a clear and present danger
5. Responds appropriately to an impaired colleague
6. Responds professionally to other’s lapses in conduct and or performance
7. Elicits patient’s understanding to enhance communication of information
8. Facilitates conflict resolution
9. Remains flexible to changing circumstances and unanticipated changes
10. Balances personal needs and patient responsibilities
11. Provides constructive feedback

**Excellence**
1. Has internal focus and direction
2. Sets goals to achieve excellence
3. Takes initiative in organizing and participating with peer groups and faculty
4. Maintains composure under difficult situations

Adapted from Behaviors Reflecting Professionalism National Board of Medical Examiners.
**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Student Technical Standards

*See ASHS catalog*

ADA Statement

*See ASHS catalog*

Fair Practices

PA students have equal access to facilities and programs of the Arizona School of Health Sciences as do students of other programs. ASHS is committed to equality of opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, religion, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability. All policies concerning Students are referred to the University catalog for policies on equal opportunity/affirmative action, sexual harassment, and discrimination.

Communication

Communication between ASHS faculty and PA students is accomplished through a variety of modes that include personal visits, phone calls, voice mail, and ATSU electronic mail. The ATSU electronic mail address is the official means of communication at the University. Communication between students and all ATSU personnel should be via ATSU assigned e-mail accounts. Students should not rely on email messages being forwarded to non-ATSU email accounts. Students are required to check ATSU e-mail on a daily basis.

Given today’s world of electronic communication PA students should reflect on the appropriateness of postings that may appear in electronic venues. This reflection should focus on both the tenor and content of postings. Considerable thought should be given to the implications of postings on the internet which may be distributed beyond what was originally intended. Postings/pictures/videos or other material that violates the professionalism standards expected of DPAS students may be cause for disciplinary action, even if said postings are not on ATSU maintained boards.

The physical and electronic materials available in class and on the Learning Management System are for educational use only. One copy per student is permitted for educational purposes. Redistribution of copyrighted materials is not permitted by law.
Conflict Resolution

Problems during didactic training can occur, be they academic, professional, or personal in nature. Students should use the following guidelines in dealing with problems:

1. Talk with the course instructor (if applicable). If this does not resolve your concern or if the problem does not relate to a specific course:
2. Talk with your assigned faculty advisor. If the issue is not resolved:
3. Talk with the director of didactic education. If the issue is not resolved:
4. Talk with the Department Chair

If a student is experiencing personal problems, the student should speak with their faculty advisor. The advisor will guide the student to appropriate resources such as student services or referral to outside agencies.

Excused Absence Policy

Each student is ultimately responsible for his/her own academic success. Students are expected to attend all scheduled educational activities. Should they miss class periods or assignments, they are responsible for the consequences and/or arranging any make up. A student may request an approved absence from classroom activities, lab activities, H&P experiences, and didactic clinical experiences (DCE) for personal, emergency, compassionate, professional, or health-related reasons.

When an absence from a scheduled educational activity is anticipated, the student shall inform the course coordinator (no less than 1 week before the anticipated absence when possible). The course coordinator and the director of didactic education will determine whether the absence will be excused. The student will then submit an absence report (as defined below) prior to the date of absence.

When an absence from a scheduled educational activity is not anticipated, the student shall submit an absence report (as defined below) at the earliest opportunity. The course coordinator and director of didactic education will determine whether the absence will be approved.

For approved absences, faculty and students are expected to make reasonable accommodations regarding make-up work, etc. for each approved absence. Absences are generally for a short duration of one or two days. Absences greater than five academic days may require a student to take a leave of absence or a personal withdrawal.

Please note: the program expects that students will arrange for appropriate care for family and/or pets. The department recognizes that unforeseeable family emergencies arise; in these instances, students should follow the processes herein for obtaining approval for absences.

For unapproved absences, the student will be expected to attend all scheduled educational activities that will take place during the period covered in the absence
request. If the student is absence without approval, the student will forfeit the
opportunity to complete any assessments given during that time.

