



**HARDIN-SIMMONS**

**U N I V E R S I T Y**

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**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM  
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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# **HARDIN-SIMMONS UNIVERSITY**

## **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant student with the policies and procedures of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. This information includes the academic and professional standards and expectations reflected in University and Program policies. Adherence to these policies is important for progression through the program as well as maintenance of a beneficial learning environment for all members of the Program. The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook applies to all students regardless of their location or timing in the program.

### **PA PROFESSION / HARDIN-SIMMONS UNIVERSITY PA PROGRAM:**

Physician Assistants (PA) are healthcare professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician collaboration. Physician Assistants graduate from an accredited physician assistant educational program and are certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Within the physician/PA relationship, Physician Assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision-making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. The clinical role of Physician Assistants includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings in rural, urban and suburban areas. Physician Assistant practice is primarily patient care-centered but may also include educational, research, or administrative activities.

The Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program is a graduate level, professional Program designed to produce clinicians who are committed to provide exceptional, compassionate, individualized patient care, serve their communities, advance the profession and engage in life-long learning and professional development. Upon graduation, students will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination and state licensure.

The Physician Assistant curriculum is delivered on a full-time basis for a total of 27 months. Students will matriculate as a cohort into a 12-month academic phase, followed by 13 months of clinical/professional education and 2 months of additional didactic studies prior to graduation.

## ACCREDITATION:

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the recognized accrediting agency that protects the interest of the public and PA profession by defining the standard for the PA education and evaluating PA education programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards. 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.

Source: [www.arc-pa.org](http://www.arc-pa.org)

The ARC-PA has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Hardin-Simmons University**.

Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA *Standards*.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the *Standards*. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be March 2032. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation *Standards* and ARC-PA policy.

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-hardinsimmons-university/>

Additionally, Hardin-Simmons University is accredited by the regional accreditor the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) who has reviewed and approved the addition of the Physician Assistant Program.

## ARC-PA STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES

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 standards for PA education and evaluating PA educational programs to ensure their compliance with the standards. The current standards can be found at the following link: <http://www.arc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AccredManual-5th-ed-9.20.pdf>

## **UNIVERSITY MISSION, PROGRAM MISSION, PROGRAM GOALS:**

### **A. University Mission**

It is the mission of Hardin-Simmons University to be a community dedicated to providing excellence in education enlightened by Christian faith and values.

Founded in 1891 by a dedicated group of ministers, ranchers, and merchants, Hardin-Simmons University (HSU) continues its commitment to developing the minds and nurturing the spiritual lives of its students. HSU is a private university located in Abilene, Texas. HSU provides an academically challenging undergraduate education based on a liberal arts foundation and advances scholarly growth by offering specialized graduate and professional degree programs. Combining its commitment to academic excellence and a concern for the development of the total person with a distinctive Christian perspective, Hardin-Simmons serves students through quality educational programs designed to provide *An Education Enlightened by Faith*.

### **B. Physician Assistant Program Mission**

The Hardin-Simmons University PA Program is dedicated to academic excellence in medical education. Our mission is to develop and prepare compassionate, professional PA providers who are committed to life-long leadership, learning, and community service. Our graduates will work as part of the healthcare team to deliver exceptional healthcare to rural West Texas and underserved communities worldwide.

### **C. Physician Assistant Program Goals**

1. Recruit outstanding PA students that display a commitment to community service.
2. Prepare PA students for the practice of medicine as exemplified by:
  - Pass rate on National Certifying Exam that exceeds national average
  - Attainment of employment after graduation.
3. Provide training opportunities for PA students in rural and underserved medical arenas.

## **ADMISSIONS:**

Information about admission to Hardin-Simmons University's 27-month graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies is detailed on the Program's website under admission guidelines at:

<https://www.hsutx.edu/pa>

The admission requirements, frequently asked questions, Program tuition and fees, and links to the CASPA application are found on the program website. Candidates selected for admission to the Program must meet all admission requirements prior to matriculation. Following a competitive interview process, applicants will be ranked using a comprehensive, holistic method, and only the top candidates will be offered a seat in the class. Students enter in August of each year and complete the Program as a cohort.

## **ADVANCED PLACEMENT:**

Hardin-Simmons University PA Program does not grant advanced placement to any matriculating student.

## **Transfer and Credit:**

All PA students must complete the entire PA curriculum. No advanced placement or advanced standing is granted, nor is transfer credit or credit for experiential learning accepted in lieu of PA courses.

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS:**

In order to ensure that patients receive the best medical care possible, the faculty have identified certain skills and professional behaviors that are essential for successful progression of PA students in the Program. A student must possess skills and behaviors at a level of capability to perform a variety of duties required of a PA as a healthcare professional. Students with disabilities who can perform these skills and successfully execute professional behavior either unassisted, with dependable use of assistive devices, or by employing other reasonable accommodations are eligible to apply for enrollment in the Program. Minimum performance standards include critical thinking, communication skills, observation skills, motor skills, and interpersonal abilities. These following descriptions define the capabilities that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant curriculum.

**Intellectual Capability/Critical Thinking:** The PA student must possess the intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence in critical thinking and problem solving required to seek entry to the profession. The ability to solve problems, a skill that is critical to the practice of medicine, requires the intellectual abilities of measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Students in the Program must be able to demonstrate these skills in working with faculty, staff, students, patients and their families, and other members of the healthcare team. Intellectual abilities also encompass learning and retaining information and the ability to make decisions in a timely manner.

**Communication Skills:** The PA student must be able to effectively speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and to perceive nonverbal communications. The student must be able to communicate attentively, effectively, sensitively, and efficiently in oral, written, and electronic forms with other clinicians, families, and patients in order to make appropriate and timely responses.

**Observation Skills:** The PA student must be able to observe a patient accurately, both at a distance and close at hand. Students must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational and clinical settings. Sensation must be satisfactory to receive verbal and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform inspection, auscultation, percussion, and palpation techniques during the physical examination.

**Motor Skills:** The PA student should have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities required of a Physician Assistant. The student should have sufficient motor coordination to move about patient care environments and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments. Students must have sufficient stamina to sit, stand, and move within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms and operating rooms for long periods of time. Students must also be able to calibrate and use large and small equipment and execute movements required for moving patients, positioning patients, and providing care to patients routinely and in emergency settings. Typical lifting requirement is a minimum of 50 lbs. unassisted.

**Interpersonal Abilities:** The PA student must possess the ability to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships. The student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities required for the diagnosis and care of patients, to be compassionate, empathetic, responsible, and tolerant toward patients, families and colleagues. This also includes the ability to prioritize competing demands and function in stressful circumstances.

## **PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

The following outlines examples of the demands and performance requirements required of the HSU PA student. (Examples included are not limited to training opportunities offered at the HSU PA Program and are not all inclusive.)

### **Typical Mental Demands**

The HSU PA student must possess the ability to:

- Process, retain, comprehend, integrate, analyze, synthesize, and apply a large volume of data related to the art and science of medicine, including legal, ethical, and moral concepts
- Be present during long hours in the following settings: classrooms, laboratories, clinicals, and self-directed study situations and environments
- Respond appropriately and in a timely manner to constructive faculty/preceptor feedback
- Effectively communicate through written and verbal communication skills
- Participate in educational activities that include laboratory dissections, skills tests, examinations, demonstrations, simulations, presentations, written communication skills, frequent and exacting evaluations
- Demonstrate the ability to gather patient data, order and interpret diagnostic testing, perform the physical examination, conduct patient assessment and evaluation, formulate a treatment plan, and perform patient education

### **Typical Physical Demands**

The HSU PA student must possess:

- Full range of body motion including manual and finger dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and the ability to assist with patient movement/transfer
- Normal visual and hearing acuity with assistive devices when appropriate
- Physical capacity to stand and walk for extended hospital and clinic visits, and during frequent and prolonged patient and professional interactions
- Physical capacity to sit for long periods during classroom and laboratory experiences
- Capability to work in physically and mentally stressful situations with long and irregular hours and with exposures to communicable diseases and body fluids

### **Typical Working Conditions**

The HSU PA student must be able to:

- Work in clinical and classroom environments with exposure to communicable diseases, medicinal preparations, hostile individuals, and other such conditions common to the medical and surgical environments
- Interact with a diverse patient population of all ages with a range of acute and chronic medical and surgical conditions



## **Student Performance Requirements**

The HSU PA student will be required to perform in the following situations:

- Medical, surgical, pediatric, obstetric/gynecologic, emergent, behavioral and other primary care medicine settings (inpatient and out-patient) at off-campus locations
- Didactic and clinical education and training
- Invasive and non-invasive procedures
- Pre-, intra-, and post-operative activities
- Emergency care
- Demonstrate a professional ethical demeanor and understanding of medical ethics and medical-legal concepts
- Display an ability to perform for long hours (physical and mental stamina)
- Complete demanding didactic and clinical evaluations, examinations, etc.
- Perform at the level determined and required by the faculty/program to be successful in the profession
- Participate in community and/or professional service activities
- Complete other responsibilities and tasks as assigned or required

## HSU PA PROGRAM COMPETENCIES:

Upon completion of the program, students are expected to demonstrate competency in the following domains:

1. Medical knowledge,
2. Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities,
3. Clinical and technical skills,
4. Interpersonal skills, and
5. Professionalism.

The HSU PA program defined competencies upon graduation are listed below. Course learning outcomes, instructional objectives, technical skill evaluations, and professional development throughout the curriculum are based on these program competencies. Syllabi throughout the curriculum reflect these program competencies and are incorporated in various components with the goal of preparing graduates for clinical practice.

1. Demonstrate acquisition of the medical knowledge required to integrate and apply basic medical sciences to care for patients in clinical settings. (*medical knowledge*)
2. Demonstrate a broad, systems-based knowledge of clinical medicine. (*medical knowledge*)
3. Understand, evaluate, and apply information regarding disease etiology, risk factors, epidemiology, and screening methods to detect conditions in symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. (*medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem solving*)
4. Demonstrate evidence-based clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills required to integrate and apply basic medical sciences to care for patients in clinical settings. (*clinical reasoning & problem solving*)
5. Formulate differential diagnoses, accurate assessments, and appropriate treatment plans and interventions to care for patients. (*clinical reasoning & problem solving*)
6. Correctly interpret diagnostic and laboratory findings appropriate for primary care settings. (*medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem solving*)
7. Apply knowledge of responsible prescribing practices for patient care and safety, including display of comprehension of indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions related to pharmacologic agents. (*medical knowledge*)
8. Effectively communicate to patients test results, treatment plans, and health-related findings in a culturally sensitive manner while maintaining patient confidentiality. (*interpersonal skills*)
9. Effectively communicate patient information with other members of the healthcare team through oral delivery and written documentation. (*interpersonal skills, clinical & technical skills*)
10. Perform basic diagnostic and therapeutic procedures needed for the evaluation and treatment of a patient. (*clinical & technical skills*)
11. Demonstrate appropriate behavior, respect, and professionalism in the educational and clinical settings. (*professionalism*)

# Hardin-Simmons University PA Department

## DEGREE PLAN

Course #		Credit Hours	Semester Hours	
<b>YEAR ONE: DIDACTIC</b>				
<b>Semester: Fall</b>				
PA 6402	Human Anatomy	4		
PA 6404	Medical Interview and Physical Examination	4		
PA 6206	Preventive Medicine & Patient Education	2		
PA 6208	Introduction to Health Professions & PA Practice	2		
PA 6310	Physiology & Pathophysiology I	3		
PA 6112	Medical Ethics	1		
PA 6214	Clinical Medicine I	2		<b>18</b>
<b>Semester: Spring</b>				
PA 6416	Clinical Medicine II	4		
PA 6312	Physiology & Pathophysiology II	3		
PA 6218	Diagnostic Methods	2		
PA 6220	Patient Assessment I	2		
PA 6224	Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics I	2		
PA 6228	Behavioral Medicine	2		
PA 6130	Cross Cultural Health	1		
PA 6232	Clinical Laboratory Science	2		
PA 6234	Research & Evidence-Based Medicine	2		<b>20</b>
<b>Semester: Summer</b>				
PA 6418	Clinical Medicine III	4		
PA 6226	Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics II	2		
PA 6222	Patient Assessment II	2		
PA 6236	Care for Special Populations	2		
PA 6538	Clinical Skills	5		<b>15</b>
<b>YEAR TWO: CLINICAL</b>				
Clinical Rotations include 5 weeks (5 credit hours each) in the following disciplines: PA 6540 Family Medicine / PA 6542 Pediatrics / PA 6544 Women's Health / PA 6546 Mental Health / PA 6548 Internal Medicine / PA 6550 General Surgery / PA 6552 Emergency Medicine / PA 6554 Elective 1 / PA 6556 Elective 2 / PA 6560 Professional Development				
<b>Semester: Fall</b>				
	Clinical Rotations: 1,2, & 3	15		
<b>Semester: Spring</b>				
	Clinical Rotations: 4,5, & 6	15		
<b>Semester: Summer</b>				
	Clinical Rotations: 7,8, & 9	15		<b>45</b>
<b>Semester: Last Fall Prior to Graduation</b>				
	Clinical Rotation: 10	5		
PA 6458	Post-clinical: Professional Practice Preparation	4		
PA 6362	Post-clinical: Capstone	3		
PA 6264	Post-clinical: Health Policy, Billing, & Coding	2		<b>14</b>
<b>Year totals:</b>			<b>Total program</b>	
	<b>Year One: Didactic Year Totals</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>112 Hours</b>	
	<b>Year Two: Clinical Year Totals</b>	<b>50</b>		
	<b>Year Two: Post-Clinical Rotations</b>	<b>9</b>		

## **HSU PA PROGRAM – COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

### **PA 6402 Human Anatomy 4 credits**

Students will be given the opportunity to acquire advanced knowledge of the anatomical structures of the human body, including but not limited to the head and neck, thorax, abdomen, pelvis, and extremities. Goals include developing knowledge essential to understand how anatomy relates to function. Students will be required to identify anatomic structures, distinguish normal from abnormal structures, and appreciate the complexity of the human body. Introductory information will be provided as to clinical application of anatomic variations from normal and the means by which these variations can contribute to disease. A clinical application lab will correspond to the lecture course. Laboratory includes study of a human cadaver.

### **PA 6404 Medical Interview and Physical Examination 4 credits**

This course is designed to introduce students to the art of medical history taking and physical examination. This encompasses the skills of medical interviewing and other forms of communication with patients, their families, and their caregivers. Students will learn the components of a complete medical history. In addition, they will learn interviewing skills that will allow them to efficiently elicit a patient history in an accurate and empathetic manner. This introductory course on physical assessment also includes instruction on performance of complete physical examination, and development of critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to assess adult patients' mental and physical status. Assessment of common and important symptoms is covered including the relevant regions and systems of skin, head, neck, neurological system, thorax and lungs, heart, musculoskeletal system, abdominal exam, and genitourinary systems. Demonstrations and practical laboratory application reinforce the PA's ability to perform a comprehensive physical examination. The laboratory allows the student an opportunity to practice the skills needed to perform a complete physical on the body regions covered in the lecture.

### **PA 6206 Preventive Medicine & Patient Education 2 credits**

This course provides a broad overview to familiarize Physician Assistant students with the basic concepts of public health and preventative medicine. Epidemiological concepts include the distribution, prevalence, causation, mode of transmission, dissemination, control, and preventative countermeasures of infectious and non-communicable diseases; and environmental occupational, behavioral, and chronic disabling conditions. Patient education techniques are reviewed with emphasis on quality of care and patient safety.

### **PA 6208 Introduction to Health Professions & PA practice 2 credits**

This course presents an introduction/overview of the Physician Assistant (PA) profession. This course addresses a variety of topics in Physician Assistant professional development including emphasizing professionalism, intellectual honesty, and the PA's role in healthcare delivery as a member of an interdisciplinary team. Additional emphasis is placed upon the inception, history, and evolution of the PA profession throughout the fields of medicine and surgery; PA relationships with the supervising Physician, the patient; responsibilities including the concepts of privilege, confidentiality and informed consent. The student will also explore media and medicine topics, licensing, hospital credentials/liability, malpractice insurance.

### **PA 6310 Physiology & Pathophysiology I 3 credits**

This course is the first course of a two-semester sequence in which the student will build upon information learned in the basic physiology prerequisite courses. General review of physiologic concepts and systems will be undertaken. Class sessions will focus on an in-depth look at human physiology with an emphasis on cellular and subcellular mechanisms of normal and abnormal function including medical genetics. Introductory information will be provided as to clinical application of anatomic and physiologic variations from normal and the means by which these variations can contribute to disease.

**PA 6312 Physiology & Pathophysiology II****3 credits**

This course is the second course of a two-semester sequence in which the student will build upon information learned in the basic physiology prerequisite courses. General review of physiologic concepts and systems will be undertaken. Class sessions will focus on an in-depth look at human physiology with an emphasis on cellular and subcellular mechanisms of normal and abnormal function including medical genetics. Introductory information will be provided as to clinical application of anatomic and physiologic variations from normal and the means by which these variations can contribute to disease.

**PA 6112 Medical Ethics****1 credit**

This course examines, in detail, the moral, social and ethical issues Physician Assistants face and reviews the ethical dimensions in healthcare. In this course, students examine the ethical responsibilities of a medical professional and debate ethical issues. Students also discuss the Physician Assistant and patient relationship in detail, covering the importance of maintaining dignity, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, autonomy, and confidentiality. Case review will be utilized to apply learned principles. Special attention is given to care at the end of life.

**PA 6214 Clinical Medicine I****2 credits**

This course is the first in a three-course sequence and is designed to teach students clinical medicine in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The course will be primarily lecture based with supplementary case discussions. Lectures will be done in system-based sequences and include instruction in the genetic/familial patterns of disease. The sequences will discuss mechanisms of disease, clinical presentation of disease, approach to diagnosis of disease, and use of various agents used in the management of disease as well as health promotion.

**PA 6416 Clinical Medicine II****4 credits**

This course is the second in a three-course sequence and is designed to teach students clinical medicine in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The course will be primarily lecture based with supplementary case discussions. Lectures will be done in system-based sequences and include instruction in the genetic/familial patterns of disease. The sequences will discuss mechanisms of disease, clinical presentation of disease, approach to diagnosis of disease, and use of various agents used in the management of disease as well as health promotion.

(3 hour lecture + 1 hour lab)

**PA 6418 Clinical Medicine III****4 credits**

This course is the third in a three-course sequence and is designed to teach students clinical medicine in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The course will be primarily lecture based with supplementary case discussions. Lectures will be done in system-based sequences and include instruction in the genetic/familial patterns of disease. The sequences will discuss mechanisms of disease, clinical presentation of disease, approach to diagnosis of disease, and use of various agents used in the management of disease as well as health promotion.

