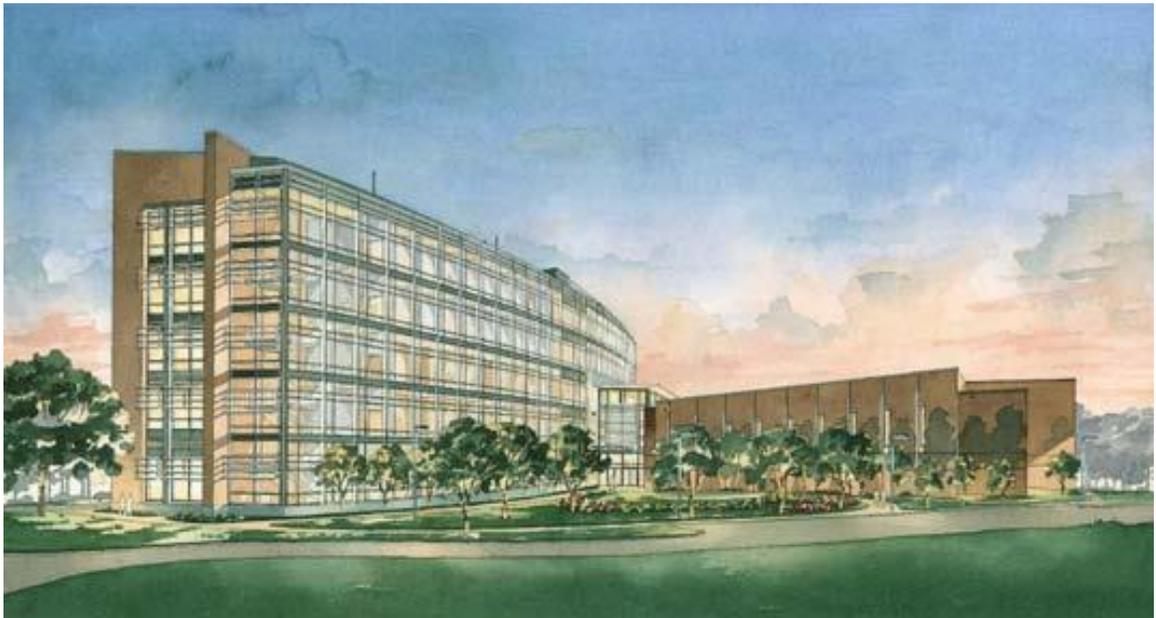


**AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY**

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
DEPARTMENT**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**



Changes and updates to this handbook may occur at any point during your enrollment with timely notification.

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## FACULTY INTRODUCTION

CONGRATULATIONS! Welcome to the Augusta University Physician Assistant Program!

This Physician Assistant Student Handbook has been published for your benefit. Please read it in its entirety. As a faculty, we have created an educational regimen designed to develop physician assistants with the knowledge and skills to practice in all aspects of medicine. The contents of this handbook outline the guidelines for that education, as well as the program rules, definitions and expectations. It is required that each student be familiar with its contents. Clarification and explanation should be sought from the faculty if needed. It is expected that information in this book will be altered as is necessary and further information may be added periodically.

You are embarking on the final stage in your journey to becoming a physician assistant. As you grapple with the impact of that reality, be mindful of the efforts, skills and persistence that have culminated in creating the person that you are as you strive to make your dream a reality. Each effort, trial, failure and triumph has imprinted its wisdom upon your character. That character is the base upon which your experience as a physician assistant student will grow.

The responsibility held by physician assistants is vast and immeasurable. In the words of our professional founders:

*“... (PAs) know patients; they are aware of the triumphs and failures of medicine; they know how doctors think and what they do with information collected about patients. For these reasons, they are in demand by all businesses that touch the medical profession. The world is open, and PAs are grasping their share.”*

-Eugene Stead and Frank Starmer

Gird yourself for the final leg of your journey, being ever mindful of the value and wisdom of your experiences that have carried you thus far.

The Physician Assistant Department faculty and staff welcome you and wish you great success!

Sara Haddow Liebel, MSA, PA-C  
Associate Professor/ Director of Education

*“The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor. But that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along... someone who will live a happier life merely because we took the time to share what we have to give. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word... all of which have the potential to turn a life around. It's overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our love felt.”*

-Leo Buscaglia

## STUDENT INTRODUCTION

To the Class of 2020,

We would like to start off by welcoming you to Augusta University. Congratulations on your acceptance into this program and beginning your journey to becoming a physician assistant! This is an incredible opportunity, and we hope you recognize what a gift it is to be here.

This program is very fast-paced and challenging but can be very rewarding. It will take hard work, discipline, support, and perspective to succeed in this program. You will be surrounded with the support from faculty and classmates that will become your teammates. The program is competitive in nature, but you are not competing against your classmates. You will need each other to get through this program.

The way you approach your time here is vital to your future as a medical practitioner. It is important to understand the significance of truly learning while you are here for the sake of your future patients. You have a responsibility to your future patients. We hope the weight of that sets in and will challenge you to be an excellent student. We hope the next two years will cultivate perseverance, discipline, compassion, and humility within each of you.

Your time here will not only prepare you as a practitioner but will transform you as a person. You will begin to appreciate and understand the beauty of the human body and complexity of medicine. You will learn a great deal about yourself, your strengths, and sometimes more importantly, your limitations. You will learn what it means to be a PA. We hope that you will not squander this time because it will be gone before you know it.

Work hard, but have fun! Again, we congratulate and welcome you as the newest members of our PA family.

Best wishes!

Ava McGahey and Jean Lee  
President and Vice President  
AU PA Class of 2019

*“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, love of what you are doing.” – Pele*

## **Augusta University Physician Assistant Department**

### **GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION**

The physician assistant is a skilled professional qualified by academic and clinical training to provide medical and health care services under the supervision of a licensed physician. In most settings, physician assistants obtain medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret laboratory and other diagnostic studies, assess and manage common illness, and perform minor procedures. Disease prevention and health promotion activities, including counseling and patient education, are important services also provided by physician assistants. Practice options for the certified physician assistant are as varied as the many disciplines within the field of medicine.

Established in 1972, the Augusta University Physician Assistant (PA) Program offers a comprehensive education that allows graduates to become employed in many specialty areas. Individually negotiated roles are determined by the needs of the medical practice and community, the interests and training of the supervising physician and the physician assistant, and local hospital and state regulations.

Physician assistants in the state of Georgia practice under the provisions of the Physician Assistant Act, the Rules of the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners, and an approved job description. Successful completion of the National Certifying Examination for Physician Assistants is required.

### **ACCREDITATION**

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the accrediting agency that protects the interests of the public and PA profession by defining the standards for PA education and evaluating PA educational programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards. The Augusta University Physician Assistant Program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Full accreditation status has been maintained throughout the program's history.

The ARC-PA encourages excellence in PA education through its accreditation process by establishing and maintaining minimum standards of quality for educational programs. It awards accreditation to programs through a peer review process that includes documentation and periodic site visit evaluation to substantiate compliance with the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education. The accreditation process is designed to encourage sound educational experimentation and innovation and to stimulate continuous self-study and improvement.

The American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the American College of Physicians, the American College of Surgeons, the American Medical Association, and the Association of Physician Assistant Programs all cooperate with the ARC-PA to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for entry level education of physician assistants

(PAs) and to provide recognition for educational programs that meet the minimum requirements outlined in these Standards.

## **PURPOSE**

The Augusta University Physician Assistant Department (PAD) has as its purpose the enhancement and promotion of the physician assistant role in health care delivery through the preparation of qualified applicants to work as certified physician assistants.

## **MISSION**

The mission of the Augusta University Physician Assistant Department is to develop physician assistants with the knowledge and skills to practice in all aspects of medicine, to participate in scholarship in academia and medicine, and to promote the physician assistant profession through leadership, mentorship, and community services which will meet the diverse needs of society.

## **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **ABILITY AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

#### **ABILITY:**

Students with an ability limitation or in need of special provisions must inform the Director of Education prior to the beginning of didactic activity, or immediately upon obtaining the knowledge, awareness or diagnosis of such a provision or need. See Section 7.1 Americans with Disabilities Act in the [Augusta University Student Manual](#).

#### **TECHNICAL STANDARDS:**

The mission of the Augusta University Physician Assistant Program is to graduate knowledgeable, skilled, and effective physician assistants. It is the responsibility of the faculty to select applicants who are best qualified to complete the required training and most likely to become the best possible physician assistants. Applicants are selected based not only on their scholastic achievement and ability, but also on their intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities to meet the requirements of the academic curriculum and of a successful career in medicine.

The following technical standards specify those attributes that are necessary for completing physician assistant training, enabling each graduate to subsequently enter clinical practice. These standards describe the essential functions that must be demonstrated in order to fulfill the requirements of physician assistant practice, and thus, are pre-requisites for entrance, continuation, promotion, retention, and completion of the Augusta University PA Program.

The Augusta University PAD will consider for admission any applicant who meets academic criteria and demonstrates the ability to perform or learn to perform the skills listed in this document, with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with

Disabilities Act, Civil Rights Restoration Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Any applicant with questions about these technical requirements is strongly encouraged to discuss the issue with the Office of Student Affairs prior to the interview process.

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

More specifically, a student in the Physician Assistant Program must have adequate abilities and skills in the following five areas as detailed below:

1. **Observation:** The student must be able to observe demonstrations and conduct experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to chemical, biological, anatomical, and physiological sciences, microbiological cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms. A student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities. A student must be able to integrate all information visually and through the other senses.
2. **Communication:** A student must be able to communicate effectively, sensitively, and rapidly in English with patients and members of the health care team. A student must be able to elicit information from patients, perceive nonverbal communications, and describe changes in mood, activity, and posture. Communication includes not only speech, but writing, reading, interpreting graphs, and computer literacy.
3. **Sensory and Motor Function:** The student must have sufficient sensory and motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. The student will be required to coordinate both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of hearing, touch, and vision.

More specifically, the student must be able to exercise such fine motor skill as to adequately perform laboratory tests, including but not limited to wet mount, urinalysis, and gram stain. The student must exercise such level of dexterity, sensation, and visual acuity as to accurately complete such processes as administering intravenous medication, making fine measurements of angles and size, measuring blood pressure, respiration and pulse, performing physical examinations, and performing therapeutic procedures such as suturing and casting.

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

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

4. **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** A student must have the intellect necessary to quickly analyze and resolve problems. These intellectual abilities include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning, analysis judgment, and synthesis. The student must be able to identify significant findings from the patient's history, the physical examination, and laboratory data; provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses; and choose appropriate medications and therapy. The ability to incorporate new information from many sources in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, diagnostic, and therapeutic planning is primary. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others.
  
5. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** A student must possess the emotional health required for full use of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. The development of mature, sensitive, effective, and professional relationships with patients and members of the health care team is essential. Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. In the event that a student displays behaviors concerning to the faculty, the faculty can request that the student take a medical leave of absence for further evaluation by a licensed healthcare provider before returning to the program.

Compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are desired in a health professional and assessed during the admissions and education process.

The Technical Standards were adapted from *Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession* NCCPA 2005.

## **SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS**

### **SATISFACTORY PROGRESSION:**

Uninterrupted progress and satisfactory academic standing through the didactic component and promotion to the clinical year require that the student enroll in all courses in the Physician Assistant curriculum as listed, maintain a 3.0 GPA, and achieve a grade of "C" or higher in each required course in the didactic phase. The College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS) grading scale for course grades and calculating GPA is 100 – 90 A, 89 – 80 B, 79 – 70 C, 69 – 60 D, 59 – 0 F is used only for out of department coursework (examples: anatomy, epidemiology and biostatistics). The grading scale for courses taught within the Physician Assistant Department is 100 – 90 A, 89 – 80 B, 79 – 75 C, < 75 F.

Enrollment in a sequenced course requires the achievement of a passing grade in the required prerequisite course. If a student withdraws from or fails any course while in the Physician Assistant program, they may be dismissed from the PA program. There is no part-time

student status. Any exception for deceleration will be determined by the PAD faculty and will be at the discretion of the faculty. If a student is appealing a PAD decision regarding suspension or dismissal on any level, the student may not progress in the didactic or clinical phase until all appeals have been exhausted. The student will be removed from their courses or clinical rotation once a recommendation has been made by the departmental chair or a majority of the PAD faculty that they be suspended or dismissed; the student will not be allowed to continue to attend class nor participate at a clinical rotation site once either the department chair or a majority of the faculty have recommended they be suspended or dismissed.

### **Progression Requirements:**

To be eligible for promotion to the clinical year and for graduation from the Program, each student must meet the following requirements:

1. Have passed all comprehensive examinations given by the PAD during the didactic component in order to be promoted to the clinical year.
2. Have earned a satisfactory letter grade of A, B, or C for all required didactic courses.
3. Have satisfactorily completed American Heart Association Health Care Provider Courses “Basic Life Support” (BLS) and “Advanced Cardiac Life Support” (ACLS) before promotion to the clinical year.
4. Maintained AHA BLS and ACLS certification for the entire clinical year.
5. Continue to meet the professional and technical standards of the program as determined by the PA Faculty.

Failure to meet the above standards is deemed unsatisfactory academic and professional standing and will result in probation, dismissal, or suspension. The PAD faculty will inform the department chair of a student’s failure to meet standards and the above may be implemented. Probation will be a period of testing or observing the student’s ability to meet academic and professional standards. While a student is on probation, they will be ineligible to hold an elected office position or be inducted into an honor society and may lose other privileges. Suspension is temporary removal from the program with the student only being allowed to return at the program’s discretion.

### **GRADING POLICY:**

Graded activities within courses will be graded with the pass level being set at 75% or greater. Students must pass all graded activities to progress within the PA Program.

Calculation of the student’s course grade uses the numerical score achieved on the initial graded activity. Retakes are not figured into the final course grade.

Failure of any graded activity requires that the activity must be repeated to demonstrate a minimum of 75% proficiency. The first score earned is the recorded grade for that activity.

Five graded activity failures within the student's PAD required courses results in automatic probationary status. The faculty will meet and a majority must agree on the future course of the student. Should the student want to dispute the recommendations of the chair, the student can appeal to the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee.

Failure to achieve a grade of "C" or higher in any required didactic course will at a MINIMUM result in the student being placed on probation.

### **REMEDIATION:**

Tests or graded PAD activity remediation during the didactic component will be decided upon by the course instructor. Remediation is required by PAD policy when the score for a test or graded activity is failing or less than 75%.

Remediation for failure of examinations during the clinical year will be decided upon by the Clinical Director. Failure of a rotation will be referred to the faculty for consideration of the student's ability to progress, and if the student is allowed to continue in the program will require repeating and passing that rotation.

### **PAD PROBATION:**

A student will be placed on probationary status when any of the criteria below are reached. Probationary status ends with either dismissal from the program, completion of an assigned remedial activity, or reinstatement to regular status.

1. Failure to achieve a grade of "C" or higher in any required didactic course will at a MINIMUM result in the student being placed on probation and may be considered for dismissal from the program.
2. If the student's overall GPA falls to 3.0 or lower.
3. If the student fails to pass one remediation effort (i.e., failure of a retake exam, failure of a remedial exercise).
4. If the student fails five exams or graded activities while in the program.
5. The student fails to meet the professional or technical standards of the program as determined by a quorum of the PA Faculty or the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee.

**A. Reinstatement to satisfactory status:** The student will be removed from probationary status when all of the following corresponding criteria are met:

1. Student has earned a GPA of 3.0 or greater.
2. One complete academic semester without failure of remedial efforts.

3. The student has fulfilled requirements for remediation or has demonstrated that they can meet the professional or technical standards of the program to the satisfaction of a quorum of the PA Faculty or the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee.

Once a student is reinstated they are eligible to hold an elected office and are eligible for nominations for awards or honor societies.

**B. Recommendation for Dismissal from PAD:** The student may be referred to the CAHS Dean for dismissal from the PA Program when one or more of the following are met:

1. After an academic semester on probationary status for low GPA, the student is unsuccessful in attaining a GPA of 3.0 or greater.
2. While on probationary status for failure to remediate, the student again demonstrates a failure to remediate.
3. Earning a course grade below C in any required course.
4. Consistently and persistently failing to meet the professional and technical standards of the Physician Assistant Department as determined by a quorum of the PA Faculty or the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee.

Students recommended for dismissal from the PA Program may request a hearing with an Academic and Professional Advisory Committee. Based on the merits of the case, the committee can recommend the dismissal be unimpeded or that the student be placed on probationary status. The Academic and Professional Advisory Committee makes a recommendation to the department chair. The department chair makes a recommendation to the Dean of CAHS. Only the Dean can dismiss a student from a CAHS program.

This hearing will be held within 7 working days of the department's recommendation that the student be dismissed. The only reason that a hearing would not be held is if the student decides to withdraw immediately at the recommendation of the department and signs a written statement that they do not wish to pursue an appeal of the departmental recommendation at any of the possible levels of appeal. The levels of appeal are as follows and must be pursued in this order:

- Disagreement with departmental recommendation – appeal to the Dean of CAHS
- Disagreement with decision at the college level (CAHS) – appeal to the institution. This appeal would be made to the President's Office.
- Disagreement with decision at the institutional level – appeal to the Board of Regents, but there is no appeal of the President's decisions except in cases where it is reasonably alleged that a decision against the student was based on discrimination with respect to race, sex, age, handicap, religion, or national origin..

Please see these links regarding the policy at the different levels of appeals:

## **PAD SUSPENSION:**

A student may be placed on academic suspension for a specified time period as warranted for disciplinary action. The conditions of reinstatement and time period of suspension will be detailed in writing at the time of notification.

Students identified for suspension from the PA Program can request a hearing with an Academic and Professional Advisory Committee (see page #13) for cases with special considerations. The committee can recommend the suspension be unimpeded or that the student be placed on probationary status.

## **PAD STUDENT WITHDRAWAL:**

The policy regarding student withdrawal can be found at the following URL: [Student Withdrawal Health Sciences Campus](#)

## **ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The purpose of the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee (hereafter known as the Committee) is to review the academic progress and professionalism of Physician Assistant students for promotion and graduation and to review a student's appeal of actions taken by the Department Chair regarding probation, suspension, or dismissal. The Committee may be called upon to review and advise on academic and non-academic issues. A student who is subjected to academic or non-academic disciplinary action will be advised of the option of review by the Committee.

### **COMPOSITION**

The Director of Education will be responsible for arranging the Committee. Two (2) members will be chosen from the PAD academic faculty, one of which is the Director of Education, who is a non-voting member and will serve as Committee Chair. Two or three (2 or 3) members will be chosen from the clinical faculty who are familiar with our program and/or Augusta University faculty from other departments. In the event that the Director of Education is unable to chair the Committee, then the Associate Director of Education will chair the Committee.

### **SECRETARY AND RECORDS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The chair of the committee will act as secretary of the Committee and will be responsible for record-keeping. A record shall be kept of Committee proceedings, recommendations, and the information on which the recommendations were based. This record shall be retained for

the remainder of the student's tenure in the program. All deliberations, materials, and recommendations shall be confidential except as otherwise provided by state and federal law. The committee's final recommendations will be recorded in the student's file.

## **JURISDICTION**

The Committee shall have jurisdiction over all students comprising the Augusta University Physician Assistant Program to review the academic and non-academic considerations as they relate to promotion and graduation or to disciplinary action. The Committee's review will be in accordance with departmental and school wide policies.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

If the PAD decides to take a disciplinary action against a student, the student will be sent a letter with a signature sheet acknowledging receipt. The signature sheet will have a due date for return. Signing the signature sheet does not indicate that the student agrees with the disciplinary actions, it just acknowledges receipt. The student:

- Will have an opportunity to respond to the disciplinary actions by requesting a formal hearing with the committee. The student must request the Committee by notifying the Director of Education before the due date of the signature page accompanying the disciplinary letter. If the student does not sign the official letter by the indicated date and time on the document, then faculty will accept that as the student's intent to withdraw from the program.
- Will have an opportunity to speak on his/her own behalf.
- Will have an opportunity to bring witnesses to support his/her position. This person may not be an attorney.

The Committee:

1. In the case of review for promotion and graduation, will review the student's entire academic performance prior to enactment.
2. In the case of disciplinary action review, will review all the pertinent materials upon which the disciplinary action was based, including the student's departmental file prior to the meeting.
3. May hear additional testimony from any person that it deems appropriate. Testimony will be heard in an orderly fashion. The Committee may ask questions for clarification. The hearing will then be dismissed, allowing the committee members to submit their individual recommendations.
4. Will conduct closed meetings. Attendance at hearings is by invitation of the committee members only, with the exception of the student involved.
5. Will submit its recommendation in writing to the Departmental Chair within five

working days of the conclusion of their deliberations. The deliberations of the Committee should take no longer than five working days. The Committee may:

- a. Recommend the student for promotion or graduation.
- b. Support the initial disciplinary actions.
- c. Append the initial disciplinary actions.
- d. Make alternative recommendations.

The Department Chair then submits the final decision to the Dean of the CAHS concurrent to the submission to student. The appeal process for any decision made by the Dean of the CAHS can be found in **Appendix IX**. The student will have five working days from the day of receipt of the chair's recommendation - via campus email- to reply to or appeal the recommendations made by the chair. If the student does not respond within five working days of receipt by email of the chair's letter, then the recommended action will take effect.