Approved absences will not be retroactively approved, except in verifiable
emergency situations. Such requests for approval should be submitted in writing
within 24 hours of the absence.

Disputes between a student and course coordinator regarding absences should be
submitted to the next ranking academician.

The program observes holidays in accordance with the university calendar.
Observed holidays (in which there will be no scheduled educational activities) will
be identified in the calendars for each course and in the department calendar.

**Absence Reporting Process**
For an excused absence, please email PAAR@atsu.edu and copy the email to the
Director of Didactic Education. The acronym “PAAR” means “PA absence report”.
In the subject line, indicate your graduating year. For example, “Class of 20xx.” In
the body of the email, please include the date(s) you will be absent and the reason
for the request. Failure to do so may result in an absence being deemed
unapproved.
1. The Director of Didactic Education will determine whether the absence is
   approved and will notify the student and instructors
2. An absence of three or more consecutive days due to illness requires a written
   excuse from a health care provider on official letterhead.
3. Following an absence, the student is expected to initiate the contact with each
   course coordinator in a timely manner to make arrangements for making up any
   missed assignments or assessments.
4. Students with three (3) or more unapproved absences in a course will receive an
   incomplete grade for the course. The course coordinator and director of didactic
   education will determine an appropriate plan of remediation.
5. Students will be excused from class during holiday breaks scheduled by the
   University including: July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, diversity
day, and Memorial Day.

**Examinations**
All examinations are the property of the Department. Copying of examinations and
related testing materials, in full or part, for any reason will be regarded as cheating
and theft, and disciplinary actions will be instituted. Students receiving, viewing, or
duplicating stolen examination materials will be treated as an accomplice, and
subject to disciplinary action. Tests will not be administered early. If a test is not
taken by a student, a make-up test may be given at the discretion of the instructor.
Make-up tests may be in a different format from the original. Examination content
is derived from course objectives and complemented by assigned readings,
classroom, and lab experiences. Re-scheduling an examination or quiz can be
accommodated only under extreme circumstances with the permission of the course
director. In extreme circumstances (i.e. death of an immediate family member) an
exam may be given late (after the time indicated in the syllabus) at the discretion
of the course instructor. Any make-up examinations are given by permission of the
instructor of record who will determine the date, and time of the make-up exam as well as the content. Students who miss an examination must notify the instructor of record prior to the scheduled examination time unless medically incapacitated.

If you cannot attend an examination or quiz, you are required to follow the procedure outlined in the University Handbook. The DPAS reserves the right to assess students for the cost of reproducing examinations or clinical competency demonstrations (i.e. pelvic exams) where the reproduction of said exam or demonstration would be excessive (i.e. require special scheduling of standardized patients). Missing an examination or assignment is not consistent with the Professional Expectations and may be cause for referral to the DPAS Student Promotion Board.

DPAS students are expected to exhibit the highest degree of intellectual honesty in the completion of examinations and assignments given by the School. Behaviors that are not consistent with this standard include (but are not limited to) having or seeking access to examination materials before the examination, impersonating an examinee or engaging someone else to take the examination by proxy, copying answers from someone else or allowing one’s answers to be copied, altering or misrepresenting scores, stealing examination materials, possessing unauthorized items during an examination (e.g. recording or photographic devices, reference material, etc.).

The content of DPAS examinations and assignments is proprietary and strictly confidential. Unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion, or receipt of any examination question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral or other form of communication (including but not limited to e-mailing, copying or printing of electronic files and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation) before, during, or after an examination, is strictly prohibited. Such behaviors are subject to disciplinary actions and sanctions outlined in the DPAS Policies, Procedures and Didactic Program Guide, the ASHS Catalog and ATSU Student Handbook. All assignments and projects submitted for any course are the property of the DPAS and may not be available for return to the student. Students should maintain a copy all work assignments submitted.

All work on examinations, exercises and assignments are to be completed individually unless direction is given by the faculty member that said assignment may be completed as a group project or with the assistance of others.

To provide for a consistent and secure test environment, the following guidelines will be followed by all DPAS students.

