



# 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.

The Student Handbook is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current standards and best practices. Students will receive the most up-to-date policies during orientation and are responsible for adhering to all published guidelines.

### **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: [Home - ARC-PA](#)

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 [Accreditation-History-Hardin-Simmons-U-272.pdf \(arc-pa.org\)](#)

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: [Accreditation Standards - ARC-PA](#)

## 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:

[Master of Physician Assistant Program in Texas - HSU](#)

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 instead 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's 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. Apply foundational medical sciences to inform clinical decision-making and management of patients. *(medical knowledge; clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
2. Accurately obtain and document a medical history, including chief complaint, medical, family, social history, and review of systems, to support clinical decision-making. *(clinical and technical skills)*
3. Demonstrate proficiency in performing a physical examination, utilizing appropriate techniques to assess body systems based on the patient's clinical presentation and history. *(clinical and technical skills)*
4. Assess and apply knowledge of disease etiology, epidemiology, and risk factors to identify health conditions in both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. *(medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
5. Demonstrate the ability to apply risk-appropriate patient screenings using evidence-based guidelines to identify health risks, promote disease prevention, and support early disease detection across the life span. *(medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
6. Demonstrate the ability to recognize, assess, and address social determinants of health that impact patient outcomes and healthcare delivery, applying this understanding to promote equitable, patient-centered care across diverse populations. *(medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem solving, professionalism)*
7. Apply evidence-based clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills to demonstrate comprehensive, systems-based knowledge across the spectrum of clinical medicine. *(clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
8. Competently perform clinical and technical skills essential for the evaluation and management of patients. *(clinical & technical skills)*
9. Accurately order and interpret diagnostic and laboratory data to support clinical decision-making. *(medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
10. Synthesize acquired patient history, physical examination findings, and diagnostic data to formulate a differential diagnosis and a comprehensive assessment, incorporating evidence-based practices. *(medical knowledge; clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
11. Formulate and implement patient-centered treatment plans and interventions based on clinical assessment, evidence-based guidelines, and individual patient needs across the life span. *(clinical reasoning & problem solving)*
12. Demonstrate responsible prescribing practices by applying knowledge of pharmacologic agents, including their indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and potential adverse reactions, to ensure safe and effective patient care. *(medical knowledge, professionalism)*

13. Communicate test results, treatment plans, and health-related information to patients in a clear, culturally sensitive, and confidential manner to support informed decision-making and patient-centered care. *(interpersonal skills, professionalism)*
14. Communicate patient information effectively with members of the healthcare team through clear oral presentations and accurate, concise written documentation. *(interpersonal skills, clinical & technical skills)*
15. Exhibit professionalism, respect, and ethical behavior in both educational and clinical environments. *(professionalism)*
16. Demonstrate a foundational knowledge of the physician assistant profession, the roles and responsibilities of various health professionals, and the principles of interprofessional collaboration essential to effective team-based healthcare. *(medical knowledge)*
17. Demonstrate the ability to critically appraise, conduct, and disseminate scholarly research that contributes to the advancement of clinical knowledge and practice, aligning with the principles of evidence-based medicine. *(medical knowledge, clinical reasoning & problem-solving)*

# Hardin-Simmons University PA Department

## DEGREE PLAN

Course #		Credit Hours	Semester Hours	
YEAR ONE: DIDACTIC				
Semester: Fall				
PA 6402	Human Anatomy	4	18	
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		
Semester: Spring				
PA 6416	Clinical Medicine II	4	18	
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 6234	Research & Evidence-Based Medicine	2		
Semester: Summer				
PA 6230	Physiology & Pathophysiology III	2	17	
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		
YEAR TWO: CLINICAL				
Clinical Rotations are 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 Surgery / PA 6552 Emergency Medicine / PA 6554 Elective 1 / PA 6556 Elective 2 / PA 6560 Professional Development				
Semester: Fall				
	Clinical Rotations: 1,2, & 3	15	45	
Semester: Spring				
	Clinical Rotations: 4,5, & 6	15		
Semester: Summer				
	Clinical Rotations: 7,8, & 9	15		
Semester: Last Fall Prior to Graduation				
	Clinical Rotation: 10	5	14	
PA 6458	Professional Practice Preparation	4		
PA 6362	Capstone	3		
PA 6264	Health Policy, Billing, & Coding	2		
	Year One: Didactic Year Totals	53	112 Hours	
	Year Two: Clinical Year Totals	59		

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

### **PA 6402 Human Anatomy**

**4 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

This course is the first course of a three-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. 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. Clinical chemistry principles, ordering, and interpretation of diagnostic tests, procedures, and correlations will be discussed to provide information for appropriate clinical application.

**PA 6312 Physiology & Pathophysiology II****3 credit hours**

This course is the second course of a three-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. 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. Clinical chemistry principles, ordering, and interpretation of diagnostic tests, procedures, and correlations will be discussed to provide information for appropriate clinical application.

**PA 6230 Physiology & Pathophysiology III****2 credit hours**

This course is the third course of a three-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. 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. Clinical chemistry principles, ordering, and interpretation of diagnostic tests, procedures, and correlations will be discussed to provide information for appropriate clinical application.

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

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit 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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

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 hour**

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 6234 Research & Evidence-Based Medicine****2 credit 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 credit 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****5 credit 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 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation in internal medicine provides practical experience in diagnosing and managing a wide array of medical conditions in adult and geriatric patients. Students will develop proficiency in addressing both acute and chronic needs while incorporating health promotion, disease prevention, and evidence-based practices.

(5-week rotation)

**PA 6540 Family Medicine****5 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation in family medicine offers practical experience in diagnosing and managing a wide range of primary care conditions. Students will gain proficiency in addressing the acute, chronic, and preventive health needs of patients across the lifespan, from children (over 2 years old) to geriatric adults, in an outpatient setting.

(5-week rotation).

**PA 6542 Pediatrics****5 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation in pediatrics provides practical experience in the diagnosis and management of prevalent childhood illnesses. Students will develop proficiency in recognizing both typical and atypical development from infancy through adolescence and will address the acute, chronic, and preventative health needs of pediatric patients.

(5-week rotation).

**PA 6544 Women's Health****5 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation in women's health offers practical experience in diagnosing and managing health conditions affecting adult and geriatric women, including exposure to prenatal and gynecologic care. Students will develop proficiency in addressing acute, chronic, and preventative health needs within these areas.

(5-week rotation).