(3-hour lecture + 1 hour lab)

**PA 6416 & 6418 Clinical Medicine II & III Lab****1 hour**

This course allows students to meet weekly for case-based laboratories. These laboratories will be small groups facilitated by faculty group facilitators. The facilitator will have students work through case studies that correspond to current lecture sequences. The student will be given introductory information and must elicit the necessary information from the facilitator to lead to the formulation of an appropriate differential diagnosis, diagnosis, and management plan. This lab will require that students incorporate patient history, physical assessment, scientific concepts, and diagnostic studies to ultimately come to a logical differential diagnosis and final diagnosis. Students will then be required to utilize their knowledge of clinical therapeutics and disease to develop a rational plan of management. Medical decision making and logic will be a key focus in lab sessions.

**PA 6218 Diagnostic Methods****2 credits**

This course will provide a comprehensive overview of two basic diagnostic methods and treatments (Electrocardiogram (ECG) and Radiology). The course provides a comprehensive overview of electrocardiography with a focus on recognition of abnormalities, emphasizing the electrical system of the heart, enabling the student to identify normal/abnormal wave shape of 12 lead EKGs using a systematic approach to ECG analysis. The second component of the course focuses on radiologic imaging designed to assist Physician Assistant students to understand, appropriately select, and correctly interpret the many imaging modalities and techniques currently available for examination and treatment of patients.

**PA 6220 Patient Assessment I****2 credits**

This is part 1 of a 2-part course series in which students will learn how to properly document medical interviews and other patient encounters. This course on patient assessment focuses on patient communication skills, techniques of interviewing and performance of complete physical examination, development of critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to assess adult patients' mental and physical status. It continues and builds upon assessment of common and important symptoms. Students will be put into practice initial physical examination skills and techniques as well as hone early documentation skills. This course includes critiqued presentation of patient data in both oral and written form.

**PA 6222 Patient Assessment II****2 credits**

This is part 2 of a 2-part course series in which students will learn how to properly document medical interviews and other patient encounters. The focus this term is development of comprehensive written notes including differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients. This course builds on previously learned skills in patient communication, techniques of interviewing and performance of complete physical examination, development of critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to assess adult patients' mental and physical status. It continues and builds upon assessment of common and important symptoms. Students will practice physical examination skills and techniques as well as hone documentation skills. This course includes critiqued presentation of patient data in both oral and written form.

**PA 6224 Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics I****2 credits**

This course is the first in a two-course sequence. The course is designed to teach students pharmacology and medical therapeutics in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. This course will include an overview of the scientific principles of clinical pharmacology. Therapeutic specific lectures will be included to cover an in-depth discussion of the pharmacology and use of various agents used in the management of disease. An understanding of the actions, reactions and toxicology of the various pharmacologic agents will be emphasized.

**PA 6226 Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics II** **2 credits**

This course is the second in a two-course sequence. The course is designed to teach students pharmacology and medical therapeutics in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. This course will include an overview of the scientific principles of clinical pharmacology. Therapeutic specific lectures will be included to cover an in-depth discussion of the pharmacology and use of various agents used in the management of disease. An understanding of the actions, reactions and toxicology of the various pharmacologic agents will be emphasized.

**PA 6228 Behavioral Medicine** **2 credits**

This course explores the psychologic health of individuals and how it interacts with overall well-being. The students will be given the opportunity to identify normal physical, sexual, social, and psychological processes and distinguish these from processes due to illness and injury. The students will then be taught to clinically assess patients' state of mental health and development and develop treatment plans. Topics covered will include the classification of common mental illnesses set forth in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and emphasis on timely recognition and the importance of appropriate referrals to collaborate with other healthcare professionals in the management of patients with mental illness.

**PA 6130 Cross Cultural Health** **1 credit**

This course will explore a broad spectrum of patient types which the Physician Assistant will be providing care for in practice. Age, culture, language, lifestyle, and religion all have considerable impact on how patients access and respond to healthcare services. In addition, the Physician Assistant student's own background and beliefs will form the basis of their attitudes and behaviors.

**PA 6232 Clinical Laboratory Science** **2 hours**

This analytic procedures course will discuss the most recent or commonly performed techniques in the clinical laboratory. Clinical chemistry principles, ordering, and interpretation of diagnostic tests, procedures, and correlations are discussed to provide information for appropriate clinical intervention.

**PA 6234 Research & Evidence-Based Medicine** **2 hours**

This course is to teach students how to access and interpret medical literature. As lifelong learners, Physician Assistants must be able to locate, understand and apply concepts derived from the medical literature as they relate to the treatment of their patients. This course will focus on an evidence-based medicine approach to interpreting medical literature. Students will review how to best search medical databases to efficiently locate appropriate material.

**PA 6236 Care for Special Populations** **2 hours**

Review of care for special populations including pediatric patients, geriatric patients, obstetric, surgical patients, and patients in the emergency department. Course provides the Physician Assistant student, as a future healthcare practitioner, an excellent understanding of the expanding areas of pediatrics and geriatrics and prepares the Physician Assistant student to appropriately evaluate, diagnose, monitor, treat, counsel, and refer vulnerable patients. This course also explores various types of medical and surgical conditions that are present in a modern day emergency department and prepares the Physician Assistant student to evaluate, treat, and monitor such conditions. Students are provided mechanisms to evaluate resources that are needed and available to provide appropriate ambulatory, emergency, and tertiary care services in a hospital setting.

**PA 6538 Clinical Skills****2 hours**

This course provides students fundamental concepts and skills required to perform common clinical procedures based on current practice standards. Students will receive knowledge of key indications, contraindications, risks, and benefits of procedural skills often performed in various practice settings. A basic review of the appropriate anatomy and physiology will be included. The laboratory environment will provide students an opportunity to perform and practice these procedures.

**YEAR TWO COURSES:**

*Can be taken in any sequence- 3 per semester*

**PA 6548 Internal Medicine****5 credits**

This rotation focuses on the medicine that treats diseases in adult patients of various organ systems by other than surgical means. The emphasis is on adult illnesses and lifetime continuity of care through health promotion, disease prevention, and evidenced based medical therapy.

(5-week rotation)

**PA 6540 Family Medicine****5 credits**

This rotation provides clinical experience with manifestations of common diseases and chronic illness. The emphasis is on providing care to patients throughout the life span, from infancy through adolescence and adulthood. The focus will include healthcare promotion and disease prevention as well as the initial and ongoing treatment of primary care disorders.

(5-week rotation).

**PA 6542 Pediatrics****5 credits**

This rotation will expose students to pediatric problems and disease, including common illnesses of childhood, congenital and acquired disease processes, normal and pathological developmental achievements and psychosocial issues. This rotation may include care delivered in inpatient or outpatient settings.

(5-week rotation).

**PA 6544 Women's Health****5 credits**

This rotation will expose the student to issues in women's health through the life span. Areas of exposure include prenatal care, reproductive endocrinology, gynecology and gynecologic oncology, family planning and other aspects of women's health. The basic operations of obstetrics and gynecology are explored to allow a fundamental understanding of the technical procedures involved. Some rotations may include delivery participation; however, this is not required.

(5-week rotation).

**PA 6546 Mental Health****5 credits**

This rotation provides students exposure to evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of acute and chronic psychiatric disorders. This rotation may be conducted in an inpatient or outpatient setting.

(5-week rotation)

**PA 6560 Professional Development****5 credits**

This course is designed to prepare PA students for their futures as healthcare providers. The course will include both clinical and professional topics. The students will be given the opportunity to examine the importance of communication and interprofessional teamwork in the clinical and administrative environment. The students will then identify certification and licensure requirements for graduation and beyond and identify/discuss the PA role in the promotion and dissemination of research. Additionally, students will develop skills to foster the concept of lifelong learning, demonstrated by the development of study materials for the national board examination. (5-week rotation).



**PA 6550 Surgery****5 credits**

This rotation focuses on the area of medicine that deals with the manual and operative procedures for the correction of deformities, injuries and disease. The surgery rotation must include a component of inpatient surgical management, pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care. This course is designed to provide the Physician Assistant student with an introduction to the many new surgical techniques that are available. Suturing, anesthesia, major and minor surgery specific to various body regions are taught through experiences with patients. New innovations in laser therapy and laparoscopic techniques are evaluated. Pre- and postoperative evaluation and care of the patient are integrated into this course. Surgical procedures, techniques, and instruments will be explored.

(5-week rotation)

**PA 6552 Emergency Medicine****5 credits**

This rotation will expose the student to the diagnosis and treatment of patients presenting to the emergency department with acute health issues. In this often-critical care environment, students will be faced with problem solving and the need to rapidly assess patients with a variety of presentations. Students will be exposed to the practice of utilizing emergency departments both for ambulatory care and primary care. This course explores various types of medical and surgical conditions that are present in a modern-day emergency department and prepares the Physician Assistant student to evaluate, treat, and monitor such conditions. A generalist approach to providing emergency care along with injury prevention is explored.

(5-week rotation)

**PA 6554 & 6556 Clinical Elective I & Clinical Elective II****5 credits**

These rotations will provide the student an opportunity to pursue additional study in an area of particular interest to the student. This rotation may be conducted in a medical or surgical specialty. These courses are designed to increase and enhance student learning during the clinical phase of the Physician Assistant Program. These courses will provide instruction and assessment on areas of clinical practice to help enrich the graduate PA to be a competent clinician.

(Two 5-week rotations)

**PA 6458 Professional Practice Preparation****4 credits**

The course will include an extensive didactic review of medical topics in a system-based approach. Preparation for employment through structured activities and workshops will be undertaken. Application for licensure procedures and board-certification will be emphasized.

**PA 6362 Capstone****3 credits**

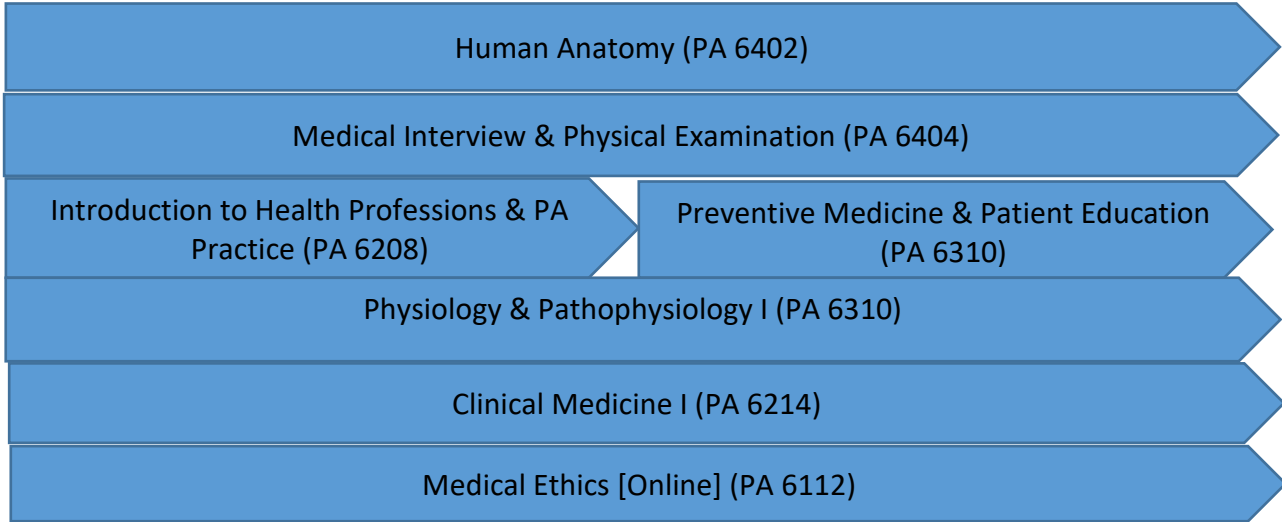
This course is designed to be a capstone course in the Physician Assistant curriculum. It is designed to review and evaluate knowledge and skills deemed essential for successful completion of the Program and entry into the PA profession. Evaluations will be conducted to assess knowledge, skills, critical thinking, problem solving, communication with patients, and professionalism. Students will present research findings of project started in first didactic year.

**PA 6264 Health Policy, Billing, & Coding****2 credits**

This course is designed to be an overview of health policy including public and private programs for patient access to care as well as pay systems. New guidelines for appropriate coding of care delivered and testing ordered for best patient and employer outcomes will be detailed. Penalties for inappropriate billing will be reviewed and honesty/fair-patient dealings stressed.

# CURRICULUM GRAPHIC

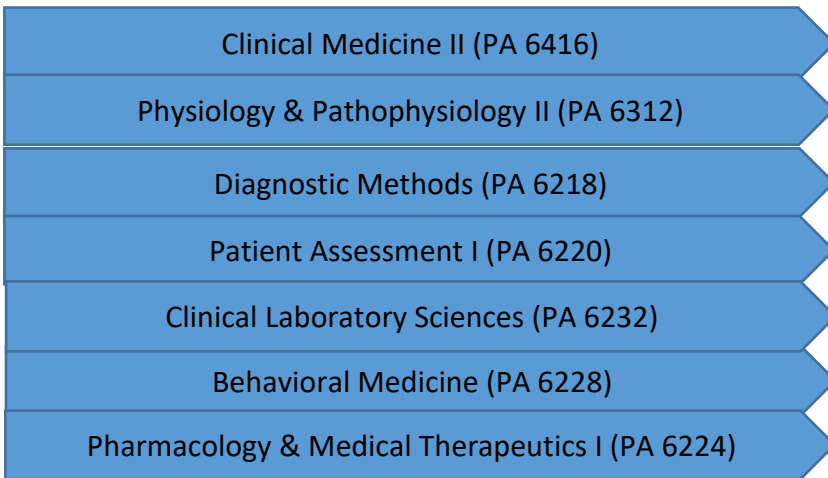
## **FALL Year One (Start mid-late August)**



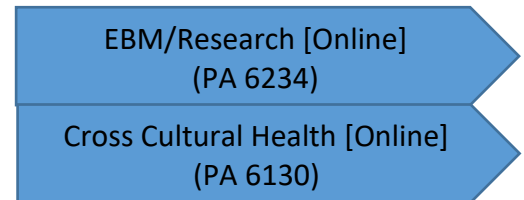
**HOLIDAYS:**  
LABOR DAY  
FALL BREAK  
THANKSGIVING WEEK

## **SPRING Year One (start mid-Jan)**

## **MAY TERM Year One (start early May)**



**HOLIDAYS:**  
MLK DAY  
SPRING BREAK WEEK  
GOOD FRIDAY

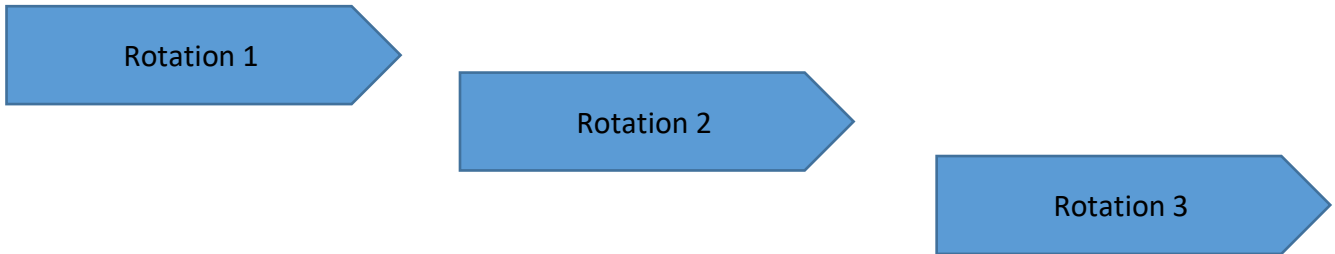


**SUMMER Year One (start late May/early June)**



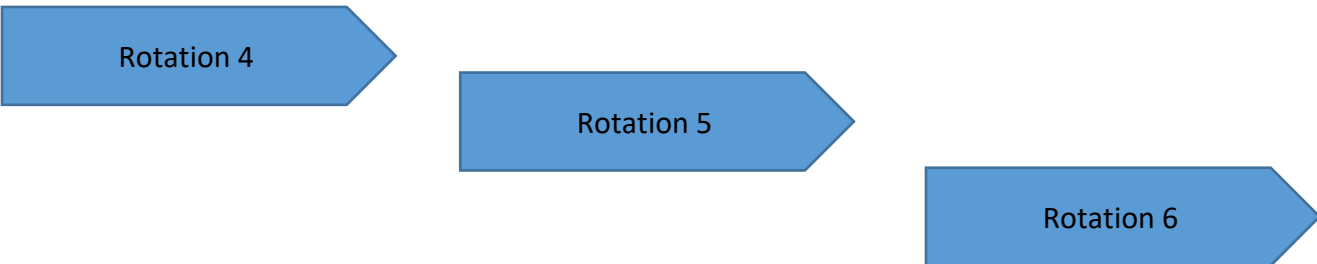
**HOLIDAYS:**  
MEMORIAL DAY  
JUNETEENTH  
INDEPENDENCE DAY

**FALL Year Two – (start end of Aug./beginning of Sept. ends mid-Dec.)**



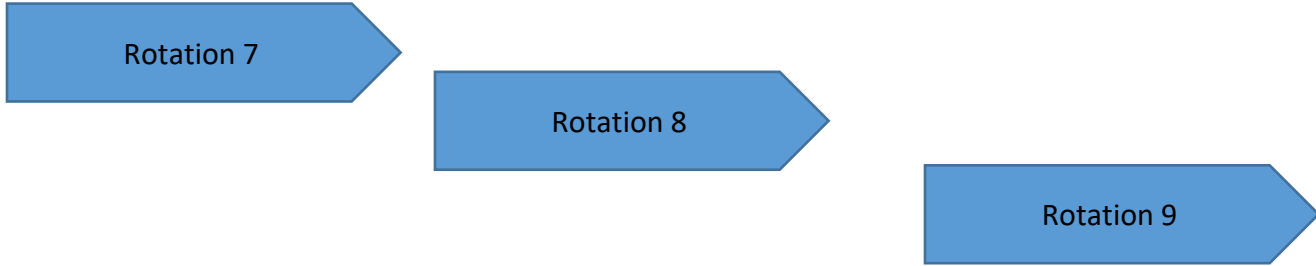
**HOLIDAYS:**  
TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE

**SPRING Year Two (starts mid-Jan. ends late-Apr.)**



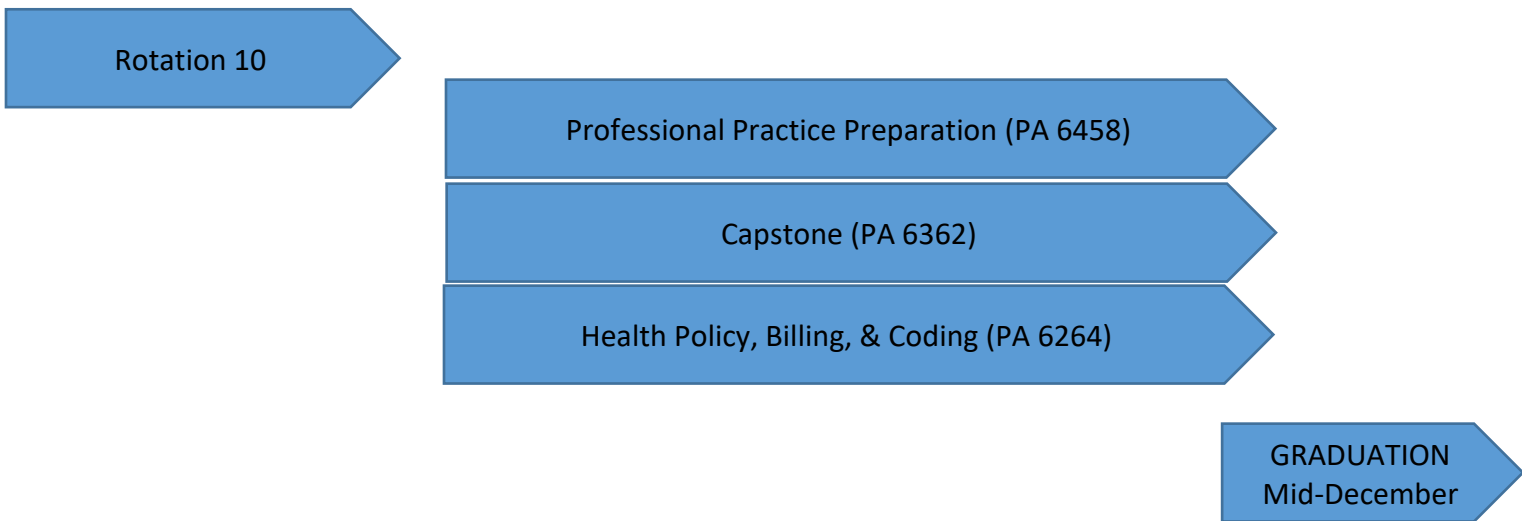
**HOLIDAYS:**  
TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE

**SUMMER Year Two (starts May, ends mid-Aug)**



**HOLIDAYS:**  
**TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE**

**FALL Year Three (starts late Aug)**



**HOLIDAYS:**  
**TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE**  
**FALL BREAK**  
**THANKSGIVING WEEK**

## **TEXTBOOKS AND EQUIPMENT:**

Prices of equipment, textbooks, and supplies are approximate and subject to change without notice. University fees and tuition are published before the start date of each cohort and are updated regularly as changes are made by the Board of Trustees.