Prior to the examination
1. Charge your laptop battery and assure that your computer is in good working order.
2. Update your browser.
3. When the test is being administered on ExamSoft, download the test file from ExamSoft.

On the day of the examination
1. Arrive at the designated time.
2. When entering the testing room, place your personal items in the area designated. The only items permitted at your desk are your computer, a writing instrument and a bottle of water. All other items should be placed with your personal belongings to collect at the conclusion of the exam. Make sure all cell phones are on silent or turned off and all pagers on vibrate.
3. Take the seat you are assigned after you have stowed your personal items.
4. Boot up your computer and be ready to enter the password when it is given. If you are having computer problems, raise your hand for assistance.
5. Enter the password and review the information screens until you come to the final screen where you will type BEGIN. Then wait for the signal.
6. When given the signal, type BEGIN and start the examination.
7. Those who are admitted late to the test will need to finish the test in the time remaining from the start time of the examination, not from the time remaining on your ExamSoft clock. You will be given a stop time from the proctor.
8. Once the examination has commenced, students may not access their personal items or communicate with other examinees until the conclusion of the examination.
9. If absolutely necessary, you may leave the room to go to the restroom. Please raise your hand so the proctor can excuse you. Examinees will be excused one at a time to leave the testing room for this purpose. Time will not be extended for the time you are absent.
10. Once you finish the examination, please leave the room and do not congregate outside the testing room. If you need your personal belongings, gather them prior to leaving the test room. Students may not re-enter the test room after finishing the examination. You may return to the classroom when the test is completed.
11. Do not ask the proctor any questions concerning the examination during its administration. Proctors are instructed not to answer any questions concerning the exam.
12. Be sure to show the proctor the confirmation screen that you have submitted your examination prior to exiting the exam room at the conclusion of the test.

Good luck on your examinations!

Grading Scale

Grades for each PA student will reflect the evaluation criteria as stated in the course syllabi. Final course grades for ASHS PA Program didactic courses will be expressed using the following scale:

A=90-100
B=80-89.99
C=70-79.99
F= < 70
I=Incomplete

Please note: Grades will be calculated to two decimal points. Rounding up of final grades will not be permitted.
Incomplete Grades

PA students whose academic work at the end of a course is incomplete may be given, at the course instructor’s discretion, a grade of incomplete. Incomplete grades will become failing grades after two weeks unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor of record.

Classroom Etiquette

Activities that distract from the classroom environment and interfere with the conduct of the educational process are prohibited. Students are expected to abide by the following professional standards:

- **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**: Use of electronic devices during scheduled educational activities should be limited by the student to activities that enrich the educational environment without distracting the student or others in attendance. All electronic devices should be set to “silent mode” during scheduled educational activities.
- **INTERNET USE**: Do not send emails or instant messages, play games, surf the Internet, or work on other assignments during lecture or class meetings. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in disciplinary action.
- **GUESTS**: Do not bring guests to class without first obtaining approval from the Course Coordinator and Director of Didactic Education.
- **PLAGIARISM**: Do not plagiarize the work of another individual. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the buying, receiving, or obtaining by any other means another’s work or idea and submitting it as one’s own.

Frequent breaks are given during the day. Please make every attempt to limit your exit and entry during class by using break time appropriately.

Current Contact Information

Students are expected to provide the Program with current address and phone number information at all times. If your address and/or phone number change, please submit information immediately.

Background Check

DPAS requires students to provide the results of background check prior to entry into the program. Recognize this is a minimum standard and that some clinical facilitates may have additional requirements that students must meet prior to beginning clerkships at those sites. These requirements may include (but not be limited to) additional background checks and drug screen.
Health Requirements

Prior to matriculation, all applicants to ASHS must submit certification of immunizations. Failure to maintain year-to-date immunizations can prevent a student from progressing in the program. For a list of the required immunizations, consult the ASHS Catalog.

Health insurance is required while you are attending the Arizona School of Health Sciences. The ASHS Catalog and the document at the end of this program guide describe the minimum medical coverage requirements that must be maintained. Noncompliance at any time during a student's enrollment may result in disciplinary action.