**PA 6546 Mental Health****5 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation provides practical experience in the diagnosis and management of behavioral and mental health conditions, fostering student proficiency in addressing both acute and chronic presentations. (5-week rotation)

**PA 6560 Professional Development****5 credit hours**

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 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation introduces the principles and practice of surgical intervention for injuries and diseases. Students will gain practical experience with inpatient surgical management, including pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care. The course will allow for the exploration of surgical procedures, techniques, and instruments. (5-week rotation)

**PA 6552 Emergency Medicine****5 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation offers students the opportunity to evaluate patients with acute and emergent conditions in the Emergency Department (ED) setting. Students will develop medical decision-making skills (MDM) by assessing the complexity of diagnoses and management options, incorporating critical thinking and risk assessment. The rotation explores a generalist approach to emergency care and injury prevention. (5-week rotation)

**PA 6554 & 6556 Clinical Elective I & Clinical Elective II****5 credit hours**

This supervised clinical rotation provides students with a valuable opportunity to explore a potential area of specialization within medicine or surgery, allowing them to gain focused training and enhance their learning during the clinical phase of the program. (Two 5-week rotations)

**PA 6458 Professional Practice Preparation****4 credit hours**

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.

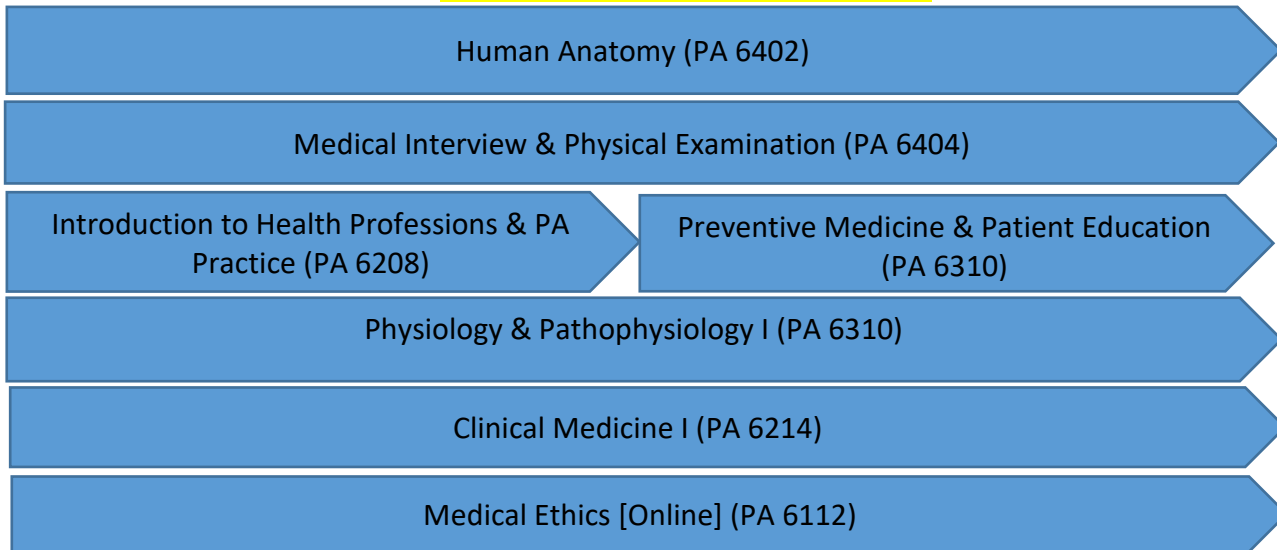
**PA 6362 Capstone****3 credit hours**

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.

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**

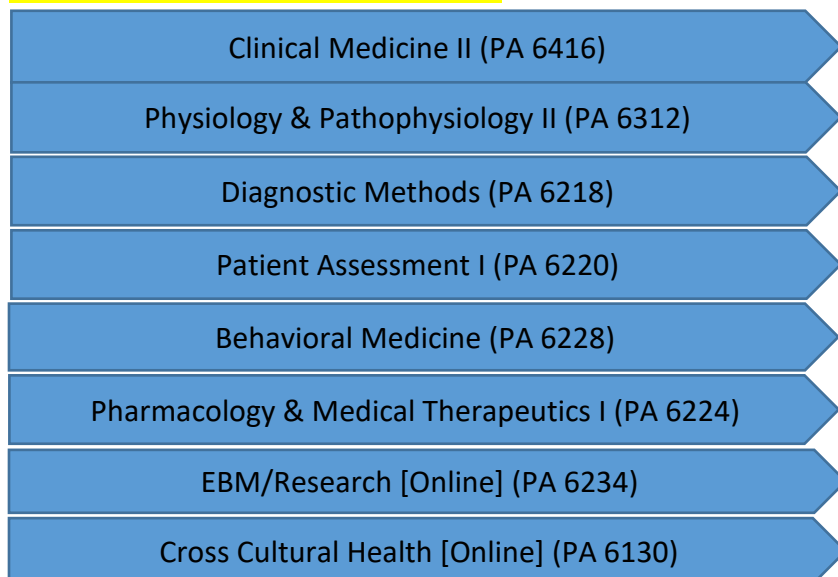
#### **FALL Year One (Start mid-late August)**



#### **HOLIDAYS:**

LABOR DAY  
FALL BREAK  
THANKSGIVING WEEK

#### **SPRING Year One (start Jan end April/May)**



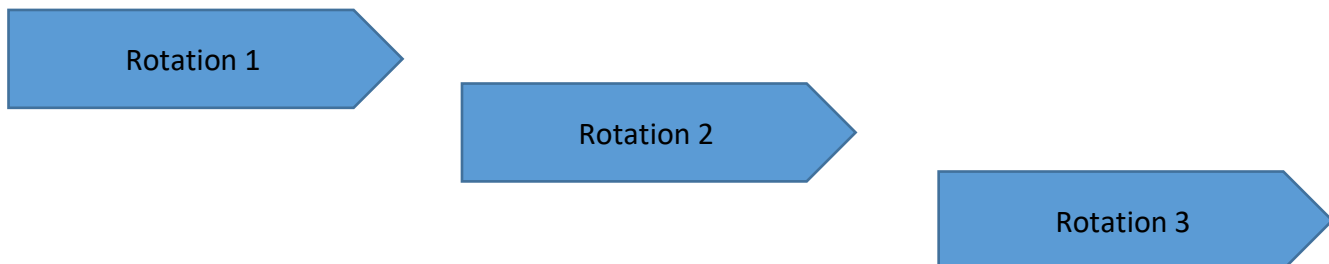
**HOLIDAYS:**  
MLK DAY  
SPRING BREAK  
GOOD FRIDAY

**SUMMER Year One (start May end August)**



**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.)**

Rotation 4

Rotation 5

Rotation 6

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

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

Rotation 7

Rotation 8

Rotation 9

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

**FALL Year Three (starts Aug/Sept)**

Rotation 10

Professional Practice Preparation (PA 6458)

Capstone (PA 6362)

Health Policy, Billing, & Coding (PA 6264)

**GRADUATION**  
**Mid-December**

**HOLIDAYS:**  
TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE  
FALL BREAK (final Fall semester)  
THANKSGIVING WEEK (final Fall semester)

**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 vendor by the first week of orientation. Do not purchase any of these items listed below beforehand as they are included in the equipment package and cannot be “pieced” together. Some students may have their own equipment which can be used in the clinical year if the student’s advisor approves and 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.