**Textbooks:** Each semester, the HSU Bookstore (located on campus), will have a list of required and recommended textbooks for courses. This information is also noted in the course syllabi (posted to Canvas and available on the first day of class).

**Equipment and Instruments:** Each student will be required to have the following basic set of equipment and supplies, in addition to bringing protective apparel to classes and rotation assignments. To ensure continuity of education as well as minimize costs to the students, you will be required to purchase the equipment package from our MDF vendor during the first week of orientation. Do not purchase any of these items listed below beforehand as they are included in the MDF equipment package and cannot be “pieced” together. Some students may have their own equipment which can use it in the clinical year if the student’s advisor approves the item(s) meet the minimum diagnostic standards. In spite of this, all students are still required to purchase the entire package as it will be used exclusively in the didactic year to maximize continuity of learning and to keep the cost of the equipment package as low as possible for all students. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to forgo purchasing this equipment package through the vendor for reasons noted above.

**Required Equipment** (recommended list will be given upon enrollment and matriculation):

- Riester EliteVue Otoscope/Ophthalmoscope Kit with Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery
- Riester Insufflator Bulb
- MDF<sup>®</sup> Classic Cardiology Stethoscope
- MDF<sup>®</sup> Bravata<sup>®</sup> Palm Aneroid Sphygmomanometer with Adult and Pediatric Cuffs
- MDF<sup>®</sup> LUMiNiX<sup>®</sup> III Penlight with Pupil Gauge
- MDF<sup>®</sup> Queen Square Neurological Reflex Hammer with Pointed Tip
- MDF<sup>®</sup> 128Hz Tuning Fork
- MDF<sup>®</sup> 512Hz Tuning Fork
- Rosenbaum Eye Chart
- Monofilament Testing Device
- Tape Measure

### **Other Required Equipment:**

White Short Lab Coat with departmental patch/embroidering

\*Smart Phone with Data Package

\*\*Laptop Computer

\*Refer to <https://www.hsutx.edu/offices/technology-services/>

\*\*Refer to <https://examsoft.force.com/emcommunity/s/article/Exemplify-Minimum-System-Requirements> for minimum system requirements.

## TOTAL COST OF THE PROGRAM:

The PA Program makes every effort to keep costs reasonable for students. However, because the Program runs continuously for twenty-seven months, applicants must review their financial resources carefully and anticipate expenses realistically. During the clinical education phase, all students may be assigned to clinical sites outside of the immediate Abilene / Big Country area. The student is responsible for the costs related to out-of-area travel and housing, if applicable.

## PROGRAM TUITION & FEES:

The total tuition of the Program is *estimated* at \$95,000, depending on year of entry into the Program. Additional fees apply. **Updated accurate tuition and fee costs are published on the university web site at [www.hsutx.edu/pa](http://www.hsutx.edu/pa).** Click on the tab under Program Details titled “Tuition & Fees for the PA Program”. Applicants should refer to the tuition and fees information listed per the specified cohort. The above estimation does not include living expenses, textbook or equipment costs. The estimates for these costs vary based on student choice of housing, family size, transportation/vehicle cost, and technology related costs (laptop computer, data plan, and mobile phone required). Estimates for textbook expenses and equipment expenses can be found at the HSU PA website at [www.hsutx.edu/pa](http://www.hsutx.edu/pa) under the Tuition & Fees for the PA Program tab. Reliable transportation is required in the clinical year for commuting to supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE).

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

**Tuition, Fees and Other Expenses:** The University reserves the right to change tuition and other charges at the beginning of any semester. The tuition cost for a full-time course load does not include expenses for required items such as textbooks, medical equipment and supplies, laboratory fees, and clinical tracking software fees. PA students are not eligible for part-time enrollment unless a specific degree plan is approved as part of a remediation plan after matriculation. In-state and out-of-state tuition are the same.

**Deposit:** There is a non-refundable \$1200.00 deposit, subject to change, for those applicants accepted into the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program, which is applied to the tuition for the first semester upon enrollment. If an applicant accepted into the Program encounters circumstances that prevent their matriculation, any amount paid by the applicant to the University that is over and above the non-refundable deposit of \$1200.00 will be refunded based on the tuition refund policy set forth by the University and outlined in the University student catalog.

**Professional Society Membership Fees:** Students enrolling in the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program will incur a one-time fee for membership to the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). The fee is mandatory and subject to change by the national organization. The fee covers membership for the entire duration of PA training. Membership includes a monthly subscription to the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (JAAPA), periodic newsletters, and discounted admission to AAPA’s annual national continuing education meeting and is paid directly to the organization. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.aapa.org/student-central/student-member-resources/>

Students are also required to join the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA) for a one-time fee. The fee is mandatory and subject to change by the state organization. Additional information about TAPA can be found at: <https://www.tapa.org>

These two organizations provide a wealth of resources to PA students and will be worthy investments.

## **Cowboy Cash**

Cowboy Cash are funds a student loads onto their student ID to be used for residence hall laundry, the bookstore, or for food and drinks at any of our campus locations, including Gilbert’s Coffee Shop in the library. You can load any amount with a minimum of \$10. These funds do carry forward as long as you are continuously enrolled at HSU. Any unused funds at the time of graduation or separation from HSU are forfeited.

See the University website for more information regarding meal plans: <https://www.hsutx.edu/tuition-aid/business-office/>

## **Refund Policy**

The HSU Business Office can provide students with account assistance along with various university cashiering functions. The Business Office is located on the second floor of the Sandefer Memorial building. They can be reached by phone at 325-670-1001, email at [businessoffice@hsutx.edu](mailto:businessoffice@hsutx.edu), or online at <https://www.hsutx.edu/tuition-aid/business-office/>

### **Hours of Operation**

General: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Cashier Window: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

## **Tuition and Fees Refund Policy**

Separation from HSU due to suspension or expulsion are not eligible for refund.

## **Withdrawal from the University (Dropping All Classes)**

The following refunds will be made upon complete withdrawal from the University. (Does not apply to “Dropping Individual Classes.”) This refund policy applies to **tuition only**. Any institutional loans or grants will be pro-rated along with the charges as seen below. Institutional Money should not exceed charges at the time of the withdrawal. A refund is not warranted if the credit is caused by any amount of institutional money within that semester. **Fees will not be refunded.** “Day one” refers to the official start date for the term session.

<b>1-4 Week Course Term</b>	<b>Tuition Only</b>
First day	100%
After day one	None
<b>5-8 Week Course Term</b>	<b>Tuition Only</b>
Day one and two	100%
Day three	90%
Day four and five	80%
Day six and seven	70%
<b>9-16 Week Course Term</b>	<b>Tuition Only</b>
Day one and two	100%
Day three through eight	90%
Day nine through sixteen	70%
Day seventeen through twenty-four	50%

## **Dropping Individual Classes**

No tuition is refunded for individual courses dropped after the 8th day of a term (16 week Fall and Spring terms only). If a student is only taking one class, that would be considered withdrawing and the refund policy above would apply.

## **Credit Balance Refund Policy**

### **Title IV Funds**

Title IV refunds result from students receiving Title IV government funds, such as, Pell Grant, subsidized and unsubsidized loans in excess of charges on their account. Title IV refunds are processed once Financial Aid has posted aid to the student account after the 8<sup>th</sup> class day. The business office will process all Title IV refunds within 14 days after financial aid has posted the funds to the student account. The Business Office processes any Title IV refund from a report that it runs weekly to determine the existence of credit balances.

The Business Office will process Title IV refunds one of two ways: (1) direct deposit through BankMobile or (2) by check. The only way a student receives their refund by check is if they specifically request it in the Business Office. Unless otherwise stated, the refund will be sent via BankMobile and processed electronically based upon how the student requested to receive it. Once BankMobile receives the refund, the student will receive an email notification stating the funds are available.

### **Parent Plus Loans**

The Parent Plus Loan is another Title IV fund that must also follow government refund regulations. Instead of the student receiving the refund, the parent will receive the refund for any credit on the account up to the amount of the Parent Plus Loan for that semester. If the parent wants the student to have the refund, the parent must specify this desire in writing at the loan origination. Once the refund appears on the student's account, we will look at the Parent Plus Loan application and mail the refund check to the parent name and address on the loan file. These checks will be sent via mail following the day the refund is processed on the student account. If the parent indicated to refund the student, the refund will be sent to the student via BankMobile. The student will receive an email stating they have a refund and how to proceed to receive the refund.

### **Non-Title IV (Remaining Credit Balances After Full Title IV Refunds)**

A non-Title IV refund can come from an overpayment, outside scholarships, or private loan to an account. Generally, these refunds occur in accounts receiving no Title IV funds paid to the students' accounts in the current semester. However, a credit balance can result after a student receives a full Title IV refund if one of the above situations occurs. These refunds can also be completed upon request once a credit is shown in the student's account. A non-Title IV refund can be returned to the student either by check or BankMobile. If the student would like to receive their refund via check, they need to contact the Business Office to specify this. If they do not request a check, the refund will be sent via BankMobile. BankMobile will then contact the student when the refund is ready to be deposited in their selected refund preference. For more information about BankMobile, visit this link: <http://bankmobiledisbursements.com/refundchoices/>.

### **Medical Withdrawal**

HSU cares deeply about the physical and mental health of its students; therefore, counseling services are available on campus. See the HSU Student Handbook for policies for medical withdrawals. If the University approves a Medical Withdrawal after the 8th day of classes, the student will receive W grades on the academic transcript.

### **Withdrawal:**

A student who desires to withdraw from the University must obtain and complete the proper forms and return to the Registrar's Office. The student must request permission from the Program Director to reenter the following year prior to completion of withdrawal process. See *Withdrawal During A Semester* section on page 59.



### **Graduate Scholarships:**

Each graduate Program is allotted a number of graduate scholarships which may be awarded upon the recommendation of the Program Directors and approval of the Graduate Studies office.

Graduate scholarships may be awarded to help cover tuition expenses. Inquiries about scholarships should be directed to the Program Director.

### **University Financial Aid Policies:**

Financial assistance is awarded for one year at a time. Separate financial aid applications (FAFSA) must be filed each year. Application materials are available in October for the coming academic year. Financial assistance is committed only to students who are accepted into a degree program. Students applying for graduate fellowships and/or graduate scholarships must hold provisional or full admission to a graduate program.

All institutional aid, including departmental awards, are HSU-tuition-specific. The University cooperates in making funds provided by both the federal and state government available to students for grants, employment, and loans. HSU must administer the federal and state programs within prescribed regulations. All government programs are dependent on funding by federal and state governments. Awards are subject to funding by legislation and are not binding on the University if such programs are not funded.

All applications and requests for information regarding federal and state assistance should be directed to the Office of Enrollment Services, HSU Box 16050, Abilene, TX 79698. A student can only receive financial aid for repeat of the same course one time for a maximum of two attempts. To view HSU's Financial Aid policies, visit [www.hsutx.edu/offices/financial-aid/policies](http://www.hsutx.edu/offices/financial-aid/policies)

### **Veterans Benefits:**

The coordination of benefits for veterans is the responsibility of the Office of the Registrar, which offers assistance to veterans and dependents of veterans. In accordance with the laws regarding veterans in Chapters 30, 31, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607 of Title 38 in the United States Code, assistance benefits to veterans and other eligible persons will be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward the completion of their training objectives. Students placed on academic probation who receive VA benefits must show academic improvement every semester they continue on probation.

## **DRESS CODE:**

PA students should be aware that the image they project is very important to both the Department of Physician Assistant Studies and the PA profession. PA students are expected to dress in a manner that is professional. Business casual attire is preferred during class. Clothing that is revealing in nature is not acceptable. When guest lecturers or other guests are present during a class or lab, students should be mindful that they are representing the Program in the community and should convey a professional image. Scrubs are allowed in the classroom provided they are solid colors with matching top/bottom and are embroidered with the HSU PA logo. Mini-skirts, shorts, strapless tops, tank tops, facial piercings, and flip-flops are not appropriate. Hats are allowed for religious or medical reasons only.

Students are also expected to follow these guidelines when they are representing the Program in any setting that requires them to interact with the University community, the professional medical community, or the general public. Faculty reserve the right to remove students from the classroom or ask them to alter their appearance if they feel they are not achieving this standard.

Attire during anatomy laboratory will be scrubs, closed toed sneakers or shoes, and lab coat (optional). No one will be permitted in the anatomy laboratory without safe footwear.

Attire during physical examination labs will be shorts, jog/sports bras for women, tee shirts for men and women, socks, and sneakers. Anatomy, physical examination, and clinical skills lab attire must be worn in the lab area only. Locker room facilities are provided for changing into appropriate clothing for a given class.

In **clinical settings**, business professional attire, name / ID badge, along with a short white lab coat embroidered with the HSU PA logo is required to be worn at all times, unless otherwise directed by the site. Students should wear a shirt, tie, dress slacks, and dress shoes or a dress blouse and dress slacks. If dresses or skirts are worn, the length should be below the knee and appropriate for patient examination, positioning, and care. Closed toe shoes must be worn at all times. Due to increased risk of infection, acrylic or artificial nails are not allowed in clinical settings, to include patient encounters in the didactic year. Fingernail length should not extend beyond the fingertip.

Failure to adhere to the dress code standards may be considered a violation of Standards for Professional Conduct and students may be subject to disciplinary actions or dismissal for repeated infractions.

## **FACULTY HOUR MEETINGS:**

This 1-hour required, regularly scheduled meeting is designed for students to meet with the Program Director and Principal Faculty to receive additional content needed for successful achievement of program learning outcomes. These sessions are used to inform students about special departmental events, schedules, announcements, etc. In addition, the meetings serve as a forum for students to provide feedback to the Program about the curriculum, testing, and other department issues, as well as, to accomplish various administrative tasks. During the clinical year, Faculty Hour Meetings are scheduled as an end of block activity after rotations.

## **MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY:**

The Program has found that students progress more rapidly during the first several semesters if they have a foundational understanding of medical terminology. The Program has collaborated with Caduceus to deliver an online, computer-based, self-paced medical terminology module. Students are required to successfully complete the online module prior to matriculation. Information regarding course registration and payment will be sent to students after acceptance into the Program.

## **IDENTIFICATION:**

All students will be provided with a University identification badge, including name and photo, clearly identifying each student as a Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant (PA) student. Students are required to wear these badges at all times when participating in PA professional functions such as a health fair or when in patient care areas. In clinical practice settings, students must identify themselves as PA students to patients and healthcare practitioners. This badge must be returned to the Program upon graduation or after withdrawal from the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. The first ID badge is free. Replacement badge is \$15.00.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Students must apprise the PA Administrative Assistant of changes in name, address, telephone number or emergency contact information as soon as the change occurs. In addition, changes must be updated in EXXAT and reported to the Hardin-Simmons University Office of the Registrar.

See the Registrar's website for necessary forms at: <https://www.hsutx.edu/offices/registrar/>

## **RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION:**

Per Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program policy, no information will be released to family, friends or acquaintances of any Hardin-Simmons Physician Assistant student (or applicant), except in the case of an emergency. Students are expected to maintain open communication with the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program at all times. While students may discuss information with their family or friends, the Program will not discuss or answer any questions with the students' family or friends; all communication will only be conducted with the student.

## **POLICY REGARDING FACULTY HEALTHCARE:**

PA Program Principal Faculty, Instructional Faculty, the Program Director, and the Medical Director will not participate as healthcare providers for students in the Program. It is acceptable for healthcare to be provided in an emergency situation only until licensed emergency personnel arrives.

### **Medical Services:**

Student health services are not available at the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program nor on the main campus of Hardin-Simmons University for any HSU students. PA Students are required to have health insurance upon matriculation and must maintain active health insurance during their enrollment at Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program. Hendrick Medical Center is two blocks from campus and is available should an emergency arise. Hardin-Simmons University is not responsible for medical bills and does not supply prescription drugs or personal nursing/medical care.

Students are required to show proof of their own private personal health insurance policy coverage prior to matriculation and again prior to beginning clinical rotations.

### **Mental Health/Counseling:**

The Office of Student Life offers free counseling services to students. No referral is necessary. Information about these services can be found at the following website:

<https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/student-services/counseling-services/>

Suicide hotlines are available 24 hours a day to students and links are made through these services to local providers on campus for interventions when needed. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline phone number is (800) 273-TALK (8255).

### **HEALTH, IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH INSURANCE:**

As part of the matriculation process into the PA Program, the Department of Physician Assistant Studies requires all students to meet the health and immunization requirements listed in Appendix B of this document.

**If a student chooses not to be vaccinated or tested, they will forfeit their seat in the program.**

Immunizations will not be required if the student has a specific medical contraindication to the required vaccine(s). Students must provide documentation from their healthcare provider of any adverse reaction or contraindication to a required vaccine(s).

Hardin-Simmons University PA Program immunization policy is aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Immunization of Health-Care Personnel: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Prior to matriculation in the Program, all students must complete the Hardin-Simmons University PA Program Immunization Verification Document and Health Clearance Form, have a physical examination by a healthcare provider, and have their healthcare provider complete the attestation form of fitness to proceed in the PA Program (**located at the end of this handbook, Appendix B & C**). Official documents must be completed by a medical provider that is not related to you. Additionally, proof of personal health insurance must be provided prior to matriculation and maintained throughout the Program.