Students can access personal counseling by contacting Student Services.

HIPAA Compliance

Prior to beginning clinical experiences, all students are trained in the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA) medical privacy regulations. Students will not be permitted to begin clinical experiences without HIPAA training. Students must demonstrate continuous compliance with these regulations throughout the didactic and clinical year. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.

OSHA Guidelines

During the didactic phase of the program, each student receives training in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Administration on Universal Precautions and learns about the appropriate methods of handling blood, tissues and bodily fluids as well as dealing with the management of communicable diseases. As part of professional development, each student is responsible for incorporating these precautionary measures into the daily routine while taking care of patients. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies and procedures for applying these precautions at each of the clinical sites to which the student is assigned.

Liability Insurance Coverage

ATSU maintains a malpractice insurance policy for students in the clinical setting. When applicable, the Program will provide clinical sites/preceptors with a certificate of coverage.

Incident Reporting

Methods of preventing infections and environmental exposures are covered within the OSHA component of the Healthy Community course. Each student is issued a card to be carried on their person, which outlines procedures to be followed in the event of exposure. Should a student sustain an injury or exposure at a clinical site,
the student should report the incident immediately to the clinical instructor, complete the site incident form, and receive appropriate medical care according to clinical site protocol. If there is no protocol at the clinical site, seek treatment at the nearest Emergency Department. The student is then required to contact the program within 24 hours with a detailed history of the incident. Students are responsible for initiating care and recommended follow up after injury or exposure to possible infectious pathogens. Injuries which occur at clinical sites and ATSU are not covered by workers compensation insurance unless specifically identified as such in individual affiliation agreements. All costs for evaluation and treatment, if not covered by the facility or student’s health insurance or the program’s needle stick coverage, are the responsibility of the student.

Advising

Students are assigned a faculty advisor. You should consider the advisor a key support and primary contact during the academic training. Each student should meet with his or her assigned faculty advisor at least once per academic term at which time the student will be expected to complete a self-assessment form (see Appendix B). Your faculty advisor will:

- Assist in the understanding of policies and practices of the Program and ASHS.
- Respond to questions or concerns about course requirements and expectations, performance criteria, academic standing, and professionalism.
- Provide feedback on academic progress, graduate competencies and program goals.
- Provide support for your personal and professional growth. This support may include referring you to appropriate professionals if difficult situations arise.
- Discuss academic performance in an effort to optimize your learning experiences.
- Assist with plans to address issues of academic difficulties on an as needed basis.

Students will be assigned a member of the clinical team as their faculty advisor during the clinical year. Students should contact the clinical team as needed during their rotations. Please note that faculty members may not act as your medical provider or professional counselor.

ASHS Property

In several courses, you will be required to submit papers, presentations and/or notes. All assignments and projects submitted for any course are the property of the ASHS DPAS and may not be available for return to the student.

Assignments

Students are advised to keep a copy of all course assignments/paperwork. If an assignment is not posted or is misplaced, a grade of zero will be given if the student does not have a backup copy. Acceptance of late submissions of assignments/paperwork is at the discretion of the course instructor.
Leave of Absence

See University Student Handbook.

Withdrawal from the Program

See University Student Handbook.

Proper Identification

Students must always identify themselves as a “physician assistant student” to faculty, patients, clinical site staff, and never present themselves as physicians, residents, medical students, or graduate physician assistants. While in the ASHS PA program, students may not use previously earned titles (i.e. RN, MD, DO, EMT, Ph.D., Dr. etc.) for identification purposes. ASHS identification badges must be worn at all times while on campus and during clinical training.

Confidentiality

Students must respect the confidentiality of patients and fellow students and are not permitted to discuss patients or fellow students by name outside the clinical or academic setting. For academic presentations and assignments, please use patient initials or first name only.

Employment

Because of the intensity of the ASHS PA program, students are strongly discouraged from seeking or maintaining employment during the entire program. If a PA student chooses to work during the program, it is his/her responsibility to ensure that employment does not interfere with or hinder academic progress.