**From The Medical Store – purchased by student:**

- Welch Allyn 3.5V NiCad Diagnostic Set
  - Includes: Pocket Eye Chart, Learner Practice Eye, Sleeve of 34 disposable ear specula, EENT reference guidebook
- Welch Allyn Economy Gauge Blood Pressure Adult Cuff
- Littmann Cardiology IV Diagnostic Stethoscope
- Insufflator Bulb for Otoscope
- Taylor Reflex Hammer
- C-128 Hz Tuning Fork
- C-512 Hz Tuning Fork
- Measuring Tape
- 6” clear plastic ruler
- Soft LED Penlight with pupil gauge, AAA batteries
- Rosenbaum pocket eye chart
- Black Nylon medical Bag (Optional)
- White lapel coat with embroidered PA patch

**\*\*No substitutions unless pre-approved by PA Program Faculty**

**Other – provided by student:**

- Small containers to hold materials to test sense of smell
- Wristwatch with a second hand (smart watches cannot be utilized for examinations)

**Other Required Equipment:**

White Short Lab Coat with departmental patch/embroidering

\*Smart Phone with Data Package

\*\*Laptop Computer

\*Refer to [Technology Services - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

\*\*Refer to [Minimum System Requirements - ExamSoft](#)

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 \$107,912 – \$116,117, 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 [Master of Physician Assistant Program in Texas - HSU](#).** 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 [Master of Physician Assistant Program in Texas - HSU](#) under the Tuition & Fees for the PA Program tab. Reliable transportation is required in the clinical year for commuting to supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs).

**UNIVERSITY 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. [Refund Policy - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

**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: [Student Membership - AAPA](#)

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: [Texas Academy of PAs](#)

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

### **Cowboy Cash**

Cowboy Cash are funds a student may load 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: [Business Office - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

### **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 [Business Office - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

#### **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 56.

### **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 Chair of the Scholarship Committee or 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. Only sweatshirts or pullovers with the HSU or HSU PA logo/design are permitted. Students may wear an HSU-approved T-shirt with scrub bottoms on Fridays only if professional dress is not required. Mini-skirts, shorts, strapless tops, tank tops, facial piercings, and flip-flops are not appropriate. Hats or head coverings 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-toe sneakers or shoes, and lab coat (optional). Shorts are not allowed. No one will be permitted in the anatomy laboratory without safe footwear or appropriate clothing. If appropriate attire is not worn, the student will be dismissed from class and will receive an unexcused absence. The student is responsible for the missed content.

Appropriate attire during physical examination labs include scrubs, shorts, jog/sports bra, and short-sleeved T-shirts. Clothing needs to allow for appropriate examination of the scheduled lab. If appropriate dress is not worn to facilitate appropriate examination, the student may be dismissed from class and receive an unexcused absence.

Anatomy and physical examination attire must be worn in the lab area only. Locker room facilities are provided for changing into appropriate clothing for a given class.

In simulated and supervised clinical practice encounters, 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 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. Attendance is mandatory for all Faculty Hour Meetings. Unexcused absences will result in an Early Concern Note. Continued infractions will result in the generation of an additional Early Concern note or a permanent Letter of Concern.

### **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 notify 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: [Registrar's Office - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

### **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, Program Director, and Medical Director will not participate as healthcare providers for students in the Program. It is acceptable for healthcare to be provided in an emergency 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. While secondary insurance policies (fixed indemnity) may help cover additional expenses, they are not a replacement for the required primary health insurance policy. Co-op policies are not considered insurance and therefore will not be accepted by the program.

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

The Office of Student Life offers free counseling services to students. A provider referral is not necessary. Students may contact counseling services directly through email or calling. Counseling service will respond to inquiries within 1-2 business days. Additional information about these services can be found at the following website: [Counseling Services - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

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 and screenings listed on the Immunization Verification Document. Some immunizations and screenings may need to be repeated on an annual basis due to clinical site requirements. 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.

[Recommended Vaccinations for Adults | Vaccines & Immunizations | CDC](#)

#### **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: [Destinations | Travelers' Health | CDC](#) 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: [Travel](#)



## **STUDENT RECORDS:**

Hardin-Simmons University PA students will not have access to 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 (minimum of three). 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 on an annual basis. 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 on an annual basis (minimum of three). 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 the 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 [Title IX - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

## 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.

## ONLINE PROFESSIONALISM & ETIQUETTE

### ONLINE VIDEO CLASSES

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 important guidelines to ensure students are developing and maintaining professional behavior during online video lectures. Please remember that our esteemed guest lecturers (and core faculty) work very hard to provide students 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 Online 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. Online video 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 during online video sessions. 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 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.

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 online video sessions. 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 online video session ends. Do not drive while participating in online video sessions.

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 online video 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 recording fails.

*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.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

While enrolled in the Hardin-Simmons University (HSU) Physician Assistant (PA) Program, students are expected to maintain professionalism in all online interactions. A student's online presence reflects themselves, the university, the HSU PA Program, and the PA profession. Students should not send friend requests or follow faculty, staff, guest lecturers, or clinical preceptors on their personal social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn) while enrolled in the HSU PA Program. Violating this policy may result in the issuance of an Early Concern Note. An exception will be made if a student has an established social media connection prior to admittance to the program. Any questions regarding contacts on social media can be directed to the student's academic advisor.

At no time should a student represent themselves as a practicing medical provider or provide medical advice on any social media platform. Additionally, students must ensure that their thoughts and opinions expressed online are not misrepresented as views or opinions of Hardin-Simmons University or the HSU PA Program. Any student found to be misrepresenting their current role or providing medical advice without the appropriate license will be in violation of the professional and academic integrity policy, which may result in a Letter of Concern or dismissal from the program.