## **WORK POLICY**

Students may not be used as regular staff in the Augusta University PA Program, but may work in other areas of the institution. Outside employment is discouraged because of the intense nature of the program. Classes and clinical experiences generally occur Monday through Friday with assignments that often fill evening and weekend hours.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is an integral component of participation and professionalism and is accordingly considered graded activity. A student officially enrolled in a course is responsible for the content as specified in the course syllabus and is required to attend all classes in the course curriculum. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, laboratories, and small group sessions. During the didactic phase, the Department Chair and the Education Director have the authority to grant an immediate excused absence to a student for the following circumstances:

Personal illness or illness of a close family member when the attention of the students is required.

Death of an immediate family member. The student must call the department prior to departure and provide a date of return. Excused absence will be at the discretion of the faculty. Students may be required to provide a death certificate.

Accident or unforeseen circumstances making it impossible for a student to attend a scheduled class.

Military leave- student will be required to provide orders with dates of leave signed

by their commanding officer before they are approved for military leave.

Each case will be considered on its own merit; there is NO GUARANTEE that an excused absence will be granted even if the student has a note from a physician and has notified the instructor of his/her absence. The student must call the department each morning of the days involved to be excused. The student is responsible for contacting the instructor of the course(s) missed or to be missed that day. Should there be evidence of impropriety or abuse of policy in the use of these allowances as determined by the faculty, the absences will be counted as unexcused. The penalty for unexcused absence will be incurred. Should the majority of the PAD faculty reach a decision that a student is incurring excessive absences then that student may be subject to suspension or dismissal.

Any change in health status that will interfere with the student's long-term ability to perform during the didactic or clinical setting could lead to a medical withdrawal. It will be the responsibility of the student to provide a letter from his/her healthcare provider addressing the specific restrictions and estimated duration to the Dean of Students Office. The student must also notify their advisor and Program Director. The policy regarding student withdrawal can be found at the following URL: [Medical Withdrawal Policy](#)

A day of unexcused absence is counted as 2 or more hours missed in one day. Students who incur unexcused absences for any reason are subject to academic penalty of 5 (five) points per two hour lecture or lab period missed. Should a student miss a significant part of a lecture without first discussing their absence with the instructor they will be counted as absent. Points will be deducted from the section or course grade. All instructors may regularly or randomly monitor student attendance. The Class Secretary will be responsible for tracking attendance during the didactic year.

The PAD will follow Augusta University policy should a student miss more than 10% of a given course:

“However, if the student has been absent for more than the equivalent of 10 percent of class time, regardless of cause, then the professor may withdraw the student from the class for excessive absences. It is important to note that the instructor may—or may not—withdraw a student from class based upon attendance. No student should assume that the instructor has initiated the withdrawal form. A student not withdrawn from a course who stops attending class (or who never attends class) is subject to receiving a grade of WF or F for the course.”

The student is responsible for all coursework missed and must contact the course instructor(s) within two days of returning to class to schedule any make-up work. Tests missed on days that are NOT excused absences will be given a grade of zero. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the department of their absence.

Students will be granted one personal leave day for the didactic portion and one personal leave day for the clinical portion. The personal leave day must be requested at least 2 weeks in advance with approval by the faculty. The leave request form must be submitted to the designated faculty member via email at least 2 weeks prior to the requested day. If any leave request has not been submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the requested date, the leave request

may not be approved. In addition, if for any particular day, personal leave requests exceed 10% of the class attendance, requests may be deemed unexcused with a grading penalty as specified in the Student Handbook. The personal leave day cannot fall on 1) day of an exam, 2) day that student's small group is meeting or 3) day of end of rotation examinations. **Lastly, at the discretion of the faculty, individual personal leave requests may be denied, and therefore, classified as unexcused if the total absences for a particular course section exceed 1/3 of the course time based on credit hours.**

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

Students are expected to exhibit appropriate professional behavior during all aspects of program participation. Professional behavior includes the approach to and interaction with patients and medical staff, cooperation and respect with instructors and guest lecturers, attendance, interest shown in assigned work, attitude toward fellow students and hospital personnel, as well as personal appearance appropriate for the circumstances. It is expected that students will be prepared to participate in class and will not be under the influence of any substance that would interfere with professional conduct or their learning. See [Augusta University Student Manual](#). The classroom computer is off limits to students unless supervised by a faculty member and the intent is to teach a class related to our curriculum. This computer is not to be used for any other activities. Out of respect for classmates and lecturers, cell phone ringers should ALWAYS BE OFF while in the classroom.

Attention to professional development individually as well as the development of the profession as an entity exemplifies high professional standards. Volunteerism is an essential part of the PA profession. **Students are expected to participate in four approved volunteer activities during the didactic component.** These activities may include participation in Free Screening Clinic at Christ Church, Health Fairs, Closer Look Tours on Campus or other activities approved by the student's advisor. These activities should be logged into One45 in the Service and Leadership Survey by the student as events occur.

Participation in professional associations is expected. Students are encouraged to participate in the Georgia Academy of Physician Assistants and the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

## **PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE**

Professional appearance and demeanor are a demonstration of self-respect, respect for the patient and the profession. From the first day of enrollment, students are representatives of the PA profession. This appearance and demeanor should be maintained at all times.

Augusta University identification badges (picture IDs) must be worn at all times while on the Augusta University and VAMC campuses and while involved in program activities. Departmental nametags must be worn during all clinical experiences. Professional dress is required at all Physician Assistant departmental classes and clinical activities.

In all settings, hair should be kept well groomed and display a neat appearance. Men may wear mustaches and beards that are neatly trimmed. Nails should be trimmed sufficiently to

ensure efficient work and cleanliness. Nail polish must be of the conservative variety. Blue jeans, shorts, T-shirts, low cut blouses, hats and exercise clothing are unacceptable. Shoes should be clean and well kept. Flip flops are unacceptable footwear.

During the didactic year, students are required to wear professional attire on Mondays. Please refer to the general rules along with male and female rules for guidance. The remainder of the week, Tuesday through Friday, students are required to wear navy scrubs with the Augusta University logo embroidered on them. Scrubs must be pressed. Men must wear undershirts under the scrub top. Undershirts should only be white, black, or grey. Students are allowed to wear clean appearing athletic shoes with scrubs. Students must refrain from wearing sweatshirts or hoodies. Student are allowed to wear white, grey, or black long sleeve shirts under the scrub tops as long as they don't have any print on them. Students may wear zip-up jackets over the scrub top as long as it does not have a hood.

## GENERAL RULES

- No visible underclothes.
- Students must wear shoes appropriate for the professional adult in both class and clinic. Women may wear flats or heels with a closed toe; no sandals with exposure of toes in clinical settings. Heel exposure is permitted. Flip flops are unacceptable footwear. During surgery or labs “cros” with holes in the tops are not permitted.
- In all labs for Anatomy and Clinical Skills Integration and Application courses, lab coats and closed toed shoes are required.
- No shorts, jeans or t-shirts.
- Approved “Dress-Down” day attire: nice jeans with a nice polo shirt/blouse or scrubs will be allowed.
- No exposed midriffs, even with stretching and bending.
- No “cut-out” or “cold shoulder” clothing
- No leggings, rompers, or shorts
- Body and Hair – washed, hair neatly combed, out of face, contained for bending and reaching (If it gets caught in your stethoscope, contain it), *not malodorous*; hair should be of naturally occurring colors.
- Nails clean and well-groomed, no longer than ¼” beyond nail bed. No artificial nails in surgery.
- No heavy perfumes or after shaves.
- Complementary make-up, not overstated.

- Clothing washed, neatly pressed, in excellent repair.
- No visible body piercings (except ears) or tattoos. Tattoos should be covered.
- No more than one ring per hand (A wedding set counts as one ring.).
- No audacious or gaudy jewelry.
- Clothes should not expose or accentuate body contour.
- Head wraps and scarves as needed per religious custom or condition.
- Sweatshirts are not allowed at any time. Students may wear a navy, black, or grey zip up jacket without a hood during class.

### **Female Students**

- Skirts no shorter than 3 inches above knee when sitting.
- Slits in skirts no higher than 3 inches above knee when sitting.
- No exposed cleavage.
- Conservative earrings in ears.
- Pantyhose optional.
- Only white, navy, grey, or black plain undershirts are appropriate under scrub tops (no printed t-shirts)

### **Male Students**

- Neatly trimmed mustache and beard, except in designated hospital departments.
- No earrings.
- Shirts with collars always.
- Only white, navy, grey, or black plain undershirts are appropriate under scrub tops (no printed t-shirts)

### **CLASSROOM ATTIRE**

Professional Attire: Males: tie optional, shirt with collar, button up with long sleeves (dress shirt); Females: dressier fabrics and styles. Capri style pants are acceptable, but must be a

minimum of three inches below the knee and may not be made of jean or denim material even different colors of denim material. Females are NOT allowed to wear leggings or tight pants with boots over them.

Scrubs: tops and bottoms must match and be of approved color, with appropriate logo; well-fitting (not too tight); it is NOT acceptable to wear a T-shirt with scrub pants

Students are NOT allowed to wear smart watches/wearable technology (i.e., the Apple Watch, Samsung Gear S2, etc.) with the exception of activity trackers during exams.

## **CLINIC ATTIRE**

Professional Attire: Males in ties and long sleeves, Females in dressier fabrics and styles. Business suit not required. These statements are general in nature and apply to most clinical settings. Individual departments should inform members and students of standards unique to that department. Exceptions will be made by faculty according to planned activities.

## **PENALTY OF VIOLATION**

The faculty of the PA program has the right and is obligated to counsel any student who, in their opinion, is in violation of any of the above standards. A student may be asked to leave the classroom and return appropriately attired by the start of the next class. If a student is counseled more than one time on their professional attire, the student will receive a professionalism warning for each subsequent infraction.

Exercises or assignments missed because of enforcement of the PAD dress code will be deemed an unexcused absence. Any attendance penalty will be in addition to the dress code penalty.

## **BACKGROUND CHECK**

All PA students will be required to undergo a mandatory background check during fall semester of the didactic program. Depending on small group assignments for CSIA II, students may also have to undergo urine drug screen testing. Students will be notified of the date and company to be used for background check and testing. Students will be responsible for the cost of the background check and any required testing.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES/GUIDELINES**

Participation in social media and online activities such as blogging, tweeting, wiki, or any other form of online publishing is more the norm than the exception in our lives. As a future health care professional you will be held to a higher standard of behavior regarding the use of these types of activities. The tenets of professionalism, good taste, and common sense should permeate every aspect of your social media interaction. If, as part of your activities online, you identify yourself as a student in the Augusta University Physician Assistant Program, you are now connected to every person in your class, your program, your group, and even those who will follow you as students. The following guidelines and policies are intended to help you make the proper choice as you engage in social media.