Travel

Some courses require travel to participate in clinical experiences. Travel is at the student’s expense and not paid for by DPAS or the clinical agencies. Reliable transportation and a valid driver’s license are a necessity to complete the program of study. In the event of inclement weather, students are advised to use their best judgment when considering travel to clinical experiences.

Textbook Policy

It is expected that students will obtain textbooks as listed in the course syllabus. It is considered an infringement of copyright law to copy an entire textbook.
Faculty Access

In addition to teaching, PA faculty members have administrative, college and clinical responsibilities. Time spent with faculty should be for counseling, advisement, academic questions or other concerns related to the ASHS PA program. PA faculty members generally maintain an “open door” policy for student access. Please use good judgment and respect faculty members' time. If extended periods of time are needed, please consult the faculty member to make appointments.

Dress Code

The dress code has been designed to assist students in presenting a professional appearance in order to inspire confidence in both colleagues and patients, as well as to comply with health and safety standards that promote effective patient care and minimize the possibilities for body fluid exposure or the spread of infectious disease, (ARC-PA Standards 3.02 and 3.08). Students should maintain a professional appearance and dress appropriately whenever they are representing ASHS and the PA profession in any setting. This includes the campus, all clinical sites, meetings, and special events. Being neatly dressed and well-groomed exemplifies professionalism and courtesy toward your colleagues and patients. Dress should not distract from the educational effort.

Each course syllabus may outline specific requirements and dress code exceptions/expectations for the particular course. Students are to adhere to course-specific requirements in the event they conflict with program-wide requirements. For example, if a professor requires students to wear professional attire for a certain skills class rather than scrubs, professional attire must be worn.

Professional Dress for Class and Laboratory Attendance on the ATSU Campus
(In force between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday-Friday)

1. School identification card with photo must be worn at all times.
2. Clothing must be clean and free of wrinkles, rips, tears, and stains.
3. Clothing must fit appropriately. Clothing must not be loosely fitting, which can promote disease transmission, or tightly fitting, which can restrict range of motion.
4. Clothing must not expose the back, midriff, cleavage, or undergarments.
5. Males are to wear business slacks and collared dress shirts. Dress khakis are permitted.
6. Female students are to wear business slacks, dresses, or skirts, and dress shirts, blouses, or cardigans. Skirts and dresses must be knee-length or longer. Dress capri pants or khakis are permitted.
7. No tank tops, halter tops, or spaghetti-straps are permitted.
8. Jeans are not permitted.
9. No sandals or open-toe shoes are allowed. Clogs are permitted. Sneakers are allowed to be worn ONLY with scrubs. All shoes must be clean and in good-repair. Heels must be less than two inches high.
10. Clothing color should not be distracting. No loud or fluorescent colors.
11. Program-approved scrubs must be worn for H&P labs and skills labs unless otherwise notified. Scrubs are not permitted to be worn at clinical sites unless otherwise notified.
12. Program-approved scrubs may be worn in the classroom in lieu of business professional dress.
13. No workout attire, leggings, or sweatpants/sweatshirts are permitted.
14. With the exception of religious head coverings or surgical caps (in appropriate environments), hats or hoods are not to be worn.
15. All tattoos must be concealed.
16. Jewelry must be kept to a minimum. Students must have no more than two earrings per ear, and dangling earrings are prohibited. No body piercings should be visible other than ear piercings.
17. Fingernails should be kept trimmed and, when in surgical settings or rotations, without polish. Artificial nails are prohibited.
18. Perfume, cologne, or aftershave must be kept to a minimum.
19. Hair must be clean and arranged so as not to interfere with providing patient care. Facial hair should be neatly trimmed.
20. Good personal hygiene is to be maintained at all times. This includes regular bathing, use of deodorants/antiperspirants, and regular dental hygiene.