## UNIVERSITY OFFICES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES:

**Campus Map.** Campus map is located at [Maps & Directions - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

**Physician Assistant Building:** Departmental faculty, staff offices, classrooms, Physical Exam Lab, Anatomy Lab, and computer testing lab are located on the HSU campus in Mabree 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 Mabree Hall or on the HSU campus in designated areas.

Additional information regarding parking and traffic regulations can be found at: [Parking and Traffic Regulations - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

### **HSU Library:**

The main Hardin-Simmons University library is named the Richardson Library. Their website is [Home - Homepage - Richardson Library at Hardin-Simmons University](#). 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, [Home - Physician Assistant - Richardson Library at Hardin-Simmons University](#), 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 [Home - Homepage - Richardson Library at Hardin-Simmons University](#)

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 [Home - Physician Assistant - Richardson Library at Hardin-Simmons University](#)

**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. [Official H.S.U. Bookstore Apparel, Merchandise & Gifts](#)

**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: [Residence Life - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

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 Disability Office online at [Disability Services - Hardin-Simmons University](#) 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 their 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 accommodation in a timely manner, allowing reasonable time for the University to respond. The student has the additional responsibility of providing 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: [Disability Services - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

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 includes but is not limited to practical examinations, OSCEs, etc.

When a student has been granted testing accommodations by the Disability Services Office, the accommodation letter must be submitted **within 5 business days of the start of each semester** (or within 5 business days of receiving the letter, if approved mid-semester) for as long as those accommodations remain active.

A copy of each letter for each course should be sent to all PA faculty members, to include the Program Director every semester. During the clinical year, the Director of Clinical Education should also receive a copy of each letter for each course every semester.

Students will **not** be permitted extended time or other accommodations on any exam unless a valid accommodation letter has been submitted within the appropriate timeframe for each applicable semester. Retroactive accommodations will **not** be granted.

Securing a testing room through the Disability Services Office is the **student's sole responsibility**. This arrangement needs to be made within 5 business days of the release of the testing schedule. Should an examination date or time change during the semester, the student is responsible for notifying the Disability Services Offices as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in the student taking the examination without full accommodations.

Should the Disability Services Office have a scheduling conflict with an examination date or time, the student must notify the Course Instructor immediately. This prompt notification allows the PA Program to arrange an alternative testing date and time. However, if the student does not schedule the test after receiving the testing schedule and a room is unavailable, the Program is not obligated to reschedule the student's test, and the student may have to take the test without full accommodations. Failure to schedule exams in a timely manner may also be considered a violation of the program's Professionalism Policy and may result in an Early Concern Note (or Letter of Concern if there has been prior documented professionalism violations).

Extended time accommodations **do not apply** to the following assessment formats:

- **In-person practical examinations**
- **Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)**
- **Live or simulated patient encounters**

These assessment formats are designed to evaluate clinical decision-making and communication skills within real-time constraints reflective of professional practice standards. All students will be held to the same timing and performance expectations for these encounters.

Students are encouraged to maintain open communication with their advisor, course instructors, and the Academic Director regarding testing logistics and any concerns related to accommodations.

**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: [Hardin-Simmons Virtual Career Center](#)

**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: [Campus Regulations - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

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: [Academic Calendar - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

### **Harassment:**

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.

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 at 325-670-1253, 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. Please see the HSU Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy at the following link: [HSU-Title-IX-Policy-10-14-22.pdf](#)

For more information, see the HSU Student Handbook which can be found at [Current Students - Hardin-Simmons University](#)



## DIDACTIC PHASE TECHNICAL PROCEDURE CHECKLIST: IN SIMULATION/ STANDARDIZED PATIENTS

Category	Skill	Date Demonstrated	Faculty Initials
<b>Professional Training</b>			
	ACLS Certification		
	BLS Certification		
	HIPAA Training		
	OSHA Training		
<b>Patient Safety</b>			
	N-95 Respirator Fit		
	OR Scrub Technique		
	Sharps Precautions		
	Standard Precautions		
	Sterile Gowning & Gloving		
<b>Patient Evaluation/ Documents</b>			
	Breast Examination		
	Comprehensive H&P Note		
	History taking		
	Male GU Examination		
	Mental Status Assessment		
	Pelvic Examination		
	Physical Examination (Adult Comprehensive)		
	Focused History & Physical Examination		
	Physical Examination (Neonatal)		
	Procedure Note		
	Rectal Examination		
	SOAP Note		
<b>Clinical Procedures</b>			
	Arthrocentesis		
	Casting		
	Digital block		
	Electrocardiogram		
	Regional Anesthesia		
	Incision & Drainage		
	Intramuscular Injection		
	Lumbar Puncture		
	Nasogastric Tube placement		
	Splinting		
	Subcutaneous Injection		
	Suture Lab (Suture placement with instrument tie)		
	Suture Lab (Surgical knot tying.)		
	Tissue Biopsy		
	Urinary Catheterization		
	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. Anytime 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

Punctuality is a critical component of professional behavior and is expected of all students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program. Timely arrival allows for full participation, minimizes classroom disruption, and fosters a respectful learning environment.

### Notification Requirement

If a student anticipates being late to class, it is their responsibility to notify the course instructor **a minimum of 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time**. Failure to do so will result in the tardy being recorded as an **unexcused absence**.

### Tardy Accumulation

- Every **two tardies**—regardless of prior notification—will be counted as **one unexcused absence**.
- Accumulated unexcused absences will be addressed according to the **Attendance Policy** outlined in the subsequent/prior section of this handbook.

### Repeated Tardiness

A **Frequent** or habitual late arrivals may result in:

- A **reduction in attendance points** proportional to the number of equivalent unexcused absences.
- Production of Early Concern Note or Letter of Concern per the program professionalism policy.

### Responsibility for Missed Content

Students are responsible for any material, announcements, or activities missed due to tardiness. It is the student's obligation to obtain notes or updates.

### Expectations for Arrival

To ensure readiness and prevent disruption, students are expected to be in their seat **at least 10 minutes prior to the start of class** to allow sufficient time to set up their computer and prepare for instruction.

### Exam Arrival Policy

To maintain fairness and academic integrity during examinations, the following policy applies:

#### 1. **Arrival Time:**

- Students must arrive in the testing center room **at least 10 minutes before the scheduled exam start time** at the PA Testing Center Room 117, Office of Disabilities Testing Center (as applicable), or designated location by PA faculty. The door will be closed 5 minutes prior to the start of the exam.