## **General Guidelines**

Be thoughtful how you represent yourself on social networks. The line between private and public, personal and professional typically blur in online social networks. Respect your colleagues and your audience. Recognize that your cohort, students at Augusta University in general, and the community as a whole represent diverse customs, values and points of view.

Express your opinion, be yourself, but be respectful. This includes avoiding the use of obscenities, personal insults, ethnic, religious or racial slurs, sexually harassing or inappropriate commentary, as well as topics that can be considered inflammatory or obscene. If you are unsure, ask for guidance from faculty. Respect the privacy of others, especially classmates, other students, faculty and staff. If you disagree with anyone, it is rarely appropriate to air your differences publically. Use sound judgment in considering anything you put into writing as it will be seen by others.

Also, any personal content posted from an Augusta University PA student cannot be presented as being a communication from the Physician Assistant Department at Augusta University. Final approval to communicate anything through Facebook as a representative of the PAD must be approved by the Director of Education or the Department Chair.

## **General Email Etiquette**

- Always address an email with an appropriate salutation (“Dear Professor Jones”, “Dear Susan”).
- Always sign an email.
- Email for professional communication should not include the common abbreviations utilized in personal texting. Sentences should be complete and appropriate grammar should be used.
- Be judicious when cc’ing emails. “Reply to all,” is not always an appropriate action.
- It is your responsibility to check your school-related emails daily and respond as needed depending on the topic. If a faculty member emails you it is expected that you respond to them in a timely manner. It is fair to expect faculty to respond to your emails in a timely fashion as well, within normal business hours. Do not expect answers to emails from faculty late at night. Please understand email is not necessarily designed to provide unrestricted 24/7 access to the recipient.
- If you choose to craft an email about a subject you disagree with or are upset about, either as an original email or in response to an email from someone else, do not respond when you are angry or upset. This will often result in an email that is unprofessional and emotional. Instead, consider what you wish to say, write it out, do not send it, and then return to it when you are less emotional. All emails you choose to send should be professional, appropriate, and polite at all times. In addition, anything you choose to say in an email you should feel comfortable and willing to say to an individual or group in a face-to-face meeting.
- Avoid SPAM.

- Email transmitted in part or wholly over college operated electronic systems is subject to the acceptable use policy as described on the [West Liberty University PA Student Handbook](#).

### **Guidelines for Use of Social Media and the Internet During Class or Lab Time**

- Respect class time and your colleagues' time. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time and not during scheduled class time or program activities.
- The use of social media, chat rooms, instant messaging and/or “surfing” the web during class when not engaged in sanctioned web-based course activity is unprofessional and inappropriate.
- Refrain from using cell phones or any other type of technology besides a laptop to follow PowerPoint presentations or lectures during class.

### **Guidelines/Policy when Posting as a Member of Augusta University's Community**

- Maintain confidentiality. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about your patients, their families, clinical facilities and staff, Augusta University, its students, or its alumni. Use good ethical judgment and follow College policies and federal requirements, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- In personal posts, if you identify yourself as a student or a member of the Augusta University community, be clear that you are posting your own views and not the views of Augusta University or your program. If you make a mistake, correct it.
- If you modify an earlier post, make it clear you are doing so. Rarely do you “speak on behalf of...” If you say it, it is yours to own.
- There is no protected or private speech on a social media site. Search engines turn up your words and pictures years later. Comments can be copied by others and forwarded.
- Respect copyright laws: You must have written permission before using any copyrighted or proprietary materials such as photographs, videos, texts, art, music, etc. In general, verbal or written permission must be obtained from individuals whose images are identifiable. However, written permission is always better.
- Do not post personally identifiable information: Information that can be used to locate someone offline, including phone numbers, addresses, birth dates, Email addresses, etc. should not be posted.
- Employers typically conduct web searches (including searches on Facebook and other social media) on job candidates before extending offers. Assume they will do this for you as well when applying for positions. Do not post commentary and other postings deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, obscene, or dangerous on the web. Potential employers may see this content and disqualify you from an offer of employment.

## **Guidelines/Policy when Posting as an Individual**

- Be honest: Tell people who you are. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a student at Augusta University College of Health Sciences. However, please be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal representative of Augusta University. If you identify yourself as a member of the Augusta University community, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues.
- Protect yourself: While you should be honest about yourself, do not provide personal information that scammers or identity thieves could use. Do not list your home address or telephone number. Do not use your Augusta University email address for social media sites.
- Do not use the Augusta University logo or make endorsements without permission:
- Do not use the Augusta University or MCG logo to endorse political candidates or endorse products or causes.
- Is your content appropriate? If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it is not acceptable for a social networking site.

## **Specific Policies for Augusta University Physician Assistant Program**

- As a student at Augusta University Physician Assistant Program, you assume all responsibility related to the security, privacy and confidentiality risks inherent in sending any content over the Internet. By its very nature, a website and the Internet cannot be absolutely protected against intentional or malicious intrusion attempts.
- Augusta University does not control the third party sites and the Internet over which you choose to send confidential, personal, health information or other content and therefore, does not warrant any safeguard against any such interceptions or compromises to your information.
- Augusta University does not endorse any product, service, views or content displayed on your or other's social media site(s).
- If identifying yourself with Augusta University Physician Assistant Program, you may not provide any content to a social media site that contains any product or service endorsements or any content that may be construed as political lobbying, solicitation or contributions, or use the social media site to link to any sites of political candidates or parties or use the social media site to discuss political campaigns, issues or for taking a position on any legislation or law.
- This policy may be updated at any time without notice, and each time a user accesses a social networking site, the new policy will govern usage, effective upon posting. All internet users are subject to state and federal laws regarding its use. (Adapted from the Student Handbook Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences and with their permission.)

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALISM**

Each student will be assessed on professionalism during the entirety of the program. Examples of professionalism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Being on time
- Being prepared for class
- Turning in assignments on time
- Being courteous to everyone, regardless of rank or position
- Appreciating the kindness of others and expressing that appreciation
- Making proper introductions
- Dressing appropriately
- Monitoring one's own emotional expressions and responsiveness (e.g., showing interest in and being attentive during class and on rotations)
- Maintaining composure when challenged
- Being receptive to feedback and constructive criticism (e.g., a willingness to learn and improve)
- Awareness of personal responsibility as a listener or audience member
- Respecting others' professional position, particularly those in authority (e.g., addressing people formally unless instructed otherwise)
- Eating or preparing food only during breaks
- Refraining from using electronic devices to text, check Facebook, and other non-class related activities during lectures and while on rotations. Electronics should only be used in support of the classroom experience.
- Respectful discussion of patients among students, clinical staff and other healthcare professionals
- Recording accurate medical entries in regard to historical and physical findings for patients
- Consideration of the setting and/or environment for discussion of personal issues while in the classroom or clinical rotations
- Being respectful in dealings with colleagues and class officers
- Being respectful in dealings with PAD faculty and staff
- Signing letters and warnings issued by the faculty and the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee by the date requested.

Offending students will be issued written warnings for each offense. Once a student has reached 3 warnings, the faculty will meet and will decide on disciplinary requirements/remediations for the student, which may include professionalism probation. The requirements/remediations are not negotiable and will be communicated in an official letter. If the student does not sign the official letter by the indicated date and time on the document, then the faculty will accept that as the student's intent to withdraw from the program. If the student is not willing to comply with the faculty decision, they can appeal to the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee and this must be communicated via email to the program director and PAC co-chairs prior to the sign date on the official letter. When a student receives a third warning, they are at risk for failing the professionalism component of the corresponding Clinical Skills and Integration course if majority of the

faculty vote in favor of a letter grade “F”. If a student conducts themselves in a manner which is deemed egregious by a majority of the faculty, the student will be issued an automatic third warning even if they have not received previous warnings in the past.

### **Professionalism Probation**

Professionalism Probation will be a period of testing or observing the student’s ability to meet academic and professional standards. While a student is on probation, they will be ineligible to hold an elected office position or be inducted into an honor society and may lose other privileges. The student will be required to successfully complete the PAD Professionalism module which may include graded written assignment(s) and self-evaluation and reflection. The student must successfully pass the remediation module with a grade of B (80) in order to remain in the program.

If a student fails to successfully pass the remediation, they will be issued a letter grade “F” for professionalism in the corresponding Clinical Skills and Integration (CSIA) course or Genetics. If a student is placed on professionalism probation during the clinical year, the remediation will be tailored to the student and specific case and may cause an interruption in the progression of the program. At the discretion of the faculty, preceptors may be notified of the professional issues while a student is on professional probation. If a student fails to successfully pass the remediation, they will be issued a letter grade “F” for the corresponding clinical rotation or PASE course.

When a student passes the probation remediation, they are reinstated to “good standing”. However, a student who has been or is currently on professionalism probation at any point during the program, will be subject to immediate faculty review with each following professionalism violation. The faculty will decide on the appropriate penalty for each subsequent violation which could include dismissal from the program. If a student is placed on probation a second time, the graded written assignments will be more extensive along with the rest of the remediation. This may delay the student’s progression in the program.

## **ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Academic and Professional Advisory Committee will serve as the entity which will oversee the progression requirements of each student in regard to professional and technical standards as determined by NCCPA, PAEA and ARC-PA for the PA profession. Students are also expected to comply with the professional and technical policies within the PAD Handbook and Augusta University’s Student Code of Conduct.

### **COMPOSITION**

The Professional Advisory Council will be responsible for arranging the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee. The Professional Advisory Director will be responsible for arranging the Committee. Two (2) members will be chosen from the PAD academic

faculty, one of which is the Professional Advisory Director or Co-Director, who is a non-voting member and will serve as Committee Chair. Two or three (2 or 3) members will be chosen from the clinical faculty who are familiar with our program and/or Augusta University faculty from other departments. In the event that the Professional Advisory Director is unable to chair the Committee, then the Co-Director will chair the Committee.

## **SECRETARY AND RECORDS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Director will act as secretary of the Committee and will be responsible for record-keeping. A record shall be kept of Committee proceedings, decision, and the information on which the decision was based. This record shall be retained for the remainder of the student's tenure in the program. All deliberations, materials, and the decision shall be confidential except as otherwise provided by state and federal law. The committee's final decision will be recorded in the student's file.