Professional Dress for Patient Encounters and Attendance at Off-Campus Conferences

1. This section covers dress for all patient encounters including OSCEs, simulated patient encounters, didactic clinical experiences (DCE), clinical rotations, and off-campus professional conferences.
2. All dress code rules from the above section apply with the following caveats:
   a. Established dress codes at health fairs, clinical rotations, and DCE sites supercede those of the Program (except required ATSU ID badges). All other exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Program Chair.
   b. Men must wear ties.
   c. Students must wear white coats, except for conference attendance.
   d. Scrubs are prohibited at clinical sites unless allowed by faculty or preceptors.

STUDENT DIDACTIC CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Didactic Year Clinical Experiences Overview

Introduction
The didactic year clinical experience program is designed to provide students with the opportunity to experience the real life application of the information they are being exposed to in the didactic curriculum. The program is also a chance for students to emulate experienced providers as role models in the application of effective interpersonal skills and patient education techniques to patient care.
Methodology
First year students will be assigned to health care facilities for half-day or full day experiences to observe or participate in various elements of the health care system. These experiences may cover the gamut of health care delivery from pre-hospital service to end of life care. Depending on site preference and circumstance the experience may be largely observational or the student may have the opportunity to participate under supervision by taking histories, performing elements of the physical exam or performing basic procedures for which they have already received instruction in the program’s curriculum.

All students are covered by the University’s malpractice insurance policy, and all students are required to carry personal health insurance. In addition, each student is covered under an accident and blood borne pathogen exposure policy purchased by the University. All students are CPR certified and many have ACLS or additional certifications.

The general objectives for these experiences are as follows:

1. Identify the role of various health care entities in the health care system.
2. Observe experienced health care providers employ effective techniques to obtain patient history, provide patient education and build therapeutic relationships.
3. Perform a history and physical examination (either complete or focused) on patients of various ages (at site discretion).
4. Perform basic clinical procedures under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner or appropriately credentialed supervisor (at site discretion).
5. Participate in the performance of patient counseling and education (at site discretion).
6. Utilize history-taking skills and physical exam techniques, with identification of normal vs. abnormal.
7. Develop effective techniques to provide culturally sensitive health care to individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds.
8. View results of diagnostic studies as they relate to the observed patient presentations.
9. Discuss the development of treatment plans with preceptor.
10. Familiarize themselves with various environments that will be experienced during the supervised clinical practice section of the program.
11. Identify barriers to receiving health care (and health care disparities) experienced by underserved populations.

Students will be assigned to various first year experiences beginning in the fall term and then continuing each term throughout the first year. On average students will be assigned to 3 experiences per term (although students may volunteer for additional experiences on a space available basis). Please be familiar with the expectations for student and site as listed below.

Student responsibilities:

1. Report to the site at the assigned time.
2. Appropriate dress (adhering to program dress code for clinical experiences) to include:
3. As assigned, compose two problem oriented SOAP notes per term using SOAP template.
4. Return evaluation from site in sealed envelope and place in drop box within two days of the experience.
5. Complete evaluation of experience and hand in to drop box within two days of experience.

Site responsibilities:
1. Provide brief orientation to student on necessary site policies and safety briefing and identify supervisor for the experience.
2. Provide students access to provision of medical care at site’s level of comfort, taking into account that the student is a first year student. At some sites this will be observational; at others students may perform activities under direct supervision at the site’s discretion.
3. Complete the four item evaluation and return to student in envelope provided to return to program (copy of evaluation attached).

Completing the required elements of this experience is a component of the professionalism standards. Completing these experiences as assigned will be a necessary element of the Body, Mind, Spirit course grade. Other elements may be factored into additional courses (i.e. SOAPs in H and P). Please check course syllabi for specific information.

If you experience a problem with a didactic clinic experience please contact Linda MacConnell, PA-C or Ashley Purviance.