## 2. Seating Deadline:

- All students must be **seated a minimum of 5 minutes prior to the scheduled exam start time**. At that point, the exam room door will be closed and the student may not enter the room.

## 3. Late Arrival Consequences:

- Arriving late disrupts the testing environment for other students and is considered unprofessional behavior.
- If a student arrives **after the door has closed** but **within 5 minutes** of the exam start time:
  - The student must report to the **Faculty Offices** for further instructions.
  - The student will be **permitted to take the exam**, but will receive an **automatic 10-point deduction** on that exam.
- If a student arrives **after the start of the exam**, they will **not be permitted to take the exam**, and a grade of **zero (0)** will be recorded in the gradebook.
- Repetitive late arrivals to examinations may result in an Early Concern Note and/or referral to Grading and Promotions committee.

## 4. No Exceptions:

- 5. This policy applies to all written and computer-based exams unless otherwise approved in writing or due to extenuating circumstances.

## DIDACTIC STUDENTS

### Excused Absences

Students may request up to three (3) excused absences per course per semester for the following reasons:

- Personal illness/unexpected circumstances (with healthcare provider documentation if requested)
- Religious or cultural observances
- Personal appointments

Requests for excused absences must be submitted to the course director in advance as outlined below whenever possible, and appropriate documentation may be required.

### Personal Illness/Unexpected Circumstances

- The student must notify the course coordinator at least 30 minutes before the start of class (or as early as possible in an emergency).
- If the absence is due to illness and extends to two (2) or more consecutive days, a healthcare provider's note is required. This note must be shared with all affected course coordinators and the student's advisor.
- After three excused absences, any additional absences will be considered unexcused and handled according to the unexcused absence policy.

### Make-Up Work:

Students who comply with all notification and documentation requirements will be permitted to make up missed assignments or assessments resulting from excused absences. It is the student's responsibility to obtain any missed course content, either by reviewing class recordings or by securing notes from classmates.

### Religious or Cultural Observances

Students who wish to observe religious holy days must submit a request within the first week of the semester for approval. Absences for approved religious observances are included within the three excused absences per course per semester.

Students must complete any missed examinations or assignments on the first class day after returning from the observance. Excused absences will not be granted for in-person practical assessments, patient encounters, or OSCEs. Failure to provide prior notice or to complete make-up work may result in a deduction in the affected course participation grade per the unexcused absence policy or an Early Concern Note.

#### Approved Personal Appointments

Requests for excused absences for personal appointments (e.g., medical, legal) will be considered case-by-case by the course coordinator.

- Requests should be submitted at least two weeks in advance, when possible.
- If approved, students must provide a return-to-work note (for medical appointments), receipts or other proof of attendance.
- Students are strongly encouraged to schedule personal appointments outside of class time whenever possible.
- Notification after the fact is not acceptable except in emergencies.

#### Funeral Leave Policy

Up to three (3) days of funeral leave may be granted to allow funeral attendance. Students must provide appropriate documentation, such as an obituary, death certificate, or funeral home record.

#### Examinations and Skills Assessments

Make-up opportunities for missed examinations, practicals, and OSCEs are more restrictive due to the complexity of rescheduling and may not be guaranteed. Approval for make-ups will be determined at the discretion of the course director and program administration.

#### Additional Guidance

Students anticipating multiple absences should meet with program leadership to discuss the possible impact on their coursework and progression.

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, an additional 40% - second occurrence, and the final 40% - third occurrence (for a total deduction of 100% of the attendance/professionalism grade). 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.

#### **Excused Absences to Attend Conferences:**

For a student to be considered excused to attend a local or national conference, a request must be submitted and approved by the student's advisor no later than the below dates:

- Didactic Students – 2 weeks minimum prior to absence date for approval by advisor
- Clinical Students – 4 weeks minimum prior to absence date for approval by the Director of Clinical Education

If a request is not submitted and approved by the above deadline, any absences will be considered unexcused and will follow the Unexcused Absence Policy.

## **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.

Excused Absences to Attend Conferences:

For a student to be considered excused to attend a local or national conference, a request must be submitted and approved by the student's advisor no later than the below dates:

- Didactic Students – 2 weeks minimum prior to absence date for approval by advisor
- Clinical Students – 4 weeks minimum prior to absence date for approval by the Director of Clinical Education

If a request is not submitted and approved by the above deadline, any absences will be considered unexcused and will follow the Unexcused Absence Policy.

**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, an additional 40% - second occurrence, and the final 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 course where the deficiency occurs. The deduction will be calculated by the specified course coordinator(s) as follows: 20% - first occurrence, an additional 40% - second occurrence, and the final 40% - third occurrence (for a total deduction of 100% of the attendance/professionalism grade). If there are more than three occurrences, this will result in the generation of an Early Concern note or a permanent Letter of Concern. If a student was absent for a guest lecture, the evaluation should NOT be completed and the student's grade will not be penalized. Should an evaluation be completed for a guest lecture / event that was not attended by the student, this will be considered a professionalism violation and may 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 and/or professionalism.
- 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).

#### **[Student Academy - AAPA](#)**

- 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/STANDARDS:**

### **General Academic Requirements**

- Grade Point Average (GPA): Students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher in all graduate coursework. When a course is repeated, only the most recent grade will be used to calculate the GPA.
- Grading Standards: Students may not obtain a grade of 'D' or 'F' in any graduate course.
- A student will be placed on academic probation if their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 or if they receive a grade of 'D' or 'F' in any graduate course provided they are allowed to remain in the program.
- A student on academic probation is not eligible to graduate.
- To return to good academic standing, a student must meet the requirements set by their graduate advisory committee and achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better.

### **Didactic Curriculum Standards**

In addition to the general academic requirements, students in the didactic curriculum must meet these specific standards:

- Course Grades: Students must earn a final course grade of 'B' (80%) or higher in all didactic courses.
- Probation: A student who earns a course grade of 'C' in a didactic course will be placed on academic probation.

### **Clinical Curriculum Standards**

During the clinical curriculum, students may earn a final course grade of 'C' (70-79%), provided they maintain the minimum 3.0 GPA requirement.

### **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%

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.

## **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

## REMEDIATION:

The Hardin-Simmons University PA Program monitors and documents 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 implementing a strategy 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, a comprehensive final, 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.**

If a student scores less than 80% on the final comprehensive examination, 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 the failed comprehensive final examination. The student will be given an incomplete (I) for the final grade recorded in the class until student has undergone remediation and reassessment outlined in the didactic policies below. See Phase II-A below.