## **JURISDICTION**

The Committee shall have jurisdiction over all students comprising the Augusta University Physician Assistant Program to review the academic and non-academic considerations as they relate to promotion and graduation or to disciplinary action. The Committee's review will be in accordance with departmental and school wide policies.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

In the event the student request to appeal the disciplinary requirements issued by the PAD, the student:

- Will have an opportunity to respond to the disciplinary actions during a formal hearing with the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee.
- Will have an opportunity to speak on his/her own behalf.
- Will have an opportunity to bring witnesses to support his/her position; This person may not be an attorney

The Committee:

6. In the case of review for promotion and graduation, will review the student's entire professional/academic performance prior to enactment.
7. In the case of disciplinary action review, will review all the pertinent materials upon which the disciplinary action was based, including the student's departmental file prior to the meeting.
8. May hear additional testimony from any person that it deems appropriate. Testimony will be heard in an orderly fashion. The Committee may ask questions for clarification. The hearing will then be dismissed, allowing the committee members to submit their individual recommendations.

9. Will conduct closed meetings. Attendance at hearings is by invitation of the committee members only, with the exception of the student involved.
10. Will submit its recommendation in writing to the Departmental Chair within five working days of the conclusion of their deliberations. The deliberations of the Committee should take no longer than five working days. The Committee may:
  - a. Recommend the student for promotion or graduation.
  - b. Support the initial disciplinary actions.
  - c. Append the initial disciplinary actions.
  - d. Make alternative recommendations.

The Department Chair then submits the final decision to the Dean of the CAHS concurrent to the submission to student. The appeal process for any decision made by the Dean of the CAHS can be found in **Appendix IX**. The student will have five working days from the day of receipt of the chair's recommendation - via campus email- to reply to or appeal the recommendations made by the chair. If the student does not sign the official document by the date indicated, then the program will take that as the student's intent to withdraw.

## **PATIENT CONTACT**

The faculty and administration of the Physician Assistant Program feel strongly that health care providers must make every effort to function within the ethical and legal boundaries of their designated roles. Thus, the students are expected to show respect to patients and their families and co-workers at all times. Students who willfully misrepresent themselves or disobey other rules identified below will be recommended to the Chair for immediate dismissal from the program.

- A. At no time may a student see, treat or cause to be treated, or dismiss a patient without reviewing and discussing the patient's problem with the responsible physician, physician assistant or designated supervisor. If for any reason adequate supervision is not available, the student must discontinue interactions with patients.
- B. At no time may a student dispense, cause to be dispensed, or prescribe any medication without approval of the responsible physician or physician assistant and that supervisor's signature on the prescription.
- C. At no time may the student discuss the patient's physical or clinical status with that person without prior discussion with the responsible physician or physician assistant.
- D. At all times, the student will wear an identifying name tag and, when interacting with patients, will explain his or her unique role as a Physician Assistant **student** while

completing program required activities

- E. At all times, the student will be responsible for following protocol or guidelines regarding PA utilization established by the responsible physician or physician assistant and the clinical facilities at each training site.

## **SHADOWING**

Shadowing refers to non-PAD-sanctioned or required clinical experiences that the student initiates independently of the PAD.

- A. I acknowledge that No white coat or AU name badge can be worn while shadowing – nothing to identify me with our institution or program.
- B. I acknowledge that I must identify myself as an observer.
- C. I acknowledge that I am NOT allowed to shadow in an OR or other scrub area UNLESS I have completed our asepsis program and have been signed off in that regard.
- D. I acknowledge that I am NOT allowed to shadow in an inpatient setting unless I have completed all credentialing required by that hospital/institution; that I as a student should typically only shadow in a private practice, outpatient setting.
- E. I acknowledge that shadowing is only OBSERVING – I cannot touch patients or talk to patients beyond a greeting and introducing myself as “Jane Doe”. *Taking patient histories, examining patients, administering shots/etc., discussing treatment plans, patient counseling and education, and all other medically related activities are off limits.*
- F. I acknowledge and understand that I am NOT covered by our malpractice insurance while shadowing which is why I should refrain from all patient contact, counseling, and discussion of any condition.

## **CONDUCT AND HONOR CODE**

All students are to adhere to the Honor Code and student disciplinary policies and procedures as outlined in the [Augusta University Student Manual](#).

In addition to professional competence, the student's behavior, demeanor and attitude will be considered in any decisions regarding acceptable performance and promotion. The Department Chair reserves the right to recommend dismissal of a student for non-academic reasons as authorized by the College of Allied Health Sciences and the student has the right to appeal that decision according [CAHS Student Appeals Policy](#).

“The authority to withdraw a student for disciplinary, academic, or other appropriate reasons resides with the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. The dean may delegate this authority to one or more individuals within the college. Any withdrawal initiated by the dean or his/her designee shall be considered an administrative withdrawal. Students who are withdrawn as the result of disciplinary,

academic, or other reasons may appeal the withdrawal. During the appeal process, students may or may not be allowed to attend courses at the discretion of the dean or his/her designee. In the case of an appeal, the student's withdrawal date will be the last date of participation in academic activities." [Withdrawal from the University](#)

## **EXAMINATION POLICY**

Examinations are to be taken on the scheduled date and time and in the designated classroom unless the student has received permission to test in a separate location. To receive approval to reschedule an examination date, the instructor and the course director must be notified **prior to** the examination. The examination will be rescheduled at the discretion and convenience of the instructor. Students should contact the PAD immediately should they have a true **emergency-illness, death in family or unforeseen event** -preventing their taking an exam or arriving at an exam on time. Students should be prepared to show documentation verifying the emergency, death or unforeseen event. An inability to provide this documentation in a timely manner may lead to a zero for the examination grade.

An unexcused absence from an examination will count as a test failure and result in an assigned grade of zero, "0", with no recourse of a makeup examination. Once a student has missed more than 2 examinations for any reason, any additional missed examinations will be assigned a zero unless a majority of the PAD faculty agree to allow the student to make up the missed examination.

Students arriving late for an examination will not have benefit of instructions or directions given at the beginning of the period. The student will not receive additional time to complete his examination. No test will be administered after any student has turned in their completed exam. Students will not be allowed to leave the room where the examination is being administered until they have completed their own exam and turned it in or shown evidence to the exam proctor that the exam has been completed. Any exception to this must be approved by the course director.

Any action taken by a student when taking an exam that is in violation of the examination policy of the PAD or the Augusta University Academic Honesty and Integrity policy can result in the student being assigned a zero for that examination. Students are not allowed to wear smart watches or any similar technology during examinations.

***Failure of 5 or more examinations during the program will result in a MINIMUM of placement on probationary status and a meeting with the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee (See Grading Policy).***

Graded activities within courses will be graded using a Pass/Fail system, with the Pass level being set at 75% or greater. Students must pass all graded activities to progress within the PA Program. A score of less than 75% is failure and requires retesting.

Scoring and retesting of any examination is at the discretion of the course director. There will be a maximum two retests per failed examination. A score of 75% or greater must be made on the repeat examination. The score on the original examination will be recorded for

that section and subsequently calculated into the average (i.e. If a score of 70% is made on the first examination, a 90% is made on the repeat examination, the 70% score is recorded and calculated into the course grade). Failure of the reexamination will result in placement on probationary status. Failure of the subsequent reexamination will result in recommendation for dismissal. See Grading Policy.

Timing and format for repeat examinations are at the discretion of the instructor and can be individualized for each student and situation. Repeat examinations may be more difficult than the original examination.

Test item grievances should be submitted in writing directly to the faculty member responsible for coordinating the section or course. Grievances should be made within 24 hours after the administration of the examination. Rebuttals should include a citation of the reference book used to include page number and paragraph.

### **Final Exam Policy for Didactic Year**

During the second, third and fourth semesters of the didactic year there are clinical medicine series courses taught. At the end of each of these semesters a comprehensive exam will be given over the clinical medicine series courses presented that semester. The exam grade will comprise 10% of each of the clinical medicine courses taught that semester. A comprehensive exam failure (grade < 75%) will count as one of the PAD exam failures and must be remediated before that student can progress to the next semester.

### **Reviewing Exams**

During the didactic component students will be allowed to review the questions they missed within the first week after an examination has been given and once everyone in the class has taken that exam. The method for reviewing exams will be decided by each course instructor and described in that course syllabus. No copies can be made of exam questions; students will not be allowed to make notes while reviewing their exam questions. Attempts to copy exams or otherwise compromise the integrity of exam content is a violation of the Augusta University Academic Honesty policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

## **STUDENT/FACULTY CONFERENCES**

### **DIDACTIC COMPONENT**

Upon entry to the program, students are assigned to a faculty advisor. Conferences are to be held once per semester at the request of either the student or advisor, or more frequently as is needed. The objects of the student/faculty advisor conferences are to provide regular individual communication with each student, assist in the supervision of each student's progress in the program, identify individual strengths and weaknesses of the student, assist in the input phase of the program self-study process by periodic identification of program or course strengths and weaknesses and, assist the student in finding ways of strengthening their identified weaknesses.

The student and the faculty advisor will sign and date the advisory conference documentation

form. Subsequent conferences will be documented in the same format.

## **DISCIPLINARY MATTERS**

The Board of Regents has adopted the following policy concerning institutional responsibility for the discipline of students.

"Admissions, discipline, promotion, graduation and formulation of all rules and regulations pertaining to students of institutions of the University System are matters to be handled by the institution within the framework of regulations of the Board of Regents. Students violating rules and regulations of an institution may be punished, suspended, excluded or expelled as may be determined by the institution." (BOR Policy 4.1.1)

As defined in the [Augusta University Student Manual](#) (Section 2: Student Code of Conduct) disciplinary matters are handled either within the PAD, referred to the College of Allied Health Sciences, or referred to the Augusta University Student Conduct Board. This will be determined by the type of infraction that has occurred.

### **STUDENT APPEALS:**

Any Physician Assistant student may appeal a decision or action taken by the Physician Assistant Program. The student, in making an appeal, should adhere to the following process:

1. Contact and seek changes from the course coordinator (if course related) and/or the assigned student advisor.
2. If the request was previously denied by the course coordinator, contact and seek changes from the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee within the Physician Assistant Department.

If the request was denied by the Academic and Professional Advisory Committee, make a written request in accordance with the [CAHS Review Body Guidelines and Principles](#) . Should the student receive an adverse decision at the college level, they can seek further appeal at the institutional level and even appeal to the Board of Regents. [Augusta University Student Manual](#)

## **CLINICAL YEAR POLICIES**

### **Patient Contact and Clinical Training**

A basic tenet of the physician assistant profession is that healthcare providers must function within the ethical and legal boundaries of their designated roles. Thus, students are expected to show respect to patients, the patient's family, support staff, and faculty at all times. Students who willfully represent themselves as physicians or certified physician assistants or

who disobey other rules or ethical guidelines will be recommended to the Chair for immediate dismissal from the program:

- A. **At no time may a student see, treat or cause to be treated, or dismiss a patient without reviewing and discussing the patient's problem with the responsible physician, physician assistant or designated supervisor.** If for any reason adequate supervision is not available, the student must not continue to see patients.
- B. At no time may a student dispense, cause to be dispensed, or write for any medication without approval of the responsible physician or physician assistant; the licensed provider's signature must appear on the prescription. Students may not sign prescriptions. Students may not e-prescribe using the responsible provider's login. Students may not use pre-signed prescription pads.
- C. At no time may the student discuss with the patient his or her physical or clinical status without prior discussion with and approval from the responsible physician or physician assistant.
- D. At all times, the student will wear identifying name and asepsis training badges and, when examining patients, will explain his or her unique role as a physician assistant student.
- E. At all times, the student will be responsible for following "protocol or guidelines" regarding PA utilization established by the responsible physician or physician assistant and the clinical facilities at each training site.