Heart Failure Project

Supervisor: Mr. Elton Bordenave, M Ed, CHC
Administrative coordinator: Ms. Jacqueline Kalinsky

Congestive heart failure is one of the most common reasons for admission to the hospital for adults age 65 and older (Lloyd-Jones et al., 2010). Despite receiving good care in the hospital, a significant portion (29-47%) of these patients are readmitted for exacerbations of their heart failure within a 3-6 month timeframe after discharge (Lloyd-Jones et al., 2010). This high rate of readmission creates hardships for patients and families along with substantial cost for the readmission to the health care system.

Developing effective strategies to reduce hospital readmissions in the acute post-discharge phase have the potential to provide a significant positive impact to reduce costs to the health care system and human suffering. The American Heart Association along with the American College of Cardiology have recommended a multi-disciplinary approach to provide post-discharge support for heart failure patients to assist in preventing early readmission to the hospital (Hunt et al., 2009).
During the didactic year each physician assistant student will have the opportunity to make an impact in the community by participate in the heart failure project. Completion of this project (including the exit report) will count toward the grade in Body, Mind and Spirit. Early in the academic year you will receive an orientation session and training on the mechanics of the heart failure program. Beginning in the fall term teams of two students will be assigned to a patient who is recently discharged from a health care facility with the diagnosis of heart failure. Your partner will be a student from another discipline (GCU nursing or SOMA medical student) so this project will also allow you an opportunity for an interprofessional education experience.

You and your partner will be responsible to contact the patient and set up four two hour appointments in their home to provide the education and monitoring required of the project. At the conclusion of your visit you will submit a final report to Ms. Kalinsky as per the instructions given at your project orientation. Please check the Body, Mind, Spirit syllabus (PA-561) to review how the points for this project will figure into the final grade.

**Heart Failure Project Objectives**

After completing the orientation and participating in all aspects of the heart failure project as assigned the learner will:

1. Identify barriers to patient adherence to treatment regimes.
2. Develop effective strategies to overcome the barriers identified in objective 1.
3. List important treatment components of the recently discharged heart failure patient to include; medications, dietary guidelines and exercise.
4. Effectively work as a healthcare team member to achieve desired patient outcomes.

**References**


**Immunization Policy**

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS) requires students to follow the immunization policy found in the Arizona School of Health Science (ASHS) Catalog during the didactic component. In addition to this policy, the Department requires students to obtain an influenza vaccination annually while a student.
Students will be required to cover the cost of this vaccination. Documentation of vaccination shall be a signed and/or certified medical record, submitted to department staff. Students will be responsible for maintaining vaccination status during the program.

This additional requirement provides protection for patients you will encounter who may be susceptible to influenza. Influenza, a respiratory infection for which a proven vaccine is available, is among the most deadly infectious diseases for which a proven vaccine exists. As health care provider students, (and future health care providers,) obtaining the influenza vaccination yearly is a necessary step to protect the patients you care for.

Exemptions from the requirement to obtain an influenza vaccination may be granted for medical contraindications or religious beliefs. Request for exemption from this policy must be made in writing to the department chair. You must include the reason(s) for your request, and any appropriate supporting documentation for your reason(s). Your request will be reviewed by the department chair and directors of didactic and clinical education.

If your request for exemption is approved, you will be permitted to matriculate. However, because clinical sites maintain their own immunization policies, you may not be able to participate in all required educational activities (e.g. Didactic Clinical Experiences, clinical rotations/experiences in the second year of the program). Forgoing influenza vaccination may delay progression in the program and/or graduation. You will be expected to complete appropriate alternative experiences where you are unable to attend required educational activities because of your immunization status. You may be required to wear protective equipment (e.g. droplet mask) while on campus or during a patient contact experience in order to protect your fellow students, faculty, staff, and campus community from exposure to influenza.

If your request for exemption is not approved, you will either be expected to obtain yearly influenza immunizations or may be expected to withdraw from the program.

Health Insurance

See ASHS Catalog
Appendix A: Professional Performance Evaluation Form

Professional Performance Evaluation

Department of Physician Assistant Studies
A.T. Still University

The A.T. Still University Department of Physician Assistant Studies Professional Performance Evaluation Form was developed to assess the professional behavior and attitudes of students through a formal, annual, written feedback process that compliments regular feedback provided by faculty advisors to their student advisees. The completion of these forms is an integral part of summative evaluation---an ARC-PA required component of student evaluation.