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.

## **DIDACTIC formal academic remediation policies:**

### ***Phase I –***

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

This policy outlines the procedures for academic remediation for students who achieve a score of 70-79% on their first attempt at any summative examination. The goal of Phase 1A remediation is to provide timely intervention and support to help students improve their understanding of the material and achieve academic success. Upon a student meeting the criteria for Phase 1A remediation, the following steps shall be implemented:

Within 3 business days of the examination grades being released, the student must schedule a mandatory meeting with their respective course instructor. During this meeting, the following will occur:

- **Review of Examination Performance:** The instructor and student will collaboratively review the student's performance on the summative examination, identifying areas of weakness and misconceptions.
- **Identification of Learning Gaps:** The discussion will focus on understanding the root causes of the student's performance, which may include study habits, comprehension issues, or areas requiring additional practice.
- **Development of a Remediation Plan:** The instructor and student will collaboratively develop a personalized remediation plan. This plan may include, but is not limited to:
  - Reviewing specific course materials (e.g., lecture notes, textbook chapters, assigned readings).
  - Engaging in additional practice problems or exercises.
  - Utilizing supplemental resources (e.g., tutoring services, academic support centers, online modules).
  - Participating in study groups.
  - Discussing alternative study strategies.

While Phase 1A remediation is designed to support learning, it does not change the original examination grade. The primary goal is to ensure the student gains a deeper understanding of the material for future success.

**Students:** Are responsible for proactively scheduling and attending the mandatory meeting with their instructor and completing all aspects of the agreed-upon remediation plan within the specified timelines.

**Course Instructors:** Are responsible for promptly identifying students requiring Phase 1A remediation, conducting thorough and supportive meetings, assisting in the development of effective remediation plans, and providing clear guidelines on the Post-Assessment Documentation form.

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

This policy outlines the comprehensive procedures for academic remediation for students who meet specific criteria indicating a greater need for intervention, specifically those scoring 70-79% on two or more summative examinations, or scoring below 70% on any summative examination. The goal of Phase 1B remediation is to

provide robust support, guidance, and a structured plan to address significant academic challenges and promote sustained improvement.

Upon a student meeting the criteria for Phase 1B remediation, the following integrated steps shall be implemented:

### **Student-Instructor Meeting**

Within 3 business days of the examination grades being released that trigger Phase 1B, the student must schedule a mandatory meeting with their respective course instructor. During this meeting, the following will occur:

- **In-depth Review of Examination Performance:** The instructor and student will conduct a thorough review of the student's performance across all relevant summative examinations, pinpointing specific areas of weakness, recurring misconceptions, and patterns of difficulty.
- **Identification of Underlying Learning Gaps:** The discussion will delve deeper into understanding the fundamental causes of the student's academic challenges, which may encompass study habits, foundational knowledge gaps, critical thinking skills, or external factors.
- **Initial Remediation Strategy Discussion:** The instructor and student will begin to discuss initial strategies for academic improvement, which will inform the broader Academic Improvement Plan.

**Course Instructors:** Are responsible for promptly identifying students requiring Phase 1B remediation, conducting thorough and supportive meetings, assisting in the development of effective remediation plans, and providing clear guidelines on the Post-Assessment Documentation form.

### **Student-Faculty Advisor Meeting**

Concurrently or immediately following the student-instructor meeting, the student must schedule and attend a mandatory meeting with their assigned faculty advisor. During this meeting, the following will occur:

- **Holistic Academic Assessment:** The faculty advisor will conduct a broader assessment of the student's academic standing, considering performance across multiple courses and overall academic progress.
- **Discussion of Academic Goals and Challenges:** The advisor will discuss the student's academic goals, current challenges, and potential barriers to success.
- **Guidance on Resources:** The advisor will provide comprehensive guidance on available academic support resources, including but not limited to:
  - Tutoring services (individual or group)
  - Academic coaching
  - Writing centers
  - Counseling services (if personal factors are impacting academic performance)
  - Time management and study skills workshops

Following the student-faculty advisor meeting, the advisor will complete the Student-Advisor Form. This form will document:

- Key discussion points from the meeting.
- Identified academic challenges.
- Recommended academic support resources.
- Agreed-upon action items for the student.
- Signatures from both the student and the faculty advisor, indicating mutual understanding and commitment.

This form serves as a formal record of the advisory session and the initial steps toward broader academic improvement.

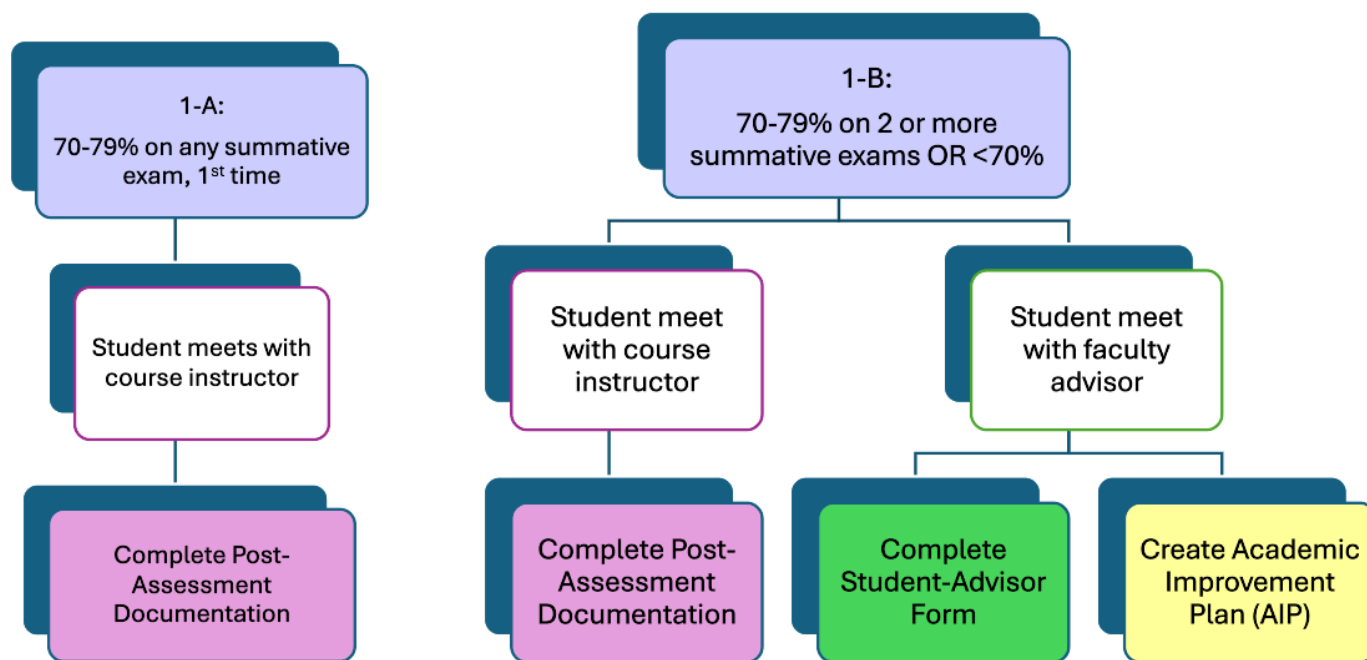
### Creation of an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP)