The Hardin-Simmons PA program's clinical sites all require the immunizations listed on the Immunization Verification Document. Unless there is a documented medical contraindication, all students must have these vaccines in order to complete the program. Immunizations will not be required if the student has a specific medical contraindication to the vaccines listed. Students must provide documentation of any adverse reaction or contraindication to a vaccine required. In addition, a licensed medical provider should certify the contraindication. Again, the form cannot be completed or signed by a family member who is in the medical field.

Various clinical training sites may require additional immunizations, evidence of testing, or titers prior to rotations, to include COVID-19. Fulfillment of these requirements, and any associated costs, will be the student's responsibility. If students choose not to be vaccinated or tested, they will not be allowed to rotate at clinical sites that require the additional immunization(s) and/or testing. Inability to rotate at clinical sites due to noncompliance with required immunizations/testing is not the responsibility of the program. **If the student is voluntarily non-compliant with rotation site policies for screening/immunizations on all rotations, graduation will be delayed, or the student may be ineligible for graduation from the PA Program.** Immunizations will not be required if the student has a specific medical contraindication to the vaccines listed. Students must provide documentation from a healthcare provider of any adverse reaction or contraindication to a vaccine required.

PA student health records are confidential and will not be accessible to, or reviewed by, Program, Principal Faculty, instructional faculty, Medical Director, or staff except for immunization and tuberculosis screening results which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student.

Recommendations may vary for pregnant women and those with health conditions or allergies. Please refer to your healthcare provider or CDC website for updates and clarifications regarding specific immunization requirements

Please contact your health care provider and/or refer to CDC websites below for updates and clarifications regarding specific immunization requirements.

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/healthcareworkers.html>

### **International Mission Immunization Requirements:**

In addition to the above health and immunization requirements for all HSU PA students, there will be supplementary immunization and health requirements for students going to international missions. These immunizations will be at the student's expense. This will include any routine and required immunizations and health recommendations for the country as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Travel Medicine website at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/vaccinations.htm>. Students traveling abroad will also be instructed to follow safety precautions for the country of interest which are available through the US Department of State website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>

### **STUDENT RECORDS:**

Hardin-Simmons University PA students will not have access to the academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty. All student and faculty files are kept securely in a locked and security monitored building. Student files are kept in locked drawers. Students do not have access to secure file storage areas and will not be permitted to enter those areas without accompaniment by a faculty or staff member who is authorized to be in the space.

PA Program files kept by the Program will include documentation that the student has met requirements for Program completions. Similar to the checklist for Program admission/matriculation, the student file will contain a checklist of required competencies, skills, and learning outcomes achieved through successive completion of Programmatic components. Each faculty member will be required to sign off on Program competencies of students in their area of instruction prior to student progression through Program and Program completion.

As professional, adult students, it is solely the student's responsibility to communicate with the program regarding all aspects of the educational experience during graduate school. Hardin-Simmons University PA Program will NOT communicate with any family member, significant other, or outside party about any aspect of the student's grading, educational, health, or other personal/professional matters except in cases of emergencies and as appropriate for clinical rotation coordination with student permissions.

While the Program will not communicate with outside parties, the University will release completed official records through the registrar's office if the student releasing said information to others completes the correct FERPA documentation.

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE:**

Hardin-Simmons University PA students will be provided professional liability insurance by Hardin-Simmons University throughout enrollment in the Program. Coverage will be \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000.00. aggregate. Proof of insurance will be provided to clinical sites where students are assigned. Coverage will be in effect for Program-assigned clinical rotations and experiences, but **will not** be in effect for students working in a clinical setting not affiliated with the Program, such as that occurring during outside employment or in the case of volunteer work during a break, unless it is Program-related.

## **SECURITY CLEARANCE / BACKGROUND CHECKS:**

Hardin-Simmons University PA students must successfully complete multiple security background checks. The first background check must be completed prior to enrollment (no more than 60 days prior to matriculation) through an HSU contractor (link and information are provided on the HSU PA orientation information packet emailed to students). Students also must successfully complete an extended background check through an HSU contractor prior to clinical rotations. Additional background checks will be based on the student's clinical schedule and will be coordinated by the Program. Students without clear background screenings may be excluded from admission and/or from Program completion on a case-by-case basis. Students will agree to release these results to hospitals during credentialing for clinical rotations as needed during training. All background checks are the student's financial responsibility.

Regarding misdemeanors or felonies, even if indicated that record is expunged, the information is still discoverable during a background check. Any omission or errors are considered falsification of the application, and this could result in negative clearance and inability to enter/complete the HSU PA training program. A negative clearance, however, will not necessarily preclude matriculation; but a conviction of a felony offense may result in ineligibility to receive licensure in Texas. Cases are considered on an individual basis by the state licensing agency.

## **DRUG SCREENING:**

Students will be screened for the use of illegal drugs/substances by an outside agency prior to matriculation and again prior to clinical rotations. Some clinical sites may require additional drug screening for rotation. Students will be required to use the Program's screening agency. No outside agency results will be accepted in lieu of this official screening, unless specified by clinical site.

Since patient safety is our priority, the program reserves the right to screen for substances of abuse/impairment at any point for cause when patient care may be impacted. Additionally, students will agree to release these results to hospitals for credentialing during clinical rotations as needed during training. Drugs of abuse screened for may include substances legal in other areas that are not currently legal to possess in our state. Drugs prescribed to the student will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may not be acceptable for use in academic, hospital or patient care areas.

## **DISCRIMINATION / HARASSMENT POLICY**

The Hardin-Simmons University PA program has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment. Any student, faculty, or staff member is obligated to report incidences witnessed or observed. Whistle blower protection is in place to protect against retaliation. Reports will trigger automatic investigations. Unacceptable conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

- Physical harm (e.g., hitting, slapping, kicking) or threats of physical harm
- Requests for performing personal services (e.g., shopping, babysitting)
- Making unwanted sexual advances
- Exchanging sexual favors for grades or other rewards
- Discrimination or harassment based on gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion
- Being subjected to offensive remarks / names based on gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion
- Public embarrassment/humiliation specifically based on gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion
- Denied opportunities for training or awards based on any of the above protected categories (note training opportunities are based upon preceptor availability)
- Receipt of lower grades / evaluations based on protected categories as listed above

For more information refer to the university harassment and Title IX policies which can be found at the HSU website <https://www.hsutx.edu/title-ix/>

## **EMPLOYMENT:**

Because of the rigor of the academic and clinical education phases of the PA Program, outside employment is strongly discouraged. In the event that a student decides to maintain employment during their training, work schedule conflicts will not be acceptable excuses for missing academic activities and clinical rotations will not be scheduled to accommodate a student's employment.

Students may not be employed by the PA Program. While a student may be invited by a faculty member to volunteer to share their expertise in a specific area with the class, a student may not substitute for or function as instructional faculty and cannot be compelled to share any previous experience with the class. Also, during supervised clinical experiences, students may not substitute for clinical or administrative staff at the clinical site or for the preceptor.

# PROFESSIONALISM & ETIQUETTE DURING ZOOM MEETINGS

The Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant program prides itself on developing professional healthcare providers. With the changing classroom delivery platforms, ensuring professional development and behavior is critical.

Below you will find some important guides to ensure you are developing and maintaining professional behavior during Zoom lectures. Please remember that our esteemed guest lecturers (and core faculty) work very hard to provide you with an excellent education, and many of them sacrifice time away from their work and families to teach you.

Kindly follow these important guidelines:

1. **Do not eat meals during Zoom Sessions**

Eating can be very distracting to other students and lecturers. Small bite-size snacks are allowed.

2. **Sit in a chair, do not sit in bed**

Please make sure that you are not lying down, or in bed. Zoom sessions work best when everyone is upright and engaged.

3. **Be dressed as if you are going to class**

Please dress as if you will be physically inside a classroom. Avoid wearing clothing that would be inappropriate for the classroom setting. While attending class in your pajama bottoms is a tempting option, you'll want to make sure that you are presenting yourself in the best possible light at least from the waist up.

4. **Keep your video on**

Because of the nature of online interactions, we want to be able to engage as much as possible. This means that we want to see your face! Lecturers really enjoy engaging with students while being able to see their faces. It is very challenging to lecture to blank screens.

5. **Scan your environment**

Be sure you are aware of the view from your camera display. Avoid sitting in areas that are distracting. For privacy reasons, many people like using backgrounds in Zoom. If you do use one, please make sure it is not overly distracting or inappropriate.

6. **Mute your microphone**

Once you log in to the virtual classroom, be sure to mute your microphone (lower left-hand corner). This will help to eliminate background noise that could distract others. Remember to unmute if you have a question or comment (both of which are highly encouraged!)

7. **Chat feature**

The Zoom chat feature is a tool to make comments and ask questions without interrupting the speaker but be aware that your comments are public and are recorded in the minutes of the session. As you most likely learned in your first face-to-face classroom back in kindergarten, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all."

8. **Be in the moment**

Make sure that you are fully present, engaged, and listening to the lecture. Others can easily tell if your attention is elsewhere.



**9. Limit distractions**

Turn off notifications, close or minimize running apps, and mute your smartphone during Zoom Meetings. Do not text or use your phone – this will infer that you are not engaged, and the behavior is distracting to others.

**10. Avoid multi-tasking**

You will retain the discussion better if you refrain from replying to emails or text messages during the meeting. Do not complete other assignments or study for upcoming tests until after the Zoom session ends. Do not drive while participating in Zoom Meetings.

**11. Be prepared**

Prepare for the upcoming class/discussion. Complete the required reading assignment and be ready to participate in the class with comments or questions. If you will be sharing content during the session, make sure you have the files and/or links ready to go before the meeting ends.

**12. Friendly reminders**

If the Zoom session is to be recorded and the Course Director/Instructor has not started the recording, please help to remind them to start the recording before the lecture begins. We recommend you take notes in case the Zoom recording fails.

Thank you for working with us to help create a positive environment for everyone!

*The above has been adapted from the following sources:*

- *Sherwin B. Nuland Summer Institute in Bioethics. "Professionalism & Etiquette During Zoom Meetings". Announcement posted by Lori Bruce. Accessed July 9, 2020.*
- *University of Pittsburgh. Information Technology. "Zoom Meetings: Etiquette and Best Practices". Accessed July 9, 2020.*
- *DePaul College of Education. "5 Easy-to-Follow Etiquette Rules for the Zoom Classroom". Accessed July 9, 2020.*

## UNIVERSITY OFFICES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES:

**Campus Map.** Campus map is located at <https://www.hsutx.edu/about/map/>

**Physician Assistant Building:** Departmental faculty, staff offices, classrooms, Physical Exam Lab, Anatomy Lab, and computer testing lab are located on the HSU campus in Mabee Hall (located at the corner of Vogel and Hickory).

**Parking:** Students must display a parking decal. All decals are numbered and color-coded for parking restrictions. Residents will receive purple decals and Commuters will receive gold decals. The first decal is free to all students. Any additional decal will be at the cost of \$5 each. PA Students are allowed to park at Mabee Hall or on the HSU campus in designated areas.

Additional information regarding parking and traffic regulations can be found at:  
<https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/campus-safety/parking-and-traffic-regulations/>

### **HSU Library:**

The main Hardin-Simmons University library is named the Richardson Library. Their website is <https://library.hsutx.edu>. A reciprocal agreement among Abilene libraries makes it possible for patrons, at any university in town, to use the resources of the others.

The Richardson Library at Hardin-Simmons University is three stories tall with 42,632 square feet of space, approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of that footage is public space for the collection and patron use. There are a total of 418 seats for users. Of those seats, 37 are lab computers with internet access, Microsoft Office, and other software. The library also has wireless service, printers, and 4 rooms for group study.

HSU libraries' holdings (FY 2018) include over 381,662 items in the online catalog: 201,619 print books; 86,942 federal documents (all formats); 41,773 electronic resources; 13,074 bound journals; 4,172 DVDs, various other media pieces and software; 10,957 scores; 6,813 LPs; 8,277 CDs; as well as microforms and other miscellaneous materials. Subscription resources include 183 paper journal subscriptions and access to 67,899 electronic full-text journal subscriptions.

In addition to its own holdings, the HSU libraries provide access to over 1.8 million items as a member of the Abilene Library Consortium (ALC). The consortium provides one integrated online catalog for HSU, Abilene Christian University, McMurry University, Howard Payne University, and the Abilene Public Library. Access is facilitated by a weekday courier operated by ALC. HSU is also a member of the TexShare library card program which enables faculty, students, and staff to use the library collections of 700 institutions in the state. HSU also participates in the statewide courier Texpress to speed delivery of materials requested across the state. The students may also use interlibrary loan services to request materials from other libraries around the world.”

Additionally, HSU library hosts a LibGuide for the PA program. This unique webpage, <http://libguides.hsutx.edu/PA>, hosts resources including Access Medicine, ProQuest's Nursing and Allied Health Source, Prescriber's Letter, JAAPA, Merck Manuals, PubMed, PubMed Central, and UpToDate. This page is also home to the Physician Assistant Research Roundup! which allows researchers to search a myriad of databases in one search. Most notably, there is a 3 part video series on how to conduct Ethically Sound Research.

The library is available to all students at HSU. Hours of operation can be found at <https://www.hsutx.edu/library/>

The Physician Assistant department has a dedicated library home page where students can access research databases, online textbooks, and other resources. The dedicated library page can be found at <http://libguides.hsutx.edu/PA>

**Department Library:** The HSU PA department maintains a limited library for student and faculty use. It is located in the PA Building. Library books are either donated or bought through departmental funds. Use of the library is on the “honor system”.

**HSU Bookstore:** The University Bookstore supplies the needs of the students for all academic materials. In addition to textbooks and school supplies, the store also offers many convenience and personal needs items and souvenirs. Credit terms for students are available for academic items only. All other sales must be cash or credit card. The bookstore is located on the first floor of the Moody Center. <https://www.bkstr.com/hardin-simmonsstore/home>

**Residence Life:** HSU hosts residence halls and multiple apartments and homes on campus. Hardin-Simmons University Residence Life is committed to providing safe, comfortable, and fun living for students deciding to live on campus.

Graduate and married students may seek housing from among a number of options. Housing options include residence halls, apartments, and some University-owned houses. Space is limited. The housing license agreement can be accessed via the Residence software found at: <https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/living-on-campus/residence-life/>

Housing rates, reservations and questions email the Residence Life office at: [residencelife@hsutx.edu](mailto:residencelife@hsutx.edu)

### **Disability Services:**

Hardin-Simmons University is committed to providing equal access for all students to all educational programs and campus activities. This commitment to all students includes those who take courses online or via affiliated distance education programs. The Office of Disability Services recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and embraces access as an opportunity for hospitality, equity, and social justice. The office works to create inclusive and sustainable learning and engagement through universally designed environments and to facilitate access, discourse, collaboration, training, and innovative programming. For the development of an access plan (accommodations) because of a diagnosed disability, please visit the Office for Students with Disabilities online at <https://www.hsutx.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-services/> or contact us at (325) 670- 5842.

HSU will provide services to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities. However, HSU does not offer separate degree plans for a program of remedial instruction designed for students with disabilities. Any person who has been accepted for admission to the University and who wishes to disclose his or her disability should request accommodation through the Disability Services Office.

A student who makes a disclosure of a disability has the legal responsibility to request any special accommodations in a timely manner, allowing reasonable time for the University to respond. The student has the additional responsibility to provide the institution with appropriate current (within a three-year period) documentation of the disabling condition. Completion of the required documentation is necessary in order to allow the University to determine reasonable accommodation of needs. The Disability Services Office is located in Sandefer Memorial, Room 107, inside the Academic Advising Office. Information about these services can be found at: <https://www.hsutx.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-services/>

In addition, the physician assistant profession has many essential functions. Testing in these realms, in many cases, will not be eligible for modifications and/or accommodations. This will be reviewed by the Disability Coordinator on a case-by-case basis. This may include but are not limited to practical examinations, OSCEs, etc.

### **Career Services:**

The office of Career Services provides current students and alumni with career development opportunities beginning their first year at Hardin-Simmons University. Career Services offers a wide variety of workshops, events, and services to promote career readiness. Workshops and events range from Job Search Strategies workshops to events such as job fairs and networking events with alumni. Services offered include resume review, interview practice, and a host of assessments. Administration and interpretation of assessments are given to provide students opportunities to develop a career plan. Additionally, access to an online job board is provided to students and alumni to search for part-time jobs, full-time employment, and internships. Educational programs related to career readiness are presented to courses over the course of the academic year on almost a weekly basis. The office is staffed with a full-time director and graduate interns. The Career Services Office is located on the second floor of Moody Center. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/career-services/>

### **Internet Access:**

All current HSU students enjoy access to the network resources provided by Technology Services. These resources include access to PCs in labs, HSU Central, Canvas, and email. Student access to HSU Central is created upon acceptance to HSU. If the student is pre-registered for classes, then all other network services are activated one week prior to their start term. Otherwise, access to all services is granted when the student enrolls during the regular registration period. After the 8<sup>th</sup> class day of the first long semester (Fall/Spring) with non-enrollment, the student will only be able to access HSU Central and email while all other access will be revoked. Next, after the 8<sup>th</sup> class day of the second long semester with non-enrollment the student's account will be disabled. Two weeks following this time, the student's account will be deleted from the system.

Students agree to abide by the Internet Code of Ethics which can be found in the HSU Student Handbook at: [HSU Student Handbook](#)

A University fee is assessed each semester for the service; this fee is included in the general fee.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

### **Academic Calendar and Holidays:**

University Holidays are listed on the HSU website under this link:

<https://www.hsutx.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-calendar/>

During the clinical year, students are expected to keep the same schedule as the primary clinical preceptor. HSU PA holidays may differ from University holiday scheduled. Curriculum graphics with specified dates will be given to students upon matriculation.

### **Harassment:**

In order to promote a safe and comfortable learning environment for all members of the Hardin-Simmons University community, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects concern for others in the environment. Examples of behaviors that are unacceptable include but are not limited to theft, vandalism, acts of violence, sexual harassment, and disrespect for personal and University property. If a student has been the recipient of behaviors that may be construed as harassment and is unable or uncomfortable addressing the behavior directly with the involved person(s), the student is encouraged to discuss the situation with their faculty advisor or the Program Director for support and guidance in navigating through Department or University harassment policies and procedures.

Hardin-Simmons University takes the health and safety of our students seriously. If you, or someone you know, believe you have been a victim of sexual misconduct, contact HSU's Title IX Coordinator. 325-670-1495, office is located on the second floor of the Moody Student Center.

A special note on sexual harassment: Because of the personal nature of patient-provider interactions and the close working relationship of PAs with other members of the healthcare team, it is vital that PAs have a strong working understanding of the behaviors that may be construed as sexual harassment and clearly avoid them.