Each course in the didactic phase and the American Heart Association BLS Provider Course (or comparable course) must be satisfactorily completed before promotion to the clinical year. Students are responsible for completing the BLS course on their own time and must submit documentation of course completion to the Clinical Team.

**Clinical Rotations** (Courses in **BOLD** are Core courses.)

PHAS 6027	<b>Adult Medicine Practicum</b>	PHAS 6081 Professional and Academic Summative Evaluation (PASE)
PHAS 6028	<b>Adult Medicine Practicum II</b>	PHAS 6090 Elective Clinical Practicum
PHAS 6020	<b>Surgery Practicum</b>	PHAS 6050 <b>Pediatrics Practicum</b>
PHAS 6035	<b>Family Medicine Practicum</b>	PHAS 6060 <b>Psychiatry &amp; Addiction Medicine Practicum</b>
PHAS 6040	<b>Emergency Medicine Practicum</b>	PHAS 6110 Research/Masters Project
PHAS 6070	<b>Women's Health Practicum</b>	
PHAS	Professionalism & Teaching	

**Professionalism During the Clinical Year**

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 negatively impacts the credibility and integrity of the profession. Training in professionalism therefore shares equal importance with content knowledge and manual skills at Augusta University. The PAD considers violation of professional conduct a significant deficiency.

Recognizing the responsibility for professional behavior, PAD sets expectations for and evaluates students on their professional conduct. Students must demonstrate mastery of these important behaviors.

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 mastery 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 during either the didactic or the clinical portion of training will be subject to the professionalism policies as defined earlier in this handbook. Severe infractions of professional behavior may be grounds for dismissal.

**Professionalism Defined****A. 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

**B. Honor and Integrity**

1. Admits errors and takes steps to prevent reoccurrence
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

#### C. 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

#### D. 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

#### E. 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

#### F. 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.*)

### **Professionalism Expectations**

- A. Communication with faculty, staff and fellow students is always respectful
  1. Response to E-mail/Phone messages (within 24 hours)
- B. All paperwork and required forms are submitted in a timely manner
  1. Includes mid- and final preceptor evaluations
  2. Includes forms and documents as required by the Program and/or clinical sites, i.e. BLS, PPD, or background/drug testing (penalty will be applicable to the rotation that the paperwork involves)
- C. Patient encounters and procedures are logged in One45 accurately and within deadlines as required by the Program
- D. Attendance is in compliance with PAD and AU policy as well as policy set by preceptors
  1. Punctuality is maintained.
- E. Dress Code is maintained at all times
  1. Student is to follow all Program expectations
  2. Student is to follow any specific dress code policy outlined by clinical site(s). Failure to comply with requirements is considered unprofessional conduct and constitutes an unprofessional behavior infraction. Each infraction is subject to loss of professionalism percentage points and professionalism warnings.

Requirements such as BLS certification and PPD testing must be kept up to date during the clinical year. If the Program does not receive proof of compliance by the expiration date, the student will be removed from their current clinical experience and will not be allowed to return until they are compliant. The student will be responsible for making up any time missed.

Please remember that absences of 5 days or greater may require a student to take a personal withdrawal from the Program. If there are circumstances which may result in a student missing more than 5 days, they are to contact the Clinical Team immediately.

Other possible consequences of professionalism infractions are written warnings, point deductions, probation or dismissal from the program.

If a preceptor contacts the Clinical Team or PAD faculty about a student's behavior on

rotation, that student will be up for immediate faculty review despite whether 3 warnings have been issued. The faculty will decide on the appropriate penalty including possible dismissal from the program.

### **Conflict Resolution**

A student who has any clinical experience concerns should address them in a professional manner. Problems that may occur are academic, professional, or personal in nature. Students should use the following guidelines in dealing with problems:

1. Attempt to resolve problems with the appropriate individual directly.
2. If this is not possible, discuss it with the clinical preceptor.
3. If unable to resolve the problem, contact the Clinical Team.
4. If unable to reach agreeable solution with the Clinical Team, contact the Program Director.

Do not allow small problems to turn into large problems. Address issues immediately so that the issue can be resolved quickly without an adverse effect on the clinical experience.

### **Scheduling of Rotations**

- A. The Clinical Director and Clinical Team are responsible for the assignment of students to individual rotation sites. Students may only be at a rotation site when current affiliation agreement(s) is/are in force. This includes any healthcare facility that the student will train in during the clinical rotation (e.g. outpatient clinic, hospital, surgical center, or nursing home).
- B. Sites for rotations other than electives will be assigned **by lottery**. Rotation sites are currently located in Augusta and throughout Georgia with limited site availability in the Atlanta area. The addition and development of new rotation sites is encouraged. The process of acquiring appropriate clearance for the use of a new site takes approximately four months, so new site requests must be submitted to the Clinical Team with sufficient advanced notice. All new clinical sites must be approved by the Clinical Director. Due to the limited availability of clinical sites locally, students should expect to be assigned to sites anywhere in Georgia. Preceptors of record must be either a Board-certified physician in the rotation specialty OR a certified physician assistant. In some cases, qualified nurse practitioners may supervise physician assistant students.
- C. Requesting changes to the master rotation schedule is strongly discouraged. In cases of illness, financial hardship, or extenuating circumstances, attempts may be made to modify the schedule. Successful modifications are not guaranteed. All requests for changes must be submitted to the Clinical Team. Students may attend a rotation at a new site provided that an official affiliation agreement has been completed. The affiliation agreement process must be initiated at least four (4) months prior to the starting date of the rotation.

- D. Where several sites are available for a required rotation, assignment will be based primarily upon **PA program needs**. Rotations are assigned using a **lottery system**.
- E. Students are strongly discouraged from engaging in outside employment during the PA Program, especially during the clinical year. No rotation adjustments will be made to accommodate outside employment.

### **Housing**

- A. Housing will be at the student's expense for the clinical year, so students are advised to budget accordingly. Every effort will be made to ensure that housing is available at remote sites, but there are no guarantees. If a student elects not to utilize the provided housing, the student must inform the Clinical Director of this choice. On occasion, male and female students may be asked to share housing (not sleeping rooms). This will be avoided when possible.
- B. **No pets or family members are allowed where housing is provided.**
- C. *A student who has a health problem that requires special consideration for housing (i.e., allergies) should inform the Clinical Team.*

### **Responsibilities**

- A. Duty hours, holidays, attire, on-call schedules and other details pertaining to the rotation are determined by the clinical site. **Thanksgiving Day is the only student holiday officially observed while on rotations.** In the absence of specific instructions regarding dress codes by the site, students are required to follow PA departmental dress code and wear their official name badge and asepsis training badge during all clinical activities. Students will need to complete a rotation work schedule for each rotation in One45 by midnight of the 3rd day of each rotation. Failure to comply with this policy will result in points deducted from the professionalism portion of the grade.
- B. Students must complete all required paperwork for access to the practice or other facilities (e.g. hospitals) 2 – 4 weeks **prior** to the first day of the rotation. Failure to comply may result in a deduction of professionalism points for each day missed during the rotation.
- C. Patient logging on one45 is required of PA students on all clinical rotations (core and electives). Logging should be done in a timely manner during the rotation in which the patient was seen. Insufficient logging/patient contact may result in repeating the rotation during an elective rotation. Failure to log sufficient patients and procedures on a rotation may result in a deduction of points on the professionalism portion of the grade.
- D. Students must not use rotation site computers unless such use is approved by the clinical site. Use of rotation site computers without clearance may result in deduction

or forfeiture of professionalism points or dismissal from the rotation. Accessing the Internet without permission using a rotation site computer is expressly forbidden as is downloading any document or program to a rotation site computer.

- E. Students are responsible for meeting with the preceptor to complete a mid-rotation evaluation and a final Clinical Competency Evaluation. Student evaluations of the rotation are also required. Both the mid-rotation and final evaluation of the student should be submitted prior to taking the end-of-rotation (EOR) examination. Failure to obtain a timely evaluation from the preceptor may result in a deduction of points on the professionalism portion of the grade. If a preceptor evaluation is not received in time to record grades for the semester, the student will receive a grade of “Incomplete (I).” Incomplete grades automatically revert to a grade of “F” at the end of the following semester if the evaluation has not been received. Students with Incomplete grades will not be allowed to graduate.
- F. Rotation-related issues that develop during a rotation should be discussed with the preceptor then with the Clinical Team. The goal of the discussions will be to reach an understanding of expectations and performance. See section on Professionalism, above.
- G. **Abandoning or leaving a rotation site without notification and approval of both the rotation site and the Clinical Director will result in a failing grade. Being dismissed from a rotation will result in a failing grade.**
- H. The student’s supervising physician/preceptor **MUST** be notified prior to any absence due to illness. The Clinical Team also needs to be notified. **Failure to notify either the supervisor or the Clinical Team may result in forfeiture of all professionalism points.** Augusta University attendance policies apply to clinical rotations. Please refer to the [Augusta University Student Manual](#). Absences due to illness need to be annotated on the duty schedule. Any days off as assigned by the clinical site must be annotated on the duty schedule.
- I. Absences due to extenuating circumstances must to be cleared by the preceptor or site representative, the Department Chair, and Clinical Team. Phone notification is preferred. Absences of greater than five days from a rotation may result in a student forfeiting an elective rotation in order to repeat the rotation. Alternately, the student may be required to repeat the rotation in the second Fall semester of the clinical year with a delayed graduation date.
- J. For planned absences (e.g. Personal Day), an absence request form should be submitted at least ten business days in advance. Notification in advance is mandatory. Notification of approval or denial should be obtained in writing prior to the absence. Submission of the form to request an excused absence does not guarantee approval. Students are required to coordinate their scheduled absence with their preceptor and make up the time missed if required. Unexcused absences must be remediated based on the preceptor’s requirements.
- K. Students must return to the PAD as required for scheduled on-campus End-of-Rotation

(EOR) activities. This schedule will be determined by the Clinical Team and will be provided to the student before the beginning of the clinical year. The time set aside for EOR will typically include End-of-Rotation examinations, master project presentations, and EOR activities. Absence from EOR activities **MUST** be approved by the Clinical Director using the rotation absence request form. Absence from EOR activities may result in a reduction or forfeiture of professionalism points.