Procedure:

1. Form must be completed by the faculty advisor at least once during the didactic year and once during the clinical year, but may be utilized to indicate student performance problems during both the didactic year or during clinical clerkships.
2. Meet with each of your first and second year advisees to discuss their evaluation during an advising session no later than midterm of the spring term in the didactic year and within a month after the second clinical assessment day of the clinical year. It is important that substantive commentary be included in the comments section, especially if there are/were professional performance problems.
3. Faculty advisors must be prepared to offer specific examples that justify all rating, especially needs “improvement” or “unsatisfactory” performance ratings.
4. Obtain the necessary signatures and specify the date of completion.
5. Pass the original copy to the program administrative assistant for filing in the student’s file. Highlight any problems with professionalism during the student concern section of the regular faculty/staff meeting.
6. If a student is away rotation at the time the form needs to be completed, the completed form may be e-mailed to the student. The advisor can then review the form with the advisee by phone or via video conference link. After that review the student must sign the form and send it to the program or send an email to document that they had reviewed the form with the advisor.
7. Each parameter must be evaluated as “Outstanding” or “Satisfactory” or “Needs Improvement” in order for a student to graduate the program.

Ordinarily, the advisor meets with each advisee to complete a professional performance form annually. If, however, a student is having professional performance problems, it may be necessary to complete the form on more than an annual basis. If necessary the program chair can meet with you and any advisee about whom you are concerned.
Professional Performance Evaluation

Department of Physician Assistant Studies – A.T. Still University

Student: ___________________________  Advisor/Evaluator: ___________________________

Evaluation Date: ________________

Check Rating:

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<td>3 = Satisfactory</td>
<td>2 = Needs Improvement</td>
<td>1 = Unsatisfactory</td>
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Reliability and Responsibility
- Strives for the highest standards of competence in skills and knowledge
- Takes personal responsibility for own learning
- Fulfills course/clerkship responsibilities in a reliable manner
- Fulfills administrative responsibilities in a reliable manner, e.g. Typhon logging
- Assumes personal responsibility for choices
- Is on time for learning activities
- Submits assignments on time and in professional format
- Maintains confidentiality standards and is HIPAA compliant
- Exhibits ethical behaviors and conduct, is truthful
- Committed to ethical principles of the PA profession
- Adheres to institutional policies and procedures
- Adheres to negotiated decisions
- Uses professional language and is mindful of the environment

Self Improvement and Adaptability
- Able to accept and offer constructive criticism
- Incorporates feedback to make positive behavioral change
- Recognizes limitations of own knowledge and seeks help when necessary
- Asks questions in a constructive manner
- Demonstrates respect, empathy and compassion for patients and colleagues
- Exhibits flexibility in dealing with needed changes
- Maintains professional appearance and hygiene
- Maintains composure during adverse interactions or situations
- Committed to ongoing professional development

Relationships with Students, Faculty, Staff and Patients
- Able to effectively relate to patients, peers, and colleagues
- Honors the choices and rights of others
- Respects faculty and their teaching endeavors
- Understands and respects cultural differences
- Uses appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication
- Resolves conflicts in a manner that respects the dignity of every person involved
- Appropriately engaged in learning process
- Responds to the needs of others without regard to self-interest
- Exhibits the attributes of a team player
- Contributes to creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and the practice of medicine
- Strives to maintain healthy lifestyle and balance
- Uses respectful demeanor in discussions and in using learning tools
Professional Performance Evaluation

Department of Physician Assistant Studies – A.T. Still University

Student: ____________________________ Advisor/Evaluator: ____________________________

Evaluation Date: ______________

Comments and suggestion/correction plan offered by advisor and/or student:

Advisor/Evaluator Signature: ____________________________ Date: ______________

Student Signature*: ____________________________ Date: ______________

*Signature indicates that the professional performance evaluation has been reviewed with the