For more information, see the HSU Student Handbook which can be found at <https://www.hsutx.edu/info-for/current-students/>

# DIDACTIC PHASE TECHNICAL PROCEDURE CHECKLIST:

IN SIMULATION/ STANDARDIZED PATIENTS \*All must be completed prior to clinical phase of training

Category	Skill	Date Demonstrated	Faculty Initials	Notes
Professional Training				
	ACLS Certification			
	BLS Certification			
	HIPAA Training			
	OSHA Training			
Patient Safety				
	N-95 Respirator Fit			
	OR Scrub Technique			
	Sharps Precautions			
	Standard Precautions			
	Sterile Technique			
Patient Evaluation/ Documents				
	Breast Examination			
	Comprehensive H&P Note			
	History taking			
	Male GU Examination			
	Mental Status Examination			
	Pelvic Examination			
	Physical Examination (Adult Comprehensive)			
	Physical Examination (Focused)			
	Physical Examination (Pediatric)			
	Procedure Note			
	Rectal Examination			
	SOAP Note			
Clinical Procedures				
	Arthrocentesis			
	Casting			
	EKG			
	ET Tube placement (Intubation)			
	Regional Anesthesia			
	Incision & Drainage			
	IM Injection/Immunization			
	IV Placement			
	Lumbar Puncture			
	NG Tube placement			
	Skin Adhesive			
	Skin Stapling			
	Splinting			
	SQ Injection/Immunization			
	Suture Lab (Knots, Technique, etc.)			
	Tissue Biopsy			
	Urinary Catheter – Male			
	Urinary Catheter – Female			
	Venipuncture			
	Vision Screening			

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

The HSU PA Program is fast-paced and therefore students must take advantage of every learning opportunity. Faculty require students to attend classes and rotations, and to exercise good judgment when taking an absence. The following guidelines have been established to ensure fair and equitable provisions for student absences. Any time a student is absent from a class or rotation for any reason, they must notify faculty before the course start time or clinic time. Absences that are not reported will be considered unexcused, and notification, after the absence, is unacceptable, unless in the case of an emergency. Any absence that is not reported will be grounds for significant penalties including possible dismissal from the Program.

## **TARDY POLICY**

If it is necessary to be late for a class session, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor **prior** to the start of class. The student is responsible for the missed material covered. Students should arrive 10 minutes prior to the start of class to allow time to set up computers. Every two tardies will equal one unexcused absence. A pattern of tardiness will result in a reduction in attendance points equivalent to the unexcused absence policy as listed in the subsequent section below.

## **DIDACTIC STUDENTS**

### **Excused absences:**

Personal illness: A student may receive an excused absence for illness up to three (3) days per course, per semester. To qualify as an excused absence, the student must have notified the course coordinator **prior** to missing class, and a healthcare provider's note is required if two (2) or more consecutive days are missed. The note must be provided to all course coordinators of missed courses and the student's advisor. After three (3) excused absences, additional absences will be considered unexcused. Students will be allowed to make up missed assignments / assessments for excused absences only provided all conditions above have been met.

Death in the immediate family: Funeral leave for a death in the immediate family will be granted for up to three (3) days. Immediate family is defined as student's spouse, the student or spouse's children, stepchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren. The student must provide appropriate documentation such as an obituary, death certificate, or funeral home record. Funeral leave for other family members/friends will be considered an unexcused absence.

Approved religious holidays: Students requesting observance of religious holy days must request these within the first week of a semester to be considered for approval as excused absences. A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day will be required to take a missed examination or complete a missed assignment the first class/workday after the holy day absence. The student may be penalized for failure to give prior notice of the planned absence or if the student does not satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination by the expected make-up date. This policy applies to all students in the training Program.

Approved personal appointments: Personal appointments will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the course coordinator. Request for permission of an excused absence should be submitted to the course coordinator two weeks prior to appointment, when possible. If approved, the student will be required to bring a return to work (medical appointments) or receipts (other appointments) concerning attendance at the appointment during class times. Students should use discretion when making personal appointments and arrange them at times other than scheduled class times, when possible. Notification after the fact is not acceptable except in cases of emergency.

Natural disaster and weather emergencies: In the event of a natural disaster or weather emergency faculty, staff and students will be alerted through the HSU Alert system. Students and employees are automatically enrolled in the HSU Alert system. Notification of inclement weather or delays are via text message and email.

**Unexcused Absences:**

The penalty for an unexcused absence is deducted from the attendance/professionalism portion of the course evaluation component which is 5% of the overall course grade. The deduction is calculated by the course coordinator as follows: 20% - first occurrence, 40% - second occurrence, and 40% - third occurrence. If additional time is needed because of prolonged illness or other circumstances, it is recommended that the student apply for a leave of absence (personal or medical). Students will not be allowed to make up missed assignments / assessments due to an unexcused absence and will receive a zero for the missed assignment / assessment.

Students may attend the TAPA and AAPA CME conferences only if prior approval is obtained from their advisor. All requests must be submitted in writing (email preferred).

**CLINICAL STUDENTS**

Clinical year students are expected to keep the same schedule as the primary clinical preceptor/supervisor. When an absence occurs, the student is required to contact: (1) the Director of Clinical Education for all rotations and (2) the clinical site preceptor prior to the expected work time. Failure to contact, or contact after the workday begins, will be considered unexcused except in the case of an emergency.

**Excused absences:**

Personal illness: A student may receive an excused absence for up to three (3) days per semester. A written excuse is required after two (2) consecutive days. To qualify as an excused absence, a healthcare provider's note (not the preceptor) is required for all personal illnesses. The note must be provided to the Director of Clinical Education. After three (3) excused absences, additional absences will be considered unexcused. If extended absence is required, please refer to the leave of absence policy.

Death in the immediate family: Funeral leave for a death in the immediate family will be granted for up to three (3) days. Immediate family is defined as student's spouse, the student or spouse's children, stepchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren. The student must provide appropriate documentation such as an obituary, death certificate, or funeral home record. Funeral leave for other family members/friends will be considered an unexcused absence.

Approved religious holidays: Students requesting observance of religious holy days must request these within the first week of a semester to be considered for approval as excused absences. A student who is absent from clinical rotations for the observance of a religious holy day will be required to take a missed examination or complete a missed assignment the first class/workday after the holy day absence. The student may be penalized for failure to give prior notice of the planned absence or if the student does not satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination by the expected make-up date. This policy applies to all students in the training Program.

Approved personal appointments: Personal appointments will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Clinical Education (DCE). Request for permission of an excused absence should be submitted to the DCE two weeks prior to appointment, when possible. If approved, the student will be required to bring a return to work (medical appointments) or receipts (other appointments) concerning attendance at the appointment during class/rotation times. Students should use discretion when making personal appointments and arrange



them at times other than scheduled class times, when possible. Any missed clinical time will be required to be made up on a 2:1-time basis for completion of the rotation.

Natural disaster and weather emergencies: The University alert system will be used to notify students and faculty of natural disaster and weather emergencies on campus. At rotation sites not in the immediate surrounding area of campus, students are asked to sign-up for local weather alerts on their phones that will notify them of emergency conditions. Student safety is the top priority of HSU and at no time should a student put their safety in jeopardy to avoid an unexcused absence. Please notify the Director of Clinical Education and site preceptor any time a potential weather emergency may impact attendance.

Job/Post-graduate training interviews: Students in the clinical year will be excused from up to three days of clinical rotation time during the entire clinical training phase (15 months) to attend job or post-graduate training interviews. Notification to and approval from the Director of Clinical Education will be required at least two weeks prior to appointment scheduling.

Students may attend the TAPA and AAPA CME conferences only if prior approval is obtained from the Director of Clinical Education. All requests must be submitted in writing (email preferred).

**NOTE: Preceptors may not approve time off, only the Director of Clinical Education should make such an approval.**

### **Unexcused Absences:**

The penalty for an unexcused absence is deducted from the attendance portion of the course evaluation component which is 5% of the overall course grade. The deduction will be calculated by the course coordinator as follows: 20% - first occurrence, 40% - second occurrence, and 40% - third occurrence.

Additionally, due to the critical important learning opportunities during a rotation, clinical students with unexcused absences are required to make-up time at a 2:1 time period ratio at a location to be determined by the Director of Clinical Education. The student will be required to maintain a time log to be co-signed by the supervising clinical preceptor. This log will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education to evaluate the need for additional clinical time in that area. If a rotation reschedule is required, it may be necessary for the student to be rescheduled in the next clinical year period and could result in delayed graduation. Make-up time cannot be during regular clinical rotation time. If additional time is needed because of prolonged illness or other circumstances, it is recommended that the student apply for a leave of absence (personal or medical).

## **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Completion of final course evaluations are mandatory. In addition, students are expected to complete evaluations for all guest course lecturers. Completion of the evaluations are a part of the students' professional development. Failure to complete final course and guest evaluations will be reflected on the student's final professionalism grade per each course where the deficiency occurs. The deduction will be calculated by the specified course coordinator(s) as follows: 20% - first occurrence, 40% - second occurrence, and 40% - third occurrence. If there are more than three occurrences, a formal remediation action plan will be initiated. Continued infractions will result in the generation of an Early Concern note or a permanent Letter of Concern.

# STUDENT OFFICER POSITIONS

During the first fall semester, students will be given the opportunity to run for a student officer position to represent their classmates.

- Class officers represent the profession, Hardin-Simmons University, and their peers. Representation will include events that are on and off campus. It is a privilege and honor to be nominated and selected as an officer and should be taken seriously.
- Serving as an officer is a 27-month commitment (from election to graduation). The majority of the time is spent in the didactic year, with less time commitment in the clinical year.
- As leaders of the class, all officers (regardless of position) are asked to attend fundraisers and class activities to uphold the standard of the PA Program and the profession.
- All officer positions require leadership skills. At times, it may be difficult to balance didactic and clinical studies, but you will acquire skills and experiences that are key to future success.
- Officers may be subject to removal from their position for concerns regarding academic performance, professionalism, and/or time management.
- All officers must join AAPA and TAPA. (This expense is not covered by the PA Program).
- Approval must be granted by an applicant's academic advisor prior to being placed on the ballot. The academic advisor will grant approval based on academic performance, professionalism, and time management skills.

## Hardin-Simmons Class Officer Positions

### **President**

The President will lead and delegate responsibilities to classmates and officers of the class. Under the leadership of the President, the PA class may choose to raise funds for social gatherings, charitable donations, mission trips, and to send representatives to AAPA and TAPA conferences. The President will attend meetings as necessary as a PA class representative. You will coordinate / select committees as needed. You will communicate with the class as needed and will be a liaison between students and faculty/staff. You will participate in and be a liaison with the Faculty Coordinator for Faculty Hour and other duties as needed.

### **Vice President**

As Vice President, you will work closely with the other class officers to represent your classmate's views and concerns. As Vice President, you will be responsible for leading the Fundraising Committee. You may be called to attend meetings in addition to or in the absence of the President. The Vice President will work with the class President to coordinate duties as needed.

### **Secretary**

As Secretary of the class, you will keep minutes during officer meetings and maintain correspondence among the class officers, students, and faculty/staff. The Secretary will be responsible for taking notes during Faculty Hour and posting them to Canvas on the Faculty Hour page for your class. You will communicate with PA faculty/staff regarding important program announcements pertaining to the PA class.

## **Treasurer**

The Treasurer will open and maintain the outside class bank account for fundraising purposes. This includes coordinating the opening of the account with the Faculty Coordinator as well as balancing and keeping track of all transactions.

## **Historian**

The Historian will engage the class as a group and document PA class volunteer, fundraising, charitable, mission, and outreach activities both on and off campus. The Historian will be responsible for posting on social media accounts in coordination with the VISTA worker. All social media posts should be copied to the Faculty Coordinator and Program Director before posting. The Historian will help maintain the student society continuity from year to year by assisting the incoming class and officers.

## **Mentorship Coordinator**

The Mentorship Coordinator will plan activities between your class and the incoming class. You will help maintain the student society continuity from year to year by assisting the incoming class and officers. If your PA class chooses, the Mentorship Coordinator may plan social and volunteer gatherings for the current and incoming class.

## **Chaplain / Mission Coordinator**

The Chaplain will be responsible for leading the group in prayer as requested and will coordinate prayer request as guided by the PA class. The Chaplain will be responsible for keeping the class informed about upcoming mission trips as well as coordinating the mission trip preparation activities. The Chaplain/Mission Coordinator is not required to go on the Mission Trip, but it is recommended.

## **Diversity Officer:**

The Diversity Officer will promote diversity, inclusion, and equity among the student class and in the PA profession. This may include distributing information to students regarding diversity issues that affect healthcare; coordinating local activities and community outreach projects; organizing student volunteers for events in the community that promote diversity, inclusion and equity; using the PAEA Project Access Toolkit to speak to high school or undergraduate students about the PA profession in order to promote diversity in the profession; coordinating with faculty regarding speaker ideas for Faculty Hour; organizing diversity discussions for the class regarding specific vulnerable populations; and becoming a student volunteer for the TAPA and AAPA diversity committees.

## **AAPA Assembly of Representatives (AOR)**

Primary Seat: 1                      Alternate Seat: 1

This representative is a liaison for Hardin-Simmons PA Program on the national level between AAPA and SAAAPA (Student Academy). If your class fundraising permits, you may attend the annual AAPA national conference. (The HSU PA Program will pay up to \$500, and the University budget MAY supplement travel, but all other expenses will be covered by class fundraising (as approved by the class & officers) and/or by the individual student.

- **The AAPA class representative should give report to the class about AAPA announcements at each Faculty Hour meeting (time permitting).**
- The AAPA delegate becomes the House of Delegates (HOD) Representative during the Second year. Depending on the class's finances and willingness to participate, you may attend the annual AAPA conference (at the class's expense).

- <https://www.aapa.org/about/aapa-governance-leadership/student-academy/assembly-of-representatives-aor/>
- The Assembly of Representatives (AOR) is the governing body of the Student Academy of the American Academy of PAs. Made up of a PA student representative from each recognized PA program student society, the AOR debates proposed resolutions, elects national leaders and directs the activities of the Student Academy Board of Directors on behalf of the PA students.
- AOR representative duties:
  - The AOR representative is an elected or appointed position of a PA program’s student society.
  - Share information from AAPA and the Student Academy with PA students
  - Prepare for the Student Academy AOR meeting at AAPA’s Conference
  - Report the results of the debates and vote in the AOR meeting to a PA program’s student society
  - Mentor incoming AOR representatives

### **TAPA Representative (Constituent Chapter Student Representative)**

Primary Seat: 1

Alternate Seat: 1

This representative is a liaison for Hardin-Simmons PA Program on the state level through TAPA. If your class fundraising permits, you may attend the annual TAPA conference, as a liaison for the Hardin-Simmons PA program. You will be in close communication with the TAPA organization representatives and another liaison’s throughout the state. There is a Board Retreat annually (TAPA will help pay for this expense) which you may attend as voted on by the class.

- **The TAPA class representative should give report to the class about AAPA announcements at each Faculty Hour meeting (time permitting).**

\*\*AAPA requires that HSU register “required” positions on their website.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES:**

### **Academic Advisors:**

Students are assigned and teamed with a faculty member who serves as the student's advisor and liaison to the Program during their matriculation in the Program. Meetings will be held between each student and their advisor at least once per semester throughout the course of training in the PA Program. The purposes of the faculty advisor system are to:

- serve as a professional role model for the student
- act as a resource for academic development and provide resources and system navigation to address personal concerns
- advise students on self-directed learning
- chart the student's progress through the Program, providing assistance and guidance
- assist the student in defining personal career goals

### **Grading System:**

The Physician Assistant Program uses the following grading scale.

The final course/rotation grade will be recorded as “A”, “B”, “C”, or “F”.

A= 90%-100%

B= 80%-89%

C= 70%-79%

F = <70%

### **\*A student who earns a course grade of a C in a didactic course will be placed on academic probation.**

Rounding up of grades is only done at the end of a course, not for individual tests or assignments, and only if greater than 0.50.

## **REMEDIATION:**

The Hardin-Simmons University PA Program will monitor and document the progress of each student in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation.

Academic advisors are assigned to each student at new student orientation and remain with the student throughout the Program. These advisors meet with students at minimum once each semester and are notified of any academic performance or professionalism concerns noted by instructors, preceptors, and faculty throughout the course of the Program. Performance <70% on any one assessment will require a meeting with the student advisor for academic counseling and strategizing for success in the future. Problem areas can be identified in these meetings and addressed as appropriate. Students may also be referred for counseling through the student resources on campus if personal issues are interfering with their academic performance. The academic advisor will globally review the student's areas of strength and weakness at the end of each semester and provide feedback and action plans as needed on a case-by-case basis.

Students are assessed on academic content through formative and summative evaluations. The goal of formative assessment is to monitor a student's learning and provide feedback to the student to improve their understanding of the material. Formative assessments identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and targets areas that need improvement. Additionally, formative assessment allows faculty to identify students who are struggling and who may benefit from remediation. Formative assessments are generally low stakes and examples include, but are not limited to, quizzes, concept mapping, assignments, and summary papers.

Summative assessments evaluate a student's learning at the end of an instructional unit/module and/or course. Summative assessments are high stakes, and examples include, but are not limited to, end-of-module examinations, comprehensive final examinations, a final research project, and a research paper.

During the didactic year, if a student scores less than 80% on a formative assessment, the student is encouraged to contact the course instructor for content clarification and remediation to include identification of areas of strengths and weaknesses.

If a student scores less than 80% on a summative assessment, the student is required to meet with the course instructor for content remediation. The student should contact the course coordinator within 48 hours of receiving notification of a failed summative examination to schedule a meeting. Content remediation should be in the form of additional formative assignments to reevaluate the student's understanding of the material. After remediation, reassessment is required to ensure the student has been remediated to competency. Reassessment methods may include retesting through a multiple-choice examination, an oral examination, or a proctored written assessment. The score earned on the reassessment must be greater than or equal to 80% to demonstrate competency. **The reassessment score will not replace the original score.**

Students requiring formal academic remediation will be identified by the faculty through progress monitoring of content areas as well as by those that do not maintain scores of 80% or higher on coursework. Globally at-risk students will be identified at the end of each semester by analysis of performance compared to peers.

### **The formal academic remediation process for the DIDACTIC year is as follows:**

#### ***Phase I –***

##### **A) Academic counseling with Instructor for grade 70-79% on any summative assessment -first time:**

This phase requires course instructors to meet with students for content remediation, study strategies, and test-taking skills for improvement on future assessments. Tutoring or other referrals may be made at this time as needed.

##### **B) Grade 70-79% on summative assessment x 2 or more in the same course or Grade <70% on any summative assessment – first time:**

In addition to meeting with the course instructor, this phase requires the student to also make an appointment with their advisor for counseling and creation of a remediation action plan to include study skills modification, learning interventions, tutoring referrals, or personal counseling referrals. Repeated failures of coursework or extremely low performances will require both the course instructor and the advisor to meet with student for action planning. This phase requires instructors to notify the Associate Program Director.

#### ***Phase II – Overall Course performance 70%-79% – first time***

This phase requires placement of student on academic probation by the University. The Associate Program Director and student's assigned advisor meet, and a letter is placed in the official student University file. A Remediation Action Plan will be initiated. Remediation in study skills will be mandated. More individualized content remediation may be required. Students will have the policies regarding Program dismissal reviewed with them by their advisor and the Associate Program Director or Program Director.