Based on the insights from both the student-instructor meeting and the student-faculty advisor meeting, the faculty advisor and the course instructor(s), will create a formal Academic Improvement Plan (AIP). The AIP is a comprehensive, actionable document that will include:

- **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (SMART) Goals:** Clearly defined academic goals for the student.
- **Detailed Action Steps:** A breakdown of specific tasks the student will undertake to achieve their goals, including timelines.
- **Required Resources:** A list of all resources the student is expected to utilize (e.g., specific tutoring sessions, workshops, regular advisor check-ins).
- **Monitoring and Review Schedule:** A plan for regular check-ins with the faculty advisor to monitor progress and adjust the AIP as needed.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clear delineation of responsibilities for the student, instructor, and faculty advisor.

The AIP must be finalized and signed by the student and faculty advisor within 10 business days of the Phase 1B trigger.

## Didactic Phase 1 Remediation



## **Phase II –**

### **A) < 80% on a Comprehensive Final**

This policy outlines the procedures for academic remediation for students who score less than 80% on a comprehensive final examination but still pass the overall course. The goal of Phase II-A remediation is to ensure mastery of core concepts, even if the course was passed, and to provide a structured pathway for addressing remaining knowledge gaps.

Phase II-A remediation is triggered when a student meets the following criteria:

- Achieves a score of less than 80% (<80%) on the comprehensive final examination AND
- Passes the overall course

#### **Student-Instructor Meeting**

Within 2 business days of the comprehensive final examination grades being released, the student must schedule a mandatory meeting with their respective course instructor. During this meeting, the following will occur:

- **Comprehensive Review of Final Exam Performance:** The instructor and student will conduct a detailed review of the student's performance on the comprehensive final examination, identifying specific areas of weakness and concepts that require further understanding.
- **Identification of Key Learning Deficiencies:** The discussion will focus on understanding the fundamental reasons for the less-than-optimal performance on the comprehensive final, even if the overall course was passed. This may include isolated knowledge gaps or areas requiring deeper integration of concepts.
- **Discussion of Retest Opportunity:** The instructor will discuss the opportunity for a retest on the comprehensive final examination and outline the scope and format of this retest.

#### **Student-Faculty Advisor Meeting**

Concurrently or immediately following the student-instructor meeting, the student must also schedule and attend a mandatory meeting with their assigned faculty advisor. During this meeting, the following will occur:

- **Academic Standing Review:** The faculty advisor will review the student's overall academic standing and discuss the implications of the comprehensive final exam score within the context of their program of study.
- **Guidance on Remediation Process:** The advisor will provide guidance on the Phase II-A remediation process, emphasizing its importance for long-term academic and professional success.
- **Resource Recommendation:** The advisor will recommend appropriate academic support resources that can aid in preparing for the retest and solidifying understanding.

Following the student-faculty advisor meeting, the advisor will complete the Student-Advisor Form. This form will document:

- Key discussion points from the meeting.
- Identified academic challenges.
- Recommended academic support resources.
- Agreed-upon action items for the student.
- Signatures from both the student and the faculty advisor, indicating mutual understanding and commitment.

This form serves as a formal record of the advisory session and the initial steps toward broader academic improvement.

Upon triggering Phase II-A remediation, the student will receive an "I" (Incomplete) as their final grade for the course. This "I" grade will remain until the re-assessment process (retest and associated documentation) is successfully completed.

The student will be scheduled for a retest of the comprehensive final examination. The retest will cover the same material as the original comprehensive final. The retest must be completed within 15 business days of the initial comprehensive final grade release.