- L. Online EOR assignments are required to be completed by the posted deadlines. Professionalism points will be deducted for any missed EOR assignments.

**Evaluation**

<b>Grade Structure - Clinical Rotations</b>	
EOR Exam	40%
Preceptor Evaluation	50%
Professionalism	10%

- A. Each preceptor evaluates the student's performance at the end of the clinical rotation using the Clinical Competency Evaluation Form in One45. This evaluation is the responsibility of the clinical preceptor and constitutes 50% of the final rotation grade. The minimum passing score is 75%. Failure to achieve a 75% on the final evaluation will result in repeating the rotation.
- B. Students must satisfactorily complete the appropriate End-of-Rotation examination. The minimum passing score is 75%, and the examination grade constitutes 40% of the final rotation grade. If a student scores below a 75% on an EOR examination, the student must coordinate the remediation with the Associate Clinical Director. Failure to remediate the End-of-Rotation examination will result in failure of the rotation and assignment of remedial activities and/or referral to an Academic Committee for appropriate action. The first examination score is used in the calculation of the final rotation grade, which is submitted to the Registrar as a letter grade. EOR exam remediation is at the student's expense.
- C. Failure of either the preceptor evaluation or the EOR examination may result in forfeiture of all professionalism points.
- D. Failure to participate in or complete EOR activities will result in a deduction or forfeiture of professionalism points.
- E. A summative evaluation (PASE) will be scheduled on campus within four months prior to graduation. The summative evaluation is composed of a cumulative written examination which covers all core rotation objectives and a Standardized Patient Encounter. Students must achieve at least a 75% on both parts of the final summative evaluation. Failure to pass either part of the summative evaluation will result in remediation or referral to an Academic Committee for appropriate action.

**Standards for Progress and Promotion**

Uninterrupted progress through the clinical year requires that the student achieve a final grade of "B" or higher in all clinical rotations. Failure to meet this standard will result in one or more of the following: 1) remediation, 2) interrupted progression (e.g. removal from rotations), or 3) referral to an Academic Committee.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the Physician Assistant Department as presented below spans twenty-seven consecutive months. The program is conducted as a sequence of a didactic phase followed by a clinical phase. The didactic phase is the only period of training that is completed entirely on the Augusta University campus. The Physician Assistant program operates on a credit hour basis.

### **DIDACTIC CURRICULUM:**

This phase of the curriculum consists of both basic science and clinically related didactic courses. It is provided during the first year plus one semester of the program. All courses are required and must be successfully completed prior to beginning clinical courses.

Summer		Credit Hours
ANM 7300	Human Gross Anatomy	6
PHAS 7120	Human Physiology for the Clinician	5
PHAS 5125	Principles of Pharmacology for the Clinician	1
PHAS 5010	Medical Terminology	1
PHAS 5020	Genetics	1
<b>Semester Total</b>		<b>14</b>
Fall		Credit Hours
PHAS 5015	Medical Communication	2
PHAS 5140	Clinical Skills Integration and Application I	1
STAT 6300	Introduction to Epidemiology & Biostatistics	3
PHAS 5115	Physical Assessment	3
PHAS 5215	Pharmacotherapeutics I	2
PHAS 5137	Diagnostic Methods and Pathology	1
PHAS 5131	Orthopedics	3
PHAS 5132	Dermatology	2
PHAS 5133	Ophthalmology	2
PHAS 5134	Infectious Diseases	2

PHAS 5135	EKG Interpretation	1
PHAS 5136	Otolaryngology	2
Semester Total		24
Spring		Credit Hours
PHAS 5330	Surgery	2
PHAS 5300	Pharmacotherapeutics II	3
PHAS 5221	Cardiology	3
PHAS 5222	Pulmonology	3
PHAS 5223	Nephrology/Urology	2
PHAS 5224	Gastroenterology	2
PHAS 5227	Hematology/Oncology	2
PHAS 5226	BLS & Airway Management	1
PHAS 5314	Neurology	2
PHAS 5230	Clinical Skills Integration and Application II	1
Spring		21
Summer 2		Credit Hours
PHAS 5320	Emergency Medicine	2
PHAS 5400	Pharmacotherapeutics III	3
PHAS 5311	Pediatrics	2
PHAS 5312	Obstetrics and Gynecology	2
PHAS 5313	Endocrinology	2
PHAS 5228	Advanced Cardiac Life Support	2
PHAS 5200	Essentials of Psychiatry	2
PHAS 5100	Ethics and Professional Practice Issues	1
PHAS 5340	Clinical Skills Integration and Application III	1

PHAS 5360	Evidence Based Medicine and Medical Writing	2
Semester Total		19
Didactic Phase Total		78

## CLINICAL CURRICULUM:

This phase consists of three consecutive semesters of required clinical rotations and clinically related course work (completed during the second fall through the third summer semester).

Each course in the didactic component must be satisfactorily completed before promotion to the clinical year. Students are responsible for maintaining AHA BLS and ACLS certification for the entire clinical year. Each student must submit documentation of course completion to the Director of Education and the Clinical Director.

Fall		
PHAS 6027	Adult Medicine Practicum	4
PHAS 6028	Adult Medicine Practicum II	4
PHAS 6020	Surgery Practicum	4
PHAS 6035	Family Medicine Practicum	4
Semester Total		16
Spring		
PHAS 6040	Emergency Medicine Practicum	4
PHAS 6050	Pediatrics Practicum	4
PHAS 6060	Psychiatric and Addiction Medicine Practicum	4
PHAS 6070	Women's Health Practicum	4
Semester Total		16
Summer		
PHAS 6090	Elective Clinical Practicum	4
PHAS 6110	Research/Masters Project	2
PHAS 6120	Professionalism and Teaching Practicum	2
PHAS 6081	Physician Assistant Summative Evaluation (PASE)	4
Semester Total		12
Clinical Phase Total		44
PROGRAM TOTAL		122

Due to the dynamic nature of the profession, required courses and clinical rotations may change. Curricular changes may result in additional requirements. Students are responsible for completion of all requirements deemed appropriate by the faculty.

# APPENDICES

## I. STUDENT PEARLS

### **Christ Church Health Clinic:**

This clinic started in February 2005 and was initiated by the Class of 2006. The clinic is for the medically underserved/ uninsured and targets the area surrounding Augusta University. The clinic is currently held at Christ Church one Saturday a month during their soup kitchen.

The focus of the clinic is to conduct screens and refer patients for further appropriate follow-up. A brief history and focused physical is performed. We also assess height, weight, blood pressure, and blood sugar. Patients are provided with a variety of education materials - ranging from nutrition, dental health, smoking cessation to domestic violence.

Your class needs a committee of individuals (4-5) to manage the clinic:

1. Point of contact- communicates between committee/class and faculty
2. Supplies- assess what needs to be replenished and who to contact for donations.
3. Educational material- obtains information/handouts/fliers to give to patients.
4. Scheduler- maintains sign-up sheets for class/faculty and stays in touch with the church.

The committee as a whole works together to obtain donations and replenish supplies as needed.

At any time a student is at the clinic, at least ONE clinical or academic faculty member must be present; anywhere from 4-5 student volunteers are encouraged to attend. Clinic lasts from 10 am to 2pm.

Christ Church Clinic will be **completely** turned over to your class at the end of the first fall semester-after you have completed physical assessment class. However, if you want to practice your skills, you are more than welcome to start coming as soon as school starts.

Starting the first PA student- run clinic was a huge accomplishment. It took a great deal of time and collaborative effort to get it going. However, the most important reason it was initiated was because of student interest! We hope that your class and the classes to follow are just as enthusiastic and able to continue this project.

### **Election of Class Officers**

Careful thoughtful selection of class officers is vital to the morale of the PA class. The faculty encourage each class to wait to select class officers until the end of the first summer semester and no later than the beginning of the first fall semester. Class officers, especially those with greater responsibilities, should be students in excellent academic standing.

## **Class Officer Organization:**

### Office of the Class President

1. Develops agenda for class meetings
  - A. Monthly meetings with faculty member(s) if needed
  - B. Class organization/evaluation meetings
    - 1) organize fund raising projects
    - 2) set objectives for the year (Class dues, educational meetings)
  - C. Quarterly meetings with classmates
    - 1) class president develops agenda
2. Monitors class morale
  - A. Identify and notify Program Director of the group's "mental health".
  - B. Informally meet with Program Director to assess class and program progress in goal attainment.
3. Represents the class
  - A. To the program faculty when the need arises.
  - B. On the School of Allied Health Sciences Class President Organization

### Office of the Class Vice-President

1. Coordinate student involvement with interviewing process.
2. Represents the class *in* the absence of the President.
3. Assists the President *in* monitoring class morale.
4. Monitors and evaluates student support systems.
5. Implements directives from the President.

### Office of the Class Secretary

1. Records and makes available minutes of class meetings.
2. Responsible for class correspondence as directed by the President or Program Director.
3. Responsible for keeping track of daily class attendance and reconciling with faculty member responsible for personal leave request once each month.

### Office of the Class Treasurer

1. Responsible for all class-monies.
  - A. Opens bank account for the class
  - B. Gives an account of monies at organizational and monthly meetings with the other class officers.
  - C. Receive and maintain an accounting of social funds
  - D. Arrange for payment of all approved indebtedness of the class.
2. Assists in fund raising efforts
  - A. Works with Secretary in communicating with fund- raising organizations.
  - B. Works with the class to organize fund-raising efforts.

### Office of the Class Historian

1. Chronicles the history of the class.
  - A. Takes pictures of class activities.
  - B. Records brief descriptions of activities.
  - C. Submit photographs/materials for Augusta University Yearbook
  - D. Maintains student bulletin board.
2. Keeps photo album current.

### Office of Class Representative to Student Government

1. Represents the PA Program to the Student Government.
2. Attends SGA meetings.
3. Reports to the class SGA functions and business.

### Georgia Association of Physician Assistants Student Representative

1. Attend GAPA Board Meeting as voting representative
2. Encourages student membership in GAPA
3. Submits items for GAPA Newsletter

### Minority Representative

1. Works with faculty Minority Academic Advisory Program (MAAP)
2. Attends all MAAP meetings
3. Assists faculty MAAP advisor in resolving class issues as necessary
4. Assists minority students individually and in groups on a regular basis (formally and informally).
5. Know minority students. In informal situations, get to know their names, family situation, financial/aid status.
6. Attend faculty/peer advisor's workshop(s). Notify and encourage peers to attend.
7. Help facilitate evaluation of MAAP programs.

### Social Director/Class Hostess

1. Responsible for obtaining funds from class treasurer to purchase refreshments for the class.
2. Coordinates class social events after class discussions.
3. Assures that clean up of the break area and kitchen is conducted daily. Responsible for developing social activities for the class.
4. Assures that all guest lecturers, at a minimum, are asked if they would like refreshment during class breaks.