#### ***Phase III – Two or more Course Performance 70-79% – or– first course performance below 70%***

Student is subject to dismissal. All Principal Faculty will review student performance in the Program to-date and vote on student progression, including potential dismissal. A majority of a blinded principal faculty vote will be the deciding factor to move forward with student dismissal.

If the student is retained, mandatory remediation in multiple areas will be included in the student's written Academic Improvement Contract (AIC). Coursework may be required to be repeated and graduation may be delayed. Analysis will be performed with results to assist in individualized goal achievement that may include all previously listed potential interventions from phase I or phase II or additional stipulations that support and encourage student success, and potential development of an individualized degree plan.

## **FAILURE WHILE ON ACADEMIC PROBATION**

If a student earns a final didactic course grade of <70% while on Academic Probation, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal. The Grading and Promotions Committee is made up of the Program Director, Medical Director, and all principal faculty. This committee reviews students' progress in committee and votes to recommend student program progression including cases of continuation, deceleration, dismissal, expulsion, etc. as needed.



## Remediation Policy for Academic Year

### Phase I\*

<80% on any assessment

#### PHASE I-A

70-79% any summative assessment first time  
Meet with Instructor (content remediation & reassessment)  
Continues to score >80% no further intervention needed

#### PHASE 1-B

70-79% 2 or more times **or** <70% first time on summative assessment  
Must meet with advisor and instructor (content remediation & reassessment)  
Associate Program Director notified  
Remediation Action Plan (RAP) initiated

### Phase II\*\*

70-79% **Entire Course**

- Placed on Academic Probation following semester
- Meet with Associate Program Director and Advisor
  - Letter from Registrar office goes in file
    - Mandated study skills
  - Remediation Action Plan (RAP)
  - Remediation of content possible
  - Dismissal policy reviewed

### Phase III\*\*

<70% **Entire course** once or 70-79% in 2 or more courses

- Student subject to dismissal
  - All faculty involved in decision process
  - GPA considered along with global course performance
  - If retained: a) develop Academic Improvement Contract (AIC)  
b) analysis of student performance with individualized goal setting/degree plan

\*Phase I deals with grades in ANY individual summative assessment

\*\*Phase II deals with final grades in ENTIRE course (overall grade)



**The formal academic remediation process for the CLINICAL year is as follows:**

### **PRECEPTOR EVALUATIONS:**

Preceptor evaluations will be completed for each clinical rotation and must be passed with a grade of 70% or higher for students to receive credit for the rotation. If a student earns a grade of <70% on the preceptor evaluation, the student will fail the clinical rotation and will be required to repeat the course successfully with a passing preceptor evaluation and passing grades on all other rotation components, including the end of rotation examination. Failure of a preceptor evaluation will automatically place the student on Academic Probation for the next semester. Graduation may be delayed. Additionally, any student with a failing rotation evaluation by a preceptor will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education and the student's advisor for counseling. A Remediation Action Plan on improvement of clinically related skills and proficiency will be implemented prior to the repeat rotation.

If a student earns an evaluation score of "Danger to Patient" or "N/A", the student will be required to remediate the learning outcome prior to graduation. This remediation could occur prior to the next rotation, at the end of the semester, or during the Fall semester prior to graduation.

### **CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

During the clinical phase of training, completion of assignments will be required in each course to assist in achievement of learning outcomes. All components must be successfully completed with a grade of 70% or higher. If a student earns a grade of <70% on their clinical assignments, they will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for academic counseling and a Remediation Action Plan will be developed for successful completion of assignment(s) or repeat of assignment(s) prior to credit being awarded for a clinical course. Resubmitted assignments will receive a maximum score of 70%.

### **OBJECTIVE STRUCTURED CLINICAL EXAMINATION (OSCE)**

OSCEs will be given at the end of each clinical semester and a summative OSCE within four months of graduation. Students are required to prove competency with each OSCE prior to progressing to the next clinical semester. Additionally, students must also demonstrate competency on the summative OSCE in order to graduate.

If a student is unable to prove competency on an OSCE, they will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for academic counseling and a Remediation Action Plan will be created. Students will be allowed to remediate one OSCE only during the clinical year. If a student fails to demonstrate competency on more than one OSCE, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal.

## **END OF ROTATION (EOR) EXAMINATIONS:**

End of rotation (EOR) examinations must be passed with a grade of 70% or higher prior to student progression in the curriculum. EOR examinations are to be taken when scheduled. Alternative dates will only be offered for excused absences or in case of emergencies (see Class Attendance policy page 45).

If a student scores <70% on an EOR examination, they will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for counseling and a Remediation Action Plan will be created. If a student fails to receive a passing grade on the End of Rotation examination and is in good academic standing, the student will be eligible to take a repeat EOR examination within two weeks of the initial exam failure. If a student fails the repeat EOR examination, the final clinical rotation grade will be recorded as an "F". The rotation will need to be repeated, the student will be placed on Academic Probation the following semester, an additional Remediation Action Plan will be created by the Director of Clinical Education, and graduation may be delayed.

If a student fails an additional EOR examination, the student will not be eligible to take a repeat EOR exam. Instead, the entire clinical course will be repeated and a final clinical course grade of "F" will be recorded. A student may only retake an EOR examination one time during the entire clinical year. The student is subject to dismissal for failure of a third EOR examination or failure of an EOR examination while on Academic Probation.

A student cannot repeat more than one clinical rotation during the clinical year, or they will be subject to dismissal.

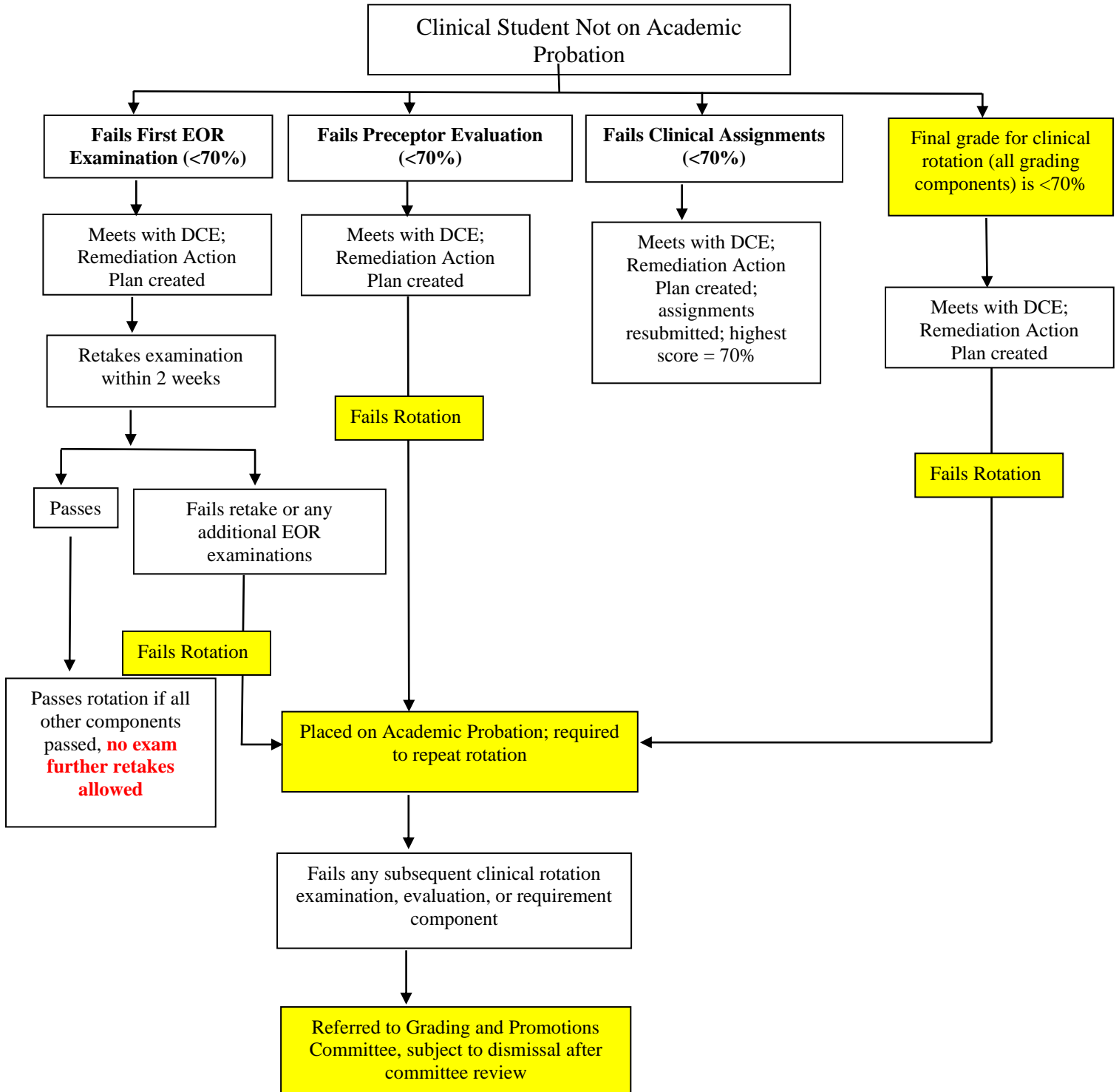
## **FAILURE WHILE ON ACADEMIC PROBATION**

If a student fails an EOR examination (<70%), a preceptor evaluation (<70%), or earns an overall final clinical rotation grade <70% while on Academic Probation, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal.

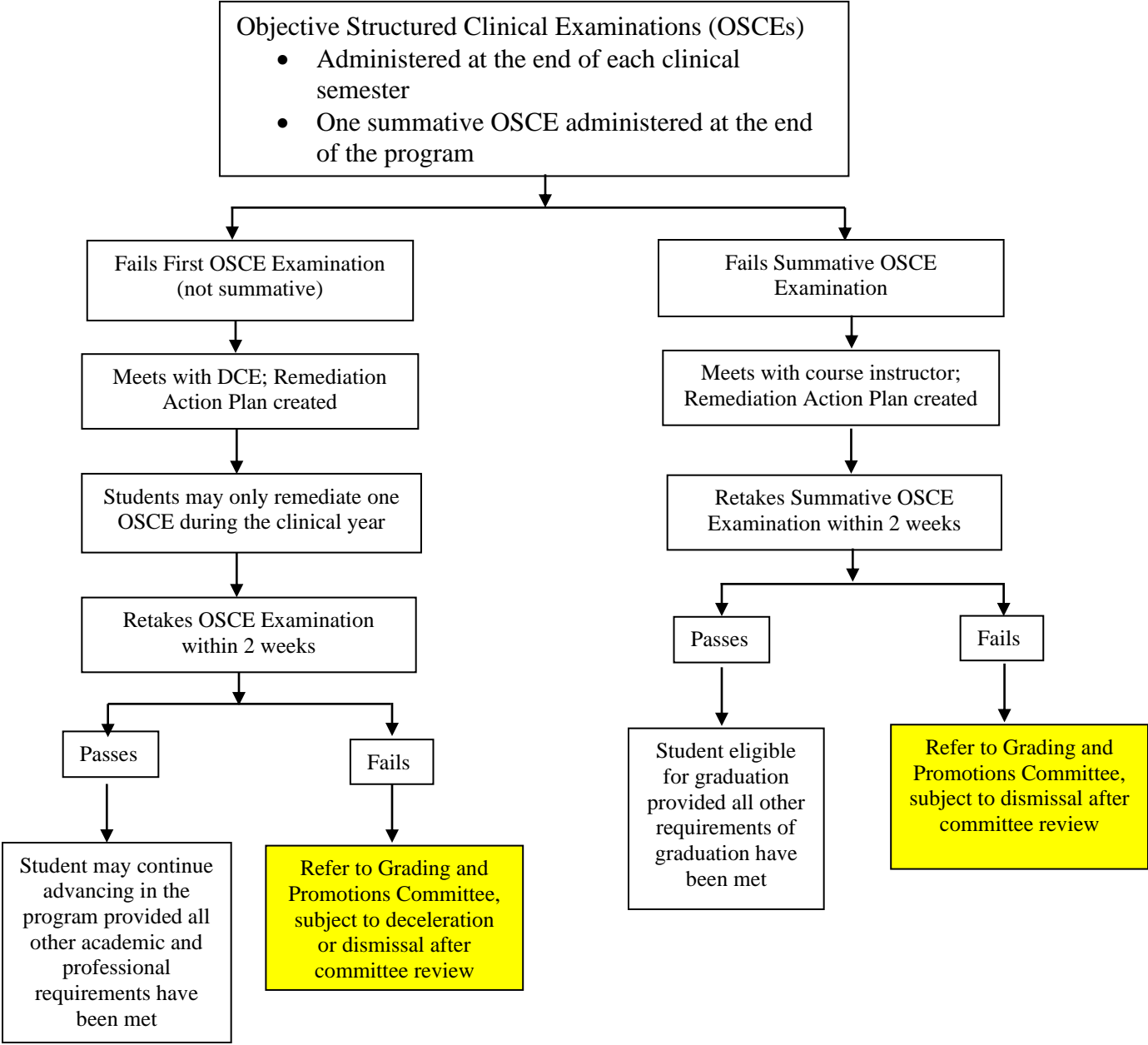
## **SUMMATIVE EXAMINATIONS:**

Prior to completion of the program, a summative evaluation of students will be conducted. The summative evaluation consists of a summative written examination, demonstration of competency with technical skills learned throughout the program, a summative professional evaluation, and a summative practical evaluation (summative OSCE previously mentioned above). Students must demonstrate competency in all summative aspects for successful completion of the program. Administration of the summative examinations will occur during the last four (4) months of the program. Failure to pass any component of the summative process will result in formal remediation and graduation may be delayed.

# Remediation Policy for Clinical Year



# Remediation Policy for Clinical Year - OSCEs



## **EARLY CONCERN NOTE / LETTERS OF CONCERN:**

The program utilizes the system of early concern notes and letters of concern for documenting deficiencies and concerns relevant to PA student performance.

The first Early Concern Note will be completed by the student's Advisor or instructor documenting a deficiency or issue noted by the advisor, instructor, and/or staff. The first letter will not be a part of the student's permanent record. This letter will serve to make the student and faculty aware that a problem exists in the student's behavior, basic scientific knowledge, clinical skills, and/or similar areas important to the performance of a PA student. Following the receipt of this first letter, recommendations may be made to the student on ways to improve the deficiency.

The second Early Concern Note will be completed by the student's Advisor and co-signed by either the Associate Program Director or Director of Clinical Education (depending on program phase) documenting the student's deficiency or issue that has occurred. The second letter will not be part of the student's permanent record. This second letter will serve to provide the same feedback mechanism as the first letter.

A third early concern note will automatically become a permanent **Letter of Concern**, completed by the student's Advisor and Program Director. This letter will become a part of the student's permanent record and must be reported to the Texas Medical Board upon graduation.

A permanent Letter of Concern can be initiated and completed at any time for more egregious conduct violations /professionalism infractions without receiving an Early Concern Note depending on the behavior or issue documented. A permanent Letter of Concern serves as grounds for any of the following:

- (a) automatic remediation,
- (b) clinical rotation rescheduling,
- (c) deceleration,
- (d) dismissal, and/or
- (e) other appropriate program, University, or legal action.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY:**

A leave of absence is a request that can be made by a student for either a personal or medical reason. Personal leave is defined as a leave for a personal nature, such as a death in the family, severe illness of a family member, or other extenuating circumstances. A medical leave is defined as a leave due to an illness as documented by a medical provider (MD/DO/PA/NP). Medical leave requires a letter from the medical provider and must include the start and end dates of the leave of absence and the expected length of time for student medical leave. A student may also take a leave of absence from their studies on a temporary basis for a justifiable reason, as approved by the Program Director.

To qualify for a leave of absence, the student must be in good academic standing without prior or current disciplinary actions. This leave ensures the student a place upon return, provided all re-entry requirements are met and space is available. Requirements may include, but are not limited to, additional academic course work, passing of a technical skill or OSCE, documentation from a healthcare provider, and/or any other requirements deemed appropriate by the Program Director. Note, an alternate degree plan may be created, and graduation may be delayed.

Prior to submitting for the leave of absence, the student must meet with the Program Director, Associate Program Director, Director of Clinical Education, and their Academic Advisor as a group to discuss the leave of absence requirements and potential alternate degree plan options. Upon approval of the leave of absence, the student will be withdrawn from all courses. University policies for withdrawal apply. Student privileges provided to enrolled students will cease during the period of leave.

For students on medical leave, prior to return the student must also provide a letter from a medical provider (MD/DO/PA/NP) indicating that the student is medically cleared to return to the program. The student is also required to submit a letter of intent to re-enroll 30 days prior to the stated return date. The letter should include an explanation of their readiness to re-enroll.

Due to the nature and sequence of the program, all students requesting a leave of absence may matriculate with the next entering class. A revised degree plan will be presented with the new graduation date based upon the anticipated re-enrollment date. The didactic curriculum is designed to prepare students for clinical rotations and therefore, when re-enrolling, courses already taken may have to be repeated upon re-entering the program. Courses which the student must repeat will be decided at the discretion of the program. In the event of a leave of absence during the clinical year, future clinical rotations will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis based on availability, possibly resulting in further delay of graduation.

## **DECELERATION POLICY:**

Deceleration is an alternative mechanism that allows students to complete the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant program curriculum. Deceleration may allow students to extend their curriculum due to academic deficiencies. Reasons for deceleration can be either voluntary or mandatory.

**Voluntary Deceleration:** Students must submit a written request to the Program Director to voluntarily decelerate by taking a leave of absence. Voluntary deceleration is considered a proactive decision on the part of the student before experiencing academic difficulty. If voluntary deceleration occurs during the didactic training, the student will reseat in August with the incoming class and must meet all previously agreed upon conditions as outlined in the Leave of Absence Policy.

**Mandatory Deceleration:** The Grading and Promotions Committee may recommend deceleration to the Program Director to remediate deficiencies, as a preventative measure to avoid further academic difficulty, or as a result of non-academic reasons as defined in the student handbook. The Committee may specify the plan for deceleration or defer to the judgment of the Program Director. Students in the decelerated curriculum must successfully complete all required courses. Upon decelerating, students may delay their graduation by no more than one year and must comply with any revisions in curriculum requirements and changes in tuition and fees of their new graduating class. A unique degree plan will be created for any decelerated student. The student will be required to audit and/or repeat courses previously passed and repeat any course(s) in which a grade of C was obtained. If the student fails any course(s) the student will be dismissed from the Program immediately. If a student earned less than a C in any course, they are not eligible to reapply.

A maximum of 4 years will be allowed to complete all aspects of the program from first matriculation date.

## **WITHDRAWAL DURING A SEMESTER:**

A student who finds it necessary to withdraw from the University before the end of the semester must secure the proper form for withdrawal through the Office of the Registrar. The form requires approval by the Business and Financial Aid Offices. If procedure is not followed, the student is automatically assigned a grade of "F" in all courses. However, no student may withdraw after the last date of withdrawal specified in the academic calendar. See leave of absence and deceleration policies for information regarding returning to the PA Program.