#### **Outcomes Based on Retest Performance**

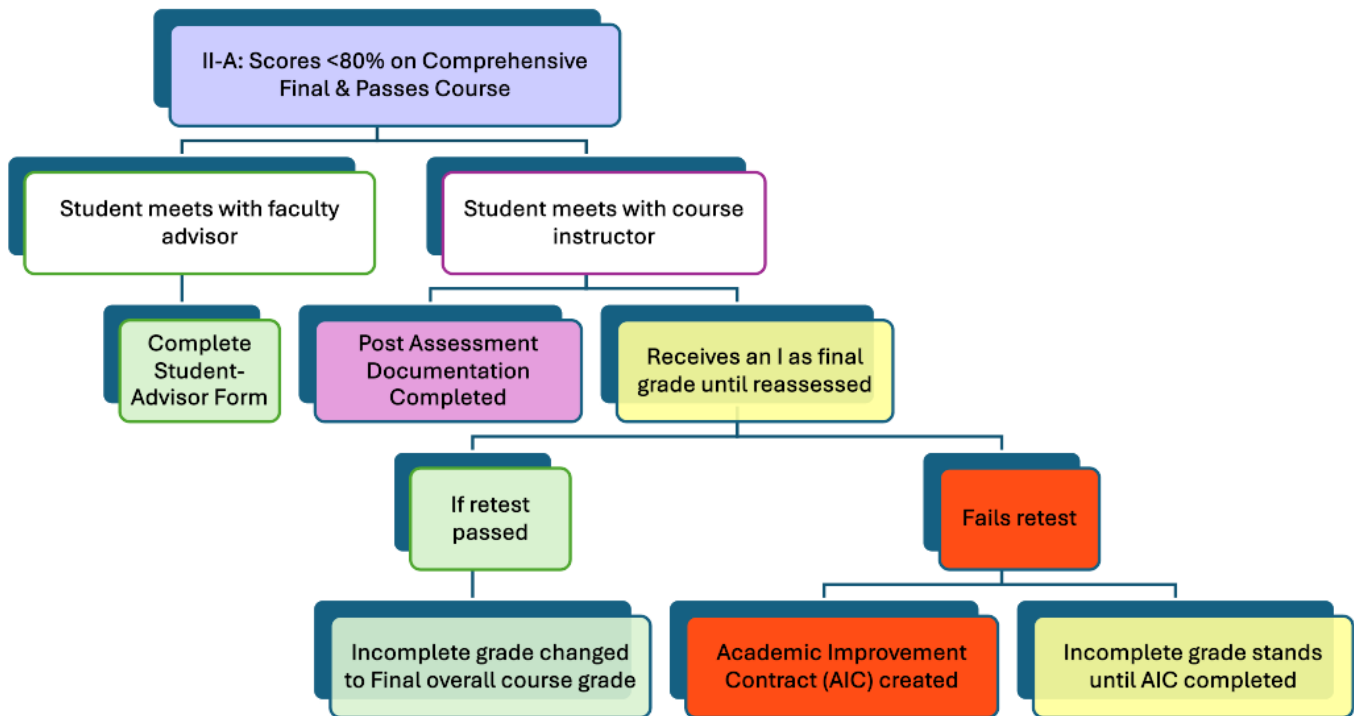
- **If Retest Passed:** If the student achieves a score of 80% or higher on the retest, the "I" (Incomplete) grade will be changed to the final overall course grade, reflecting the student's successful completion of the course and demonstrated mastery of the comprehensive material.
- **If Retest Failed:** If the student fails to achieve a score of 80% or higher on the retest, the following will occur:
  - **Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) Created:** The faculty advisor and course instructor will create a formal Academic Improvement Contract (AIC). This contract will be a more intensive and detailed plan than the AIP from Phase 1B, outlining specific, rigorous steps for remediation, additional academic support, and potential academic consequences if the terms are not met.
  - **Incomplete Grade Stands:** The "I" (Incomplete) grade for the course will remain on the student's transcript until the Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) is fully completed and all its terms are satisfied. Failure to complete the AIC within the stipulated timeframe may result in the "I" grade converting to a failing grade (e.g., "F") as per institutional policy.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- **Students:** Are responsible for proactively scheduling and attending all mandatory meetings, completing all documentation, preparing diligently for and taking the retest, and adhering to the terms of the Academic Improvement Contract, if applicable.
- **Course Instructors:** Are responsible for promptly identifying students requiring Phase II-A remediation, conducting thorough meetings, providing retest opportunities, and collaborating with faculty advisors on AICs.
- **Faculty Advisors:** Play a critical role in providing comprehensive academic guidance, assisting in the development and monitoring of the AIC, connecting students with appropriate resources, and ensuring compliance with the policy.



# Didactic Phase II-A Remediation



## B) Overall Course performance 70-79% -- first time

This policy outlines the procedures for academic remediation for students who achieve a final course grade of 70-79%. This phase signifies a more serious academic standing, requiring direct intervention from the Academic Director and the implementation of formal academic probation and an Academic Improvement Contract (AIC). The goal is to provide intensive support and a clear pathway for students to improve their overall academic performance and avoid potential dismissal.

Upon a student meeting the criteria for Phase II-B remediation, the following integrated steps shall be implemented:

### Meeting with the Academic Director and Advisor

Within 5 business days of the final course grades being released, the student must schedule a mandatory meeting with both the Academic Director and their assigned faculty advisor. This meeting is crucial for addressing the student's academic standing comprehensively. During this meeting, the following will occur:

- **Review of Academic Standing:** The Academic Director and advisor will conduct a thorough review of the student's overall academic performance, including the specific course(s) that triggered Phase II-B remediation, and their cumulative academic record.
- **Discussion of Academic Challenges:** A detailed discussion will take place to identify the underlying causes of the student's academic difficulties, which may include recurring learning gaps, study habits, personal circumstances, or other contributing factors.
- **Explanation of Academic Probation:** The student will be formally informed that they are being placed on Academic Probation, and the implications of this status will be thoroughly explained.
- **Initiation of Academic Improvement Contract (AIC):** The process of creating a formal Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) will be initiated during this meeting.

### **Academic Director: Review Dismissal Policy**

During or immediately following the meeting, the Academic Director will review the institutional dismissal policy with the student. This review serves to:

- **Inform the Student:** Ensure the student is fully aware of the potential consequences of continued academic underperformance, including the criteria and process for academic dismissal.
- **Emphasize Seriousness:** Highlight the seriousness of the student's academic standing and the importance of successful remediation.
- **Clarify Expectations:** Clearly outline the expectations for academic improvement to avoid dismissal.

### **Advisor: Complete Student-Advisor Form**

Following the meeting with the Academic Director and advisor, the faculty advisor will complete a Student-Advisor Form. This form will document:

- Key discussion points from the joint meeting with the Academic Director.
- Identified academic challenges and contributing factors.
- Specific recommendations for academic support and resources.
- Agreed-upon action items for the student as a result of the meeting.
- Signatures from the student and the faculty advisor, acknowledging the discussion and commitments made.

This form serves as a formal record of the advisory session and the initial steps toward broader academic improvement.

### **Placed on Academic Probation**

Upon meeting the criteria for Phase II-B remediation, the student will be formally placed on Academic Probation. This status will be noted on the student's academic record and will carry specific conditions and expectations as outlined in the institution's academic probation policy. The terms of probation will be clearly communicated to the student during the joint meeting with the Academic Director and advisor.

### **Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) Created**

A formal Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) will be created for the student. This contract is a highly structured and individualized plan designed to address the student's specific academic deficiencies and ensure significant improvement. The AIC will be developed collaboratively by the student's faculty advisor and the Academic Director, and will include:

- **Rigorous, Measurable Goals:** Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) academic goals for the student, often including target grades for upcoming courses or specific performance metrics.
- **Detailed Action Steps:** A comprehensive breakdown of specific, mandatory tasks the student will undertake, including timelines (e.g., mandatory tutoring sessions, regular check-ins with instructors, specific study hours, utilization of academic support services).
- **Required Resources and Support:** A list of all resources and support mechanisms the student is required to utilize.
- **Monitoring and Review Schedule:** A strict schedule for regular check-ins and progress reviews with the faculty advisor and/or Academic Director.
- **Clear Consequences:** Explicitly stated consequences for failure to meet the terms of the AIC, which may include further academic sanctions up to and including academic dismissal.
- **Signatures:** The AIC must be signed by the student, faculty advisor, and Academic Director, signifying mutual understanding and commitment to the terms.