### Volunteer Director

1. Organize all volunteer activities of the class.
2. Prepare and maintain the volunteer records.
3. Serve as a member of the Social Committee.

4. Make recommendations to the class for volunteering projects.
5. Coordinate all volunteer activities with the faculty.

**Amenities near the Classroom:**

ATM - Student Center

Copier - nearest one is at the Greenblatt Library

Stamps - The Jag Store-located in the Student Center

Subway - a decent location for food other than Student Center or Terrace Dining Room

New Moon Café-located in University Hospital’s Heart and Vascular Center

The VA Hospital - Nice cafeteria, Great GIFT SHOP –

CHOG Gift Shop - a good on-campus location for children’s gifts and sending flowers. Good location for emergency needs.

Security Phones/Security Escort – several blue-lighted posts for on-campus security. Call 721-2911 to be escorted to your car on-campus at night.

[Parking – Parking and Transportation Services](#)

**Intramural Activities:**

Previous PA classes have participated in three intramural sports: flag football, basketball, and softball. We tried to make the name funny with a medical basis. Also, we tried to use two words that coincided with "PA" like Pruritis Ani, Physical Antagonists, and Professional Athletes. There are about twenty different intramural sports like billiards, badminton, soccer, table tennis, dodge ball to name a few. Most of the sports are coed teams but there are some sports in which men and women have their own teams. There is a small entry fee, usually paid for out of the class budget. T-shirts are awarded for the "champion" of each sport. All schools and departments are eligible for entry (Medicine, Dentistry, CAHS, Nursing, and Graduate Studies).

**II. GRADING SYSTEMS**

Grading system parallels the University of System of Georgia guidelines listed below (*from USG Board of Regents Policy Manual 305*):

All institutions of the University System of Georgia shall be on a 4.0 grade point average system. The following grades are approved for use in institutions in the determination of the Grade Point Average:

Grade	Grade Point Average
A Excellent	(4.0)
B Good	(3.0)
C Satisfactory	(2.0)
D Passing	(1.0)

F Failure (0.0)

WF Withdrew (0.0)

The following symbols are approved for use in the cases indicated, but will not be included in the determination of the grade point average.

"I" This symbol indicates that a student was doing satisfactory work but, for non-academic reasons beyond his/her control, was unable to meet the full requirements of the course. The requirements for removal of an "I" are left to the respective institutions; however, if an "I" is not satisfactorily removed after three academic terms of residence, the symbol "I" will be changed to the grade "F" by the appropriate official.

"IP" These symbols indicate that credit has not been given in courses that require a "CP" continuation of work beyond the term for which the student signed up for the course. The use of these symbols is approved for dissertation and thesis hours and project courses. With the exception of Learning Support or Developmental Studies courses, and Regents' Test remediation courses, these symbols cannot be used for other courses. These symbols cannot be substituted for an "I"

"W" This symbol indicates that a student was permitted to withdraw without penalty. Withdrawals without penalty will not be permitted after the mid-point of the total grading period (including final examinations) except in cases of hardship as determined by the appropriate official of the respective institution.

"WA" – Withdrawal medical. This symbol indicates that a student was approved to withdraw for medical reasons.

"WF" Withdrawal failing grade. This symbol indicates that a student withdrew or was withdrawn after the published withdrawal deadline.

"WH" Withdrawal hardship. This symbol indicates that a student was approved to withdraw for hardship reasons.

"WM" This symbol indicates a student was permitted to withdraw under the Board of Regents policy for military service refunds . The use of this symbol indicated that this student was permitted to withdraw without penalty at any time during the term.

"S" This symbol indicates that credit has been given for completion of degree requirements other than academic course work. The use of this symbol is approved for dissertation and thesis hours, student teaching, clinical practicum, internship, and proficiency requirements in graduate programs. Exceptions to the use of this symbol for academic course work must be submitted to the Chancellor for approval.

"U" This symbol indicates unsatisfactory performance in an attempt to complete degree requirements other than academic course work. The use of this symbol is approved for dissertation and thesis hours, student teaching, clinical practicum, internship, and proficiency requirements in graduate programs. Exceptions to the use of this symbol for academic course work must be submitted to the Chancellor for approval.

"V" This symbol indicates that a student was given permission to audit this course. Students may not

transfer from audit to credit status or vice versa. Students may register, however, on a credit basis for a course that has previously been audited

"K" This symbol indicates that a student was given credit for the course via a credit by examination program approved by the respective institution's faculty. "K" credit may be provided for a course the student has previously audited if the institutional procedures for credit by examination are followed

“NR” This symbol indicates a grade was not reported.

Institutions are permitted to use other than the Uniform Grading System for the purpose of grading student progress in Learning Support or Developmental Studies .

“Cumulative Grade Point Average” The cumulative grade point average in each institution of the University System of Georgia will be calculated by dividing the number of hours scheduled in all courses attempted in which a grade of A, B, C, D, F or WF has been received into the number of grade points earned on those hours scheduled. The cumulative grade point average will be recorded on the student's permanent record. Institutional credit shall in no way affect the cumulative grade point average.

Please refer to the following link: [Grades](#)

### **III. COUNSELING**

#### **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL**

Each student will be assigned an academic advisor. Academic assistance is available to any student either having or anticipating academic or personal difficulty. Students should contact their academic advisor and course coordinator as early as possible to obtain specific academic resources.

Students are invited to meet with the assigned student advisor, Program Director, or Director of Education of the PA Program to discuss general concerns, scholastic issues, and any issues relating to the PA profession.

Professional assistance and counseling is available through various departments on the campus and can be found in the Augusta University Student Manual.

### **IV. RELEVANT WEBSITES**

[\*\*FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT \(FERPA\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*GEORGIA OPEN RECORDS ACT REFERENCE\*\*](#)

[\*\*BLOOD/BIOHAZARD EXPOSURE\*\*](#)

[\*\*EDUCATION AND EXPOSURE POLICY FOR HEALTH CARE STUDENTS\*\*](#)

[\*\*AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY STUDENT MANUAL\*\*](#)

**STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES**

**STUDENT INFORMATION**

**GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

**STUDENT ACADEMY AAPA**

**V. IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

Physician Assistant Department	(706) 721-3246 /3247
Registrar	(706) 446-1430 /1431
Business Office	(706) 737-1767
Financial Aid (Student Affairs)	(706) 737-1524
Student Housing	(706) 729-2300
Student Health	(706) 721-3448
Public Safety	(706) 721-2914 /2911
Parking Bureau	(706) 721-2953
Library	(706) 721-3441
Bookstore (JagStore)	(706) 737-1611

**VI. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT COMPETENCIES**

**Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession**

**Preamble**

In 2003, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) initiated an effort to define PA competencies in response to similar efforts being conducted within other health care professions and growing demand for accountability and assessment in clinical practice. The following year, representatives from three other national PA organizations, each bringing a unique perspective and valuable insights, joined NCCPA in that effort. Those organizations were the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), the body

that accredits PA educational programs; the Association of Physician Assistant Programs (APAP), the membership association for PA educators and program directors; and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), the only national membership association representing all PAs.

The resultant document, Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession, is a foundation from which each of those four organizations, other physician assistant organizations, and individual physician assistants themselves can chart a course for advancing the competencies of the PA profession.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to communicate to the PA profession and the public a set of competencies that all physician assistants regardless of specialty or setting are expected to acquire and maintain throughout their careers. This document serves as a map for the individual PA, the physician-PA team, and organizations that are committed to promoting the development and maintenance of these professional competencies among physician assistants.

The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. Professional competencies for physician assistants include the effective and appropriate application of medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, patient care, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, systems based practice, as well as an unwavering commitment to continual learning and professional growth, and the physician-PA team, for the benefit of patients and the larger community being served. These competencies are demonstrated within the scope of practice, whether medical or surgical, for each individual physician assistant as that scope is defined by the supervising physician and appropriate to the setting.

The PA profession defines the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes required and provide educational experiences as needed in order for physician assistants to acquire and demonstrate these competencies.

## **Medical knowledge**

Medical knowledge includes an understanding 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 investigatory and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Understand etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- Identify signs and symptoms of medical conditions
- Select and interpret appropriate diagnostic or lab studies
- Manage general medical and surgical conditions to include understanding the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities
- Identify the appropriate site of care for presenting conditions, including identifying emergent

cases and those requiring referral or admission

- Identify appropriate interventions for prevention of conditions
- Identify the appropriate methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- Differentiate between the normal and the abnormal in anatomy, physiology, laboratory findings and other diagnostic data
- Appropriately use history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate a differential diagnosis
- Provide appropriate care to patients with chronic conditions.

### **Interpersonal & communication skills**

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass verbal, nonverbal, and written exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, their patients' families, physicians, professional associates, and the health care system. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information
- Appropriately adapt communication style and messages to the context of the individual patient interaction
- Work effectively with physician and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
- Apply an understanding of human behavior
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- Accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the care process for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

### **Patient care**

Patient care includes age appropriate assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of wellness. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient centered care
- Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- Gather essential and accurate information about their patients
- Make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence, and clinical judgment
- Develop and carry out patient management plans
- Counsel and educate patients and their families
- Competently perform medical and surgical procedures considered essential in the area of practice
- Provide health care services and education aimed at preventing health problems or maintaining health.

## **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 know 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
- Responsiveness to the needs of patients and society
- Accountability to patients, society, and the profession
- Commitment to excellence and ongoing 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 disabilities
- Self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative.

## **Practice-based learning and improvement**

Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which clinicians engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self-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 problems
- Obtain and apply information about their own population of patients and the larger population from which their patients are drawn
- Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- Apply information technology to manage information, access online medical information, and support their own education
- Facilitate the learning of students and/or other health care professionals
- Recognize and appropriately address gender, cultural, cognitive, emotional, and other biases; gaps in medical knowledge; and physical limitations in themselves and others.

## **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 is of optimal value. PAs should work to improve the larger health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education
- Effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- Understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care
- 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 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
- Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education
- Apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide more effective, efficient patient care
- Utilize the systems responsible for the appropriate payment of services.

## **VII. STUDENT CONDUCT CODE AND PROCEDURES**

Please access the [Augusta University Student Manual](#) and the [College of Allied Health Sciences Policies and Procedures](#). It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the contents of the *Augusta University Student Manual*. Students who face disciplinary or academic difficulties may need to utilize the avenues for appeal or grievance as provided by the College of Allied Health Sciences. Please visit the above referenced sites for this information.

**VIII. SIGNATURE PAGE**

**I certify by my signature below that I have read and understand the Academic and Professional Standards of the Physician Assistant Program. I agree to abide by these rules while I am a student in this Program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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**Program Director**

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**Date**