At no time will the Program Director or Faculty be aware of a student's medical condition. The documentation that validates the legitimacy of the student's case will be contained in the Office of the Dean of Students in the area of Student Life and Counseling.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:**

Students are expected to do their own academic work; therefore, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Faculty and students are encouraged to take an aggressive approach to combating acts of inappropriate academic behavior. Academic dishonesty occurs when a student submits the work of someone else as his/her own or has special information for use in an evaluation activity that is not available to other students in the same activity. Students who observe or become aware of violations of academic integrity are urged to report these violations to the professor in whose course the dishonest acts occur.

### **Examples include but may not be limited to the following:**

1. Cheating on an examination:
  - a) Copying from another student's examination.
  - b) Possessing or using during an examination material not authorized by the person giving the exam.
  - c) Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during an exam without permission from the instructor.
  - d) Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an un-administered examination.
  - e) Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself to take a test.
  - f) Obtaining an un-administered test or information about an un-administered test.
2. Plagiarism is the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means, another person's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it as one's own work. This could include the failure to specifically cite sources.

### **Penalties**

Penalties may range from dismissal from the University to a lesser penalty. If the penalty is an F for the course in which the violation occurred, the F will count in the computation of the student's GPA even if the course is repeated.

### **Procedures for Violation**

1. At the point of discovery, the instructor shall inform the student of the alleged violation of academic integrity and hear his/her explanation of the circumstances. If the instructor determines there is no violation, the case is dropped. If the instructor decides the violation is unintentional or minor, the instructor may decide to require the student to rewrite the paper in question, take a modified exam, or take some similar action. If, in the judgment of the instructor, the alleged violation is deemed to be serious and intentional, the instructor will follow the procedure outlined below in steps 2–5.
2. Before imposing a penalty for a violation, the instructor shall consult with his/her immediate supervisor and together they will agree on a penalty. The instructor shall then make a written report outlining the incident and the recommended penalty. A copy of the report shall be given to the supervisor, the head of the department and the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered, the Office of the Provost, the student and the student's advisor. The instructor shall inform the student, in writing, of the right to appeal the charge of violating academic integrity.
3. From the point of discovery, and within 10 working days, the instructor shall complete the process outlined above.
4. The Office of the Provost shall maintain files of all violations of academic integrity.
5. The student has the right to appeal the charge of violating academic integrity and/or the penalty assessed in accordance with the following appeals process.



## **Procedure for Appeal**

1. A student appealing a charge of academic integrity violation and/or a penalty must deliver a letter to the chair of the Grade Appeal and Academic Misconduct Committee, specifying the basis for the appeal, within 10 working days after receiving the instructor's written report.
2. The chair of the committee will schedule a meeting of the committee as soon as practical, after receipt of the letter of appeal, preferably within 10 working days. The chair will notify the student and the instructor of the meeting date and time.
3. Copies of the instructor's report and the student's letter of appeal will be provided to all members of the committee at least two working days before the day of the meeting.
4. The committee will review the materials submitted by both the student and the instructor before the formal meeting and convene at a time convenient for all involved for the purpose of hearing the two individuals present their cases. The committee will then convene in an executive session to reach a decision in the matter. The chair of the committee will inform, in writing, the student, the student's advisor, the instructor, the instructor's immediate supervisor, the head of the department and the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered, and the Office of the Provost of the decision.
5. If the appeal is denied, then the charge and the penalty is upheld. If an appeal of a charge of violating academic integrity is upheld, the case is dismissed. If an appeal of a penalty is upheld, then the committee will determine an appropriate penalty. The ruling of the committee is final. Action, or failure to take action, by an instructor or the Appeals Committee does not preclude disciplinary action by the University when appropriate.

<https://www.hsutx.edu/academics/academic-resources/>  
<https://www.hsutx.edu/info-for/current-students/>

## **GRADE REPORTS:**

Grade reports are posted on Canvas for the University and on HSU Central at the close of each semester.

## **GRADE APPEAL PROCESS / GRIEVANCE:**

### **Grade Appeal Process**

A student, who believes that the grading policy for a class has been unfairly administered, resulting in a course grade lower than expected, has the right to appeal the professor's decision on the grade. The following process is for appealing a course grade only, not for grades on individual projects or tests.

For an appeal to be considered valid, each of the following steps must be taken in the order listed.

1. Discuss the matter with the professor. If at all possible, the matter is reconciled at this point.
2. If dissatisfied with this discussion, the student voices the concern to the program director in a conference scheduled by the student. The program director discusses the matter with the professor; another attempt is made to reconcile the matter. (If the professor is the program director, proceed to step three).
3. If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student submits a formal, written appeal to the dean of the academic area. The following must be included in the graduate student's appeal:
  - a. A cover letter requesting reconsideration of the grade.
  - b. A straightforward narrative (one to three pages) detailing the circumstances surrounding the contested grades, with special emphasis given to reasons why the student believes the grade is unwarranted.
  - c. All graded projects in the class (tests, essays, projects, etc.) that are in the student's possession.
  - d. The student's personal record of attendance in the class.
4. The program director forwards a recommendation on the matter to the dean of the academic area upon notification that the student has filed a grievance.
5. In writing, the dean of the academic area formally apprises the professor of the student's grievance and gives a summary of the points of concern.
6. The professor submits to the dean of the academic area a written response, which includes the projects in the professor's possession, grades on all work done in the course, and a copy of the class syllabus with the contested policy highlighted.
7. The dean of the academic area will meet with each party separately and may schedule a joint appointment with the two parties in order to attempt a solution.

Petitions for exceptions to academic policies, other than for grade appeals, may only be made in writing to the dean of graduate studies. The graduate dean, in consultation with members of the Graduate Council, will make the final determination. No petitions will be considered from students on academic probation or suspension with a GPA below 3.0.

If the student feels that additional appeal is necessary, then the last line of appeal is to the Graduate Studies Grievance Committee. The grievance committee is appointed by the Graduate Council from nominations submitted to them by the dean of graduate studies.

## **GRADUATE STUDIES GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Membership of the Grievance Committee**

The committee includes three graduate faculty professors from different academic areas with one specified to be the chair and two graduate students recruited from the Graduate Student Advisory Council. The chair of the committee will schedule meetings and preside during deliberations.

Neither the professor nor the student will have counsel at the meetings.

### **Duties of the Grievance Committee**

The grievance committee will review all pertinent materials before the formal meeting and convene at a convenient time for the purpose of hearing the case. The grievance committee may request oral presentations by the parties. The committee will then convene in an executive session to reach a decision in the matter. The

chair of the committee will inform in writing the student, faculty member, and the provost of the decision of the committee. If a grade is to be changed, the provost will see that the proper forms are filled out in the Registrar's Office.

The ruling of this committee is final.

Procedures for Handling Student Grievances (other than grades) with Fellow Students, Faculty, or Staff

### **Procedure for Appeal**

A student appealing a charge of an academic integrity violation and/or a penalty must deliver a letter to the chair of the Grade Appeal and Academic Misconduct Committee, specifying the basis for the appeal, within 10 working days after receiving the instructor's written report.

The chair of the committee will schedule a meeting of the committee as soon as practical after receipt of the letter of appeal, preferably within 10 working days. The chair will notify the student and the instructor of the meeting date and time.

Copies of the instructor's report and the student's letter of appeal will be provided to all members of the committee at least two working days before the day of the meeting.

The committee will review the materials submitted by both the student and the instructor before the formal meeting and convene at a time convenient for all involved for the purpose of hearing the two individuals present their cases. The committee will then convene in an executive session to reach a decision in the matter. The chair of the committee will inform, in writing, the student, the student's advisor, the instructor, the instructor's immediate supervisor, the head of the department and the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered, and the Office of the Provost of the decision. Page 62 of 107 Updated 7.16.18 If the appeal is denied, then the charge and penalty are upheld. If an appeal of a charge of violating academic integrity is upheld, the case is dismissed. If an appeal of a penalty is upheld, then the committee will determine an appropriate penalty. The ruling of the committee is final.

Action, or failure to take action, by an instructor or the Appeals Committee does not preclude disciplinary action by the university when appropriate.

Refer to the HSU Student Handbook at <https://www.hsutx.edu/info-for/current-students/>

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASE / ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE:**

The Hardin-Simmons University Department of Physician Assistant Studies has a commitment to protect the health and well-being of students, faculty, staff, and patients. As part of their training, students may encounter exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. This may include, but is not limited to, being exposed to human donors and preservative chemicals such as formalin in the anatomy lab, latex or other products such as gloves that may contain allergens, and exposure to communicable infectious disease which may be transferred in the classroom or clinical setting. **PREVENTION:** While the risk of transmission is small, the Program has a number of policies and procedures in place to minimize risk.

It is the policy of the Hardin-Simmons University, Physician Assistant Program to follow the guidelines and recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regarding standard precautions. Before beginning clinical education experiences through the HSU Physician Assistant Program, students will receive training regarding CDC standard precautions as well as OSHA training.

### **Standard Precautions**

Standard Precautions combine the major features of Universal Precautions and Body Substance Isolation and are based on the principle that all blood, body fluids, secretions, respiratory particles, excretions, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes may contain transmissible infectious agents.

Standard Precautions include a group of infection prevention practices that apply to all patients, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status, in any setting in which healthcare is delivered. These practices include:

1. Hand hygiene
2. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

In addition to Standard Precautions, students will receive training in the three categories of Transmission-Based Precautions:

1. Contact Precautions
2. Droplet Precautions
3. Airborne Precautions

Transmission-Based Precautions are used when the route(s) of transmission is (are) not completely interrupted using Standard Precautions alone.

Students may access details of this information at any time at the following website:

[http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007IP/2007ip\\_part4.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007IP/2007ip_part4.html)

### **Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens:**

Strict adherence to standard precautions and other infection control measures should prevent a student's exposure to blood borne pathogens. CARE AND TREATMENT AFTER EXPOSURE: Should a student sustain a possible exposure (including a needlestick injury) to blood borne or other infectious respiratory or contact pathogens during a clinical training experience, the student is responsible for immediately notifying their supervisor, instructor/preceptor, or department manager. The student should then follow the steps outlined in the section titled "Post-Exposure Procedure" and "Student Injuries or Exposures". Exposure is defined as a demonstrated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

### **Follow this protocol **IMMEDIATELY** if you are experience a needlestick injury or are exposed to blood/bodily fluids while on your rotations:**

1. **Aggressive local wound care** to the site of exposure should be initiated immediately. The site should be cleansed thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes using a surgical hand brush when possible. It may be beneficial to use an antiseptic such as chlorhexidine gluconate (Foam Carer CHG), an iodophor (EZ Scrub, Betadine), or Dakins solution (dilute 1:9 buffered sodium hypochlorite). Difficult to scrub areas should be soaked in chlorhexidine gluconate (Foam Carer CHG) or other antiseptic. Non-intact skin should be cleansed with soap and water for at least 15 minutes. It may be beneficial to use an antiseptic as described above. Mucous membrane exposures (e.g., eye splashes) should be irrigated thoroughly for at least 15 minutes with saline or tap water using the nearest eye washing station (or faucet if none available).
2. **The incident MUST be reported **immediately**** to the preceptor and/or department manager.
3. Student should seek **immediate** medical care at the nearest Emergency Room. Do not wait until the end of your shift. Students are responsible for all medical expenses related to a bodily fluid exposure.
4. Finally, the student must notify the Director of Clinical Education or if unavailable, the Clinical Administrative Coordinator or Program Director. In addition, the HSU Physician Assistant Program Incident Form must be completed and sent to the Program. (This form is located at the back of the handbook; Appendix D).

More information can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/emergnedl.html>

### **Student Injuries**

Incidents involving an injury to a student (such as a fall, or other accidental injury) or unexpected other pathogenic exposure during a clinical education experience will follow a similar protocol.

1. The injury/exposure should be reported to the student's supervisor or clinical preceptor.
2. Students should report to the nearest Emergency Department for treatment
3. The Program should be notified as soon as it is possible to do so. The student must notify the Director of Clinical Education or the Clinical Administrative Coordinator.
4. In addition, the HSU Physician Assistant Program Incident Form, must be completed and sent to the Director of Clinical Education. Do not send copies of medical records.

If a potentially infectious exposure occurs, do not allow feelings of embarrassment, a large workload, or misplaced peer pressures prevent you from reporting the event immediately. Needle sticks and other exposures can be life-threatening. Responsible healthcare providers recognize that unintentional injuries and occupational exposures may occur and must be evaluated by competent, objective, and experienced medical professionals.

COVID-19 exposures are reported to the university directly through the Dean of Students' office in addition to the above parameters.

**FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

**IMPORTANT:**

All charges incurred by PA students for healthcare visits, diagnostic studies, and prescribed medications related to an injury, needle stick, blood, or body fluid exposures are the student's responsibility. **Students must maintain health insurance throughout their educational experience at the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program. All medical or healthcare services (emergency or otherwise) that the student receives or requires are the student's financial responsibility and are at the student's expense.**

## CLINICAL YEAR INFORMATION:

During the clinical year, you will train with preceptors at sites throughout the nation to become competent clinicians capable of providing comprehensive, quality care to patients from diverse populations. Please take a moment to consider how very privileged you are as a PA student to enter the practices of your preceptors and the lives of their patients. Your preceptors and patients are counting on you and expect that you will provide excellent care in a professional and compassionate manner.

Supervised Clinical Practical Experiences (SCPE) are your “real world” chance to practice what you have learned. Hard work, motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm will be rewarded with newfound knowledge and skills. Be punctual, work hard, ask questions, and always maintain a positive attitude. Show genuine interest and read every day/night about the cases you see. Take responsibility for your learning. If you ask for help, you will get it. Remember that our faculty are here for you, even while you are away from campus.

Please consider these clinical rotations as informal interviews. Your preceptors are observing your behaviors and attitude. They can be the best resource for future employment. If not in their clinic, they may have colleagues that they can refer you to as potential employers. Keep an open mind! Do not let others take away from your experiences. Others’ experiences will probably be different than yours. You may be surprised by what you find! Go into each rotation with an open mind and a great attitude!

This handbook has information you will need for a smooth transition into the clinical year. It is intended to supplement other student material that we have provided for you such as information that can be found in the [HSU PA Student Handbook](#) . Should you have any questions about material covered in this section, please contact the Director of Clinical Education.

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# General Goals of the Clinical Year

Clinical rotations are designed to provide the student with hands on clinical experience that will reinforce medical knowledge and clinical reasoning skills gained in the didactic year, while allowing the student to refine patient interviewing, physical examination, procedural, diagnostic and data integration skills. Rotations also allow the student to begin assimilating into the professional role of a physician assistant while developing working relationships with other members of the healthcare team.

The clinical curriculum is designed to give the student the opportunity to achieve baseline clinical competence as a physician assistant while under the supervision of a clinical preceptor in various healthcare settings. Students will work directly with physicians (MDs or DOs) or certified physician assistants who serve as preceptors. In certain settings, where appropriate, other health professionals may also participate in the students' clinical training.

Each clinical rotation in any given discipline is intended to emphasize and strengthen the student's ability to achieve the program defined competencies as previously listed above.

## Program Responsibilities

1. The Hardin-Simmons Physician Assistant program maintains responsibility for *all* aspects of preceptor/clinical site coordination. This includes the identification, communication, and evaluation of all sites (core or elective) and preceptors for suitability. The student may offer suggestions for potential rotation sites/preceptors but are not required to do so. Student suggested sites/ preceptors must undergo the same process of review, evaluation, and approval as other program designated sites/ preceptors.
2. The Clinical and Technology Coordinator will coordinate the assignment of students with the preceptor(s) and shall act as a liaison and information resource to the student and the preceptor.
3. The Clinical and Technology Coordinator will provide the preceptor with appropriate links to electronic evaluations and instructions for their completion. If the preceptor does not wish to complete the evaluation electronically, a hard copy will be provided.
4. The Clinical and Technology Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that each student maintains personal health insurance throughout the clinical year as stipulated by the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Student Handbook.
5. The Director of Clinical Education will be responsible for enforcing the program's immunization policy.
6. The Director of Clinical Education will withdraw any student from a rotation if it is determined that the student's work, conduct, or health is considered detrimental to patients or the practice site(s), safety, or preceptor misconduct as outlined in the preceptor handbook.
7. Students in the program are covered by a malpractice policy that insures students at Hardin-Simmons University. This policy covers liability risks that may be incurred by a student or instructor of the program.



## Preceptor Responsibilities

One of the most important features of the Physician Assistant program curriculum is the education provided by clinical preceptors. Preceptors serve as role models for the student and through guidance and teaching, help students' hone skills in history taking, physical examination, effective written and verbal communication, diagnosis, problem assessment, and treatment plan development, including a logical approach to further studies, therapy, and referral. Preceptor responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Orient students at the onset of the rotation with practice/ site policies and procedures (including safety protocols) and review the expectations and objectives for the rotation.
- Provide ongoing and timely feedback regarding clinical performance, knowledge base, and critical thinking skills. This can be done with the student informally each week or at a designated time and can be formally reported to the Director of Clinical Education through the submission of the mid-rotation and end-of-rotation evaluations.
- Supervise, demonstrate, teach, and observe clinical activities in order to aid in the development of clinical skills and ensure proper patient care.
- Assign to the student increasing levels of responsibility for clinical assessment and management as appropriate to the student's experience and expertise.
- Participate in the evaluation of clinical skills and medical knowledge base through the following mechanisms:
  - Direct supervision, observation, and teaching in the clinical setting
  - Direct evaluation of presentations (including both oral and written)
  - Assignment of outside readings and research to promote further learning.
- Dialogue with faculty during site visits to evaluate student progress and assist the learning process.
- Audit, edit, and co-sign charts in order to evaluate the student's ability to write appropriate and complete progress notes, histories, physical examinations, assessments, and treatment plans.
  - Written orders must be countersigned immediately so the orders may be carried out.
  - Daily progress notes hand-written, dictated or in the EMR, are completed within 24 hours.
  - History and physical exams hand-written, dictated or in the EMR are completed within 24 hours.
- 
- Complete and promptly return the evaluation forms provided by the program, reflecting on student knowledge and skills as well as their improvement throughout the rotation.
- Promptly notify the Director of Clinical Education of any circumstances that might interfere with the accomplishment of the above goals or diminish the overall training experience.
- Maintain an ethical approach to the care of patients by serving as a role model for the student.

- Demonstrate cultural competency through interactions with patients.
- Spend a few minutes each week in a candid summary discussion with the student as to whether each is meeting the other's needs and expectations, and what changes need to be made in the roles and relationship.
- Provide timely feedback to the student and the program regarding student performance.
- The preceptor *shall not* compensate the student in return for his/ her assistance in medical care to patients.
- The preceptor agrees *not* to use the PA student as a replacement for a paid staff position or as a personal assistant.

## **Preceptor-Student Relationship**

If the preceptor, student, and/or the student's family have an existing professional relationship prior to the start of the clinical rotation (i.e. the preceptor is the provider), then the student will immediately notify the Director of Clinical Education in writing of the conflict of interest. Each case will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure a conflict of interest does not exist. If the preceptor and the student's family members have an existing professional relationship prior to the start of the rotation (the preceptor is the provider) the student may not access protected health information, discuss protected or disclosed health information with the preceptor or any associated staff, and the student may not participate in the care of the family member.

## **Student Guidelines/ Information:**

### **General Information**

The guidelines and policies for clinical students are the rules, which allow orderly, beneficial and safe conduct through the clinical rotation year for the student, the patient, the program, preceptors and clinical sites. Students are expected to adhere to these guidelines unless directed otherwise by the Director of Clinical Education or the Program Director.

Students are responsible for their personal conduct within the environment of the host facility. Violation of law, deleterious public behavior, participation in community disputes/ demonstrations or other actions that violate the student handbook, whether occurring as a part of the education assignment or on personal time, *and* which might bring negative attention to the student, the host facility, the program or the University, or in any way interfere with the preceptor's or the clinical site's mission, must be avoided.

### **Student Guidelines**

1. The student will always act professionally. The student will strive to be competent, reliable, responsible, and respectful when caring for any patient.

2. The student will adhere to the dress code as delineated in the Hardin-Simmons University PA Program Student Handbook: *DRESS CODE: Clinical Settings*. These standards will be enforced in their entirety.
3. The student will be clearly identified to distinguish them from physicians, residents, and other health professional students. In the clinical setting, business professional attire, name / ID badge, along with a short white lab coat embroidered with the HSU PA logo is required to always be worn, unless otherwise directed by the site. For example, men should wear a shirt, tie, dress slacks and dress shoes. Women should wear dress blouse and dress slacks. Closed toe shoes must always be worn. Long hair must be pulled up off the neck.
4. The student will adhere to the personal habits as delineated in the Hardin-Simmons University PA Program Student Handbook. In addition, eating food or chewing gum should be kept out of view of patients. The use of tobacco products is strongly discouraged. Intoxication, or signs of recent use of agents, other than those prescribed by a licensed health care provider, is wholly unacceptable in ANY educational or professional setting. Any student deemed to be in violation of these principles will be removed IMMEDIATELY from the rotation and is subject to dismissal from the program.
5. Students are required to be prompt and on time for each workday. Students are expected to keep hours *no less* than those of their preceptor. If a preceptor works late hours, call hours or on weekends/holidays, the preceptor can expect the student to keep the same hours and call time. The preceptor may also assign additional work that is reasonable in volume and is educationally beneficial.
6. The student must first notify the *Director of Clinical Education* via email or telephone as soon as possible if there will be an absence. The absence must be documented within 24 hours. The student must notify the preceptor if he/she is unable to be on time for assigned responsibilities. Students must notify the preceptor(s) *immediately* of any absence related to injury, illness, or emergency.
7. Students are expected to attend the various conferences and other educational opportunities offered at their rotation site. Attendance at weekend, evening or early morning rounds that are usual activities of the rotation service or physician, is expected. Students who do not attend the usual activities of the service cannot successfully complete the rotation.
8. Treatments plans or procedures shall not be initiated by a student without prior knowledge of the preceptor. Student activities must be confined to those which are either directly supervised or delegated by the preceptor. The preceptor, or their delegate must be in attendance with the student for all procedures involving direct patient contact until the student demonstrates a level of competence which satisfies the preceptor.
9. Written orders must be countersigned immediately so the orders may be carried out. The PA student cannot provide or receive telephone orders.
10. It is the preceptor's responsibility to ensure that the supervising preceptor sees all of the student's patients. Patients shall never be managed, treated, or released in any setting without consultation with the preceptor. The preceptor can assign other activities to the student such as reviewing the patient record or making courtesy visits to patients without the preceptor present. The preceptor must countersign any documentation by the PA student in the patient's chart within 24 hours. Any dictation by the PA student must also be countersigned by the preceptor within 24 hours of placement of the dictation on the chart. The student is to report to the DCE if the preceptor does not see all of the student's patients.

11. Students must maintain a professional relationship with patients, preceptors, and clinical/hospital staff at all times. Students must demonstrate a high degree of respect for confidentiality of patient's personal and medical problems. Examination of the breasts, genitalia, and rectal areas of patients should ONLY be performed in the presence of a chaperone. The chaperone's name must be documented in the medical record.
12. *Pre-signed* prescription pads, order sheets or other documentation *shall not* be utilized by students at any time.
13. A physician assistant student *may not* phone in prescriptions.
14. The rules and regulations of the hosting hospital or facility must be followed at all times.
15. Employment during a student's course of training is strongly discouraged. The following rules apply to PA students who wish to seek part-time employment during their training.
  - A. Employment must never interfere with academic or clinical assignments. Any student unable to maintain adequate academic standing as outlined above will be asked to terminate his/her employment.
  - B. Students must not substitute for clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical practical experiences.
16. The student should never misrepresent him/herself as a physician, certified physician assistant, or other health care professional. This policy applies at any time or place and in any activity while participating in the educational environment. This policy must be adhered to regardless of any past medical training or current employment status (i.e. nurse, paramedic, OR tech).
17. Student should check university email at least twice daily (morning and evening) during the clinical year.
18. The student will promptly advise the Program of any problems which seem to be detracting from the purpose of the rotation.
19. The student will contact the preceptor prior to the beginning of the rotation as directed by the Clinical Team to ascertain the time/ place to meet on the first day. Additional rotation requirements and/or associated hospital requirements may need to be met, and the student must check the clinical scheduling program early to be aware of and to meet these requirements.
20. The student will be responsible for providing all documentation for hospital privileges and office requirements in ample time prior to the start of each rotation. Delays in the provision of this documentation may result in a delayed rotation start date. The student must be aware that insufficient clinical hours may result in the delayed completion of a rotation.

## Requirements to Complete Clinical Year

### 1. Successfully Complete 7 core rotations, 2 elective rotations and Professional Development

- PA 6540 Family Medicine
- PA 6542 Pediatrics
- PA 6544 Women's Health
- PA 6546 Mental Health
- PA 6548 Internal Medicine
- PA 6550 General Surgery
- PA 6552 Emergency Medicine
- PA 6554 Elective 1
- PA 6556 Elective 2
- PA 6560 Professional Development

### 2. Must attend Interprofessional (IPE) Days

- Held in the Spring and Fall each year

### 3. Completion of Technical Procedure Requirements sheet

- Preceptors must have initialed and dated the date of demonstrated **competency**
- Must be completed during clinical rotations
- It is the student's responsibility to complete the form prior to the completion of the clinical year.
- Graduation will be delayed if a student does not submit a completed technical procedure log.

### 4. Must log all patient encounters and exceed minimum exposures required as outlined in the HSU PA Student Handbook and below in the CLINICAL YEAR STUDENT TRACKING section.

### 5. Demonstrate competency on the clinical semester OSCEs

- **Fall**-Adult/Emergent
- **Spring**-Infant/Preventative
- **Summer**-Adolescent/Acute

## CLINICAL PHASE TECHNICAL PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS:

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ \*All must be completed prior to graduation

<i>Clinical Competency</i>	<i>By signing, the Preceptor deems the student as competent in performing skill.</i>	<i>Date</i>
Application of fluorescein stain		
Breast Exam		
Diabetic foot exam		
Fetal heart tones (by Doppler or US)		
Fundal height measurement		
Growth chart plotting		
Incision & Drainage of abscess		
Interpret arterial blood gases		
Interpret culture results		
Interpret Electrocardiogram		
Interpret PAP smear results		
Injection		
IV placement		
Mental status exam		
Perform PAP smear		
Splinting		
Sterile technique		
Surgical scrub/donning surgical PPE		
Urinary bladder catheterization (male or female)		
Venipuncture		
Wound Closure		

## CLINICAL YEAR STUDENT TRACKING:

### Patient Encounter Logging Requirements

Logging patient encounters involves more than annotating and documenting student notes in patient charts. Each patient encounter must be logged in the clinical management system (i.e. EXXAT). Additionally, these encounters must be logged appropriately by encounter type (Preventive, Emergent, Acute, or Chronic Care), and by Lifespan (Prenatal, Infant, Child, Adolescent, Adult, and Elderly). The number of encounters listed below are the **MINIMUM** number of encounters needed to document exposure. Logging all patient types and encounters is **MANDATORY** and required for graduation. Falsification of these logs by the student will result in disciplinary actions in accordance with *Student Handbook policy*.

<b>Patient Encounter Type:</b>	<b>Minimum Number to be Logged</b>
Preventive Care	50
Emergent Care	50
Acute Care	150
Chronic Care	150
<b>Care Across Lifespan:</b>	
Prenatal	5
Infant (0-1 year)	5
Child (2-10 years)	25
Adolescent (11-17 years)	10
Adult (18-64 years)	250
Elderly (>65 years)	75
<b>Specific for Area/Specialty Setting:</b>	
Women GYN	15
Women Prenatal	5
Mental Health	30
Pre-operative	10
Intra-operative	10
Post-operative	10

## **CLINICAL SCHEDULES:**

The clinical rotation schedule has been planned with special consideration and concentration on the needs of the students, faculty, and clinical sites. The Program adheres to its schedule after publication annually in the Summer semester; however, it is subject to change based on preceptor availability and program needs. Students selected for the Physician Assistant Program at Hardin-Simmons University must complete clinical rotations at Program-affiliated sites. All students are assigned to at least one rotation located in a rural/medically underserved practice/facility to broaden opportunities and experiences and meet the mission and goals of the HSU PA Program. During clinical rotations, students must plan for the expense of rotations away from campus (e.g., living expenses, transportation, etc.).

1. The Clinical and Technology Coordinator and the Director of Clinical Education will determine the best possible placement of students within the constraints of the number and location of clinical sites.
2. Students will receive online notification of the clinical phase schedule and clinical site assignments, dates, and the names of respective preceptors. These assignments are subject to change for a variety of reasons. The Clinical Education Team will make a concerted effort to minimize these changes, but site changes may be outside of the control of the PA Program.
3. Students are made aware of the financial and logistical implications of the clinical phase of physician assistant education prior to acceptance into the program. The following reasons, therefore, will *not* merit special consideration in the assignment of clinical experiences: financial need, lack of transportation, lack of housing, or special events such as weddings, reunions, other special family events, etc. Clinical sites/ preceptors are not responsible to assist students in arranging for housing, transportation, and/ or meals.
4. If a clinical site must cancel its availability, the Clinical and Technology Coordinator will make a concerted effort to place the student in an acceptable alternative site of the same clinical discipline. However, in some situations this may not be possible due to clinical site availability. The Clinical and Technology Coordinator will meet with the student to discuss options.
5. Although changes after the reveal of the schedule in June are strongly discouraged, exceptions are possible in cases of illness, family hardship, or other extenuating circumstances. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All requests for changes must be in writing. They will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education. If the Director of Clinical Education approves the change, the student will be notified in writing.

## **PRECEPTOR POLICY:**

Students must not be **required** to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Hardin-Simmons University PA Director of Clinical Education and Clinical and Technology Coordinator must coordinate clinical sites and preceptors for the Program required rotations.

## **AVAILABILITY OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):**

PPE will be used at the level appropriate to the facility's infection control policies including respiratory precautions. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the student has access to PPE. If the student does not have access to appropriate PPE for assigned rotation, the student will not be allowed to attend rotation until appropriate PPE can be obtained.



## **CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE:**

### **CERTIFICATION:**

To attain the PA-C designation, a candidate must be a graduate of an accredited PA training Program and successfully pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). PANCE is a multiple-choice test that assesses medical and surgical knowledge. For the most up-to-date information on certification and recertification and exam/application windows, check the web site (<http://www.nccpa.net/>).

### **TEXAS LICENSURE:**

Texas is a regulatory state with responsibility for governance of Physician Assistants coming under the Texas State Board of Physician Assistant Examiners as provided for by the Medical Practice Act. The Board issues rules and regulations regarding the practice of Physician Assistants and according to the rules, maintains Physician applications for supervision of Physician Assistants. Please refer to the following web sites, [www.tmb.state.tx.us](http://www.tmb.state.tx.us) for more information. Conviction of a felony offense may result in ineligibility to receive licensure in Texas. Each case is considered on an individual basis by the state licensing agency.

### **OUT OF STATE LICENSURE:**

Students seeking out of state licensure are responsible for researching that state's rules and regulations. It is the student's responsibility to provide any necessary paperwork to the program.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:**

In addition to completion of all course requirements, the program requires completion of the following tasks:

### **Community Service:**

Hardin-Simmons University PA Program believes that active participation in community service is important. All students will be required to log a minimum of 50 service hours completed while enrolled in the PA Program as a requirement prior to graduation, of which 20 hours must be completed by the end of the didactic year. These hours can be fulfilled in a variety of settings both locally and globally. Community service will be approved and recorded with each student advisor during enrollment as a PA student.

### **Diploma Card:**

The deadline for filing diploma cards in the Office of the Registrar is listed in the academic calendar in the front of the Undergraduate Catalog. It is to the benefit of the student to file the diploma card at least one semester prior to the semester the student plans to graduate. (October 1 for May graduation, March 1 for August/December graduation)

A degree audit will be made as soon as the diploma card is received, and the student will receive a letter indicating requirements needed for graduation within a couple of weeks. The student should notify the assistant registrar one month before graduation if his/her graduation date changes. A student's name will appear on the commencement program only once.

A late fee of \$25 will be charged for late diploma cards. Beginning approximately six weeks after the deadline, this late fee will increase substantially in order to add a student to the graduation list so late in the process.

For more information, refer to the HSU Student Handbook: [HSU Student Handbook](#)

### **Participation in Graduation Exercises:**

All candidates for degrees are requested to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Incomplete grades must be completed by the deadlines of April 15 (May graduation) and November 15 (December graduation). Students with any graduation requirements not completed by these dates will be excluded from walking at their respective graduation ceremony.

### **Financial Obligations to the University:**

Students are required to settle all accounts in a manner satisfactory to the University comptroller before a diploma will be awarded.

## **TEACHING OUT POLICY:**

In accordance with the SACSCOC requirements, that is, those of the University's regional accreditor, specific people at Hardin-Simmons University have been charged with responsibility for developing a teach-out plan for currently matriculated students in the event of program closure or loss of accreditation. The Program Director and Dean will work with the University's SACSCOC liaison to develop a teach-out plan; a written plan to provide for the equitable treatment of students who have not yet completed their program of study. If necessary, to achieve that goal, the teach-out plan may include a teach-out agreement between institutions.

The teach-out plan will be submitted to SACSCOC for approval in advance of implementation. Any teach-out plan will include the following information:

- The date of closure (date when new students will no longer be admitted);
- An explanation of how affected parties (students, faculty, staff) will be informed of the impending closure;
- An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption;
- An indication as to whether the teach-out plan will incur additional charges/expenses to the students and, if so, how the students will be notified;
- Copies of signed teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any; and
- How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment.



**HARDIN-SIMMONS**  
UNIVERSITY  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

## Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the information contained within the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook and the Hardin-Simmons University Student Handbook.

I understand my obligation to successfully complete all Program requirements in the outlined time frame. I fully understand this information and hereby agree to abide by the Physician Assistant Program policies and procedures contained within the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook. Additionally, I agree to abide by all rules and regulations as set forth in the Hardin-Simmons University Student Handbook.

I understand the outlined requirements for graduation from the Hardin-Simmons University Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. The Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program reserves the right to modify curriculum requirements as necessary to ensure the academic integrity of the Program. Students will be notified of any changes in curriculum or Program requirements prior to implementation in accordance with ARC-PA standards.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

IMMUNIZATION VERIFICATION DOCUMENT

<b><u>Tuberculin Skin Test (PPD)</u></b>	Date ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) <b>PPD Results:</b> _____ mm *Please provide <b>actual</b> measurement of induration.
<b><u>Alternative to PPD</u></b> *not required if PPD done	<b>IGRA Results:</b> Positive _____ Negative _____ (Health care provider initials)
<b><u>Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis Vaccination (Tdap) &amp; Td Booster</u></b>	Tdap Date ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Td Booster Date ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Get a onetime dose of Tdap if you have not received Tdap previously (regardless of when previous dose of Td was received). Get Td boosters every 10 years thereafter.
<b><u>Hepatitis B Vaccination</u></b> *NOTE- If serology does NOT show protection from Hepatitis B, please consult with your healthcare provider to restart series and provide documentation of repeat series in progress. +If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.	Date of Serology testing: ___/___/___ Anti-HBc Immune _____ Not Immune _____ (Health care provider initials) ***** If not immune: Vaccine #1 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Vaccine #2 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Vaccine #3 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials)
<b><u>Influenza Vaccination</u></b>	Date ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials)
<b><u>Meningococcal</u></b>	Date ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) *Only required if age is <22 years old.
<b><u>MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) Vaccinations</u></b> If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required	Date of serology testing: ___/___/___ Measles: Immune _____ Not Immune _____ Mumps: Immune _____ Not Immune _____ Rubella: Immune _____ Not Immune _____ (Health care provider initials) ***** If not immune: Vaccine #1 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Vaccine #2 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials)
<b><u>Varicella Vaccination</u></b> If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.	Date of serology testing: ___/___/___ Varicella: Immune _____ Not Immune _____ (Health care provider initials) ***** not immune: Vaccine #1 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Vaccine #2 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials)
<b><u>COVID-19 Vaccination</u></b>	Vaccine #1 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Vaccine #2 ___/___/___ (if a 2 dose series) _____ (Health care provider initials) Booster #1 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials) Booster #2 ___/___/___ _____ (Health care provider initials)

Check box if patient has a medical contraindication to receiving a vaccine. Indicate which vaccine: \_\_\_\_\_

All immunization dates and/or vaccine contraindication(s) above are hereby certified by:

Healthcare Provider Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Healthcare Provider Name Printed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this statement, the student provides a waiver for the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program faculty and staff to maintain and release immunization and tuberculosis screening results.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ \*USE THIS FORM TO DOCUMENT IMMUNIZATIONS. IF MULTIPLE PROVIDERS GAVE IMMUNIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, GATHER ALL IMMUNIZATION RECORDS AND TAKE THEM WITH YOU WHEN YOU SEE YOUR PROVIDER TO COMPLETE THIS FORM.\*

**DO NOT SEND MEDICAL RECORDS!**



**HARDIN-SIMMONS**  
UNIVERSITY  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

**HEALTH CLEARANCE FORM**

**Based upon standard history and physical exam findings, this applicant is able to provide patient care services required of a Physician Assistant student. Medical records of this applicant are on file at the provider’s office:**

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**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Healthcare Provider Signature:**\_\_\_\_\_

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

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**Healthcare Provider Printed Name:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:**\_\_\_\_\_

**City:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:( )** \_\_\_\_\_





**HARDIN-SIMMONS**  
**U N I V E R S I T Y**  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

**STUDENT INCIDENT FORM**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Cause: \_\_\_\_\_

Give brief description of incident, including predominating and contributing causes:

State corrective action taken to prevent recurrence. Indicate if further investigation is warranted:

Did you seek medical care?       Yes     No

Was clinical preceptor notified?     Yes     No      Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time/Method PA Program Notified: \_\_\_\_\_

Report reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student Injured: \_\_\_\_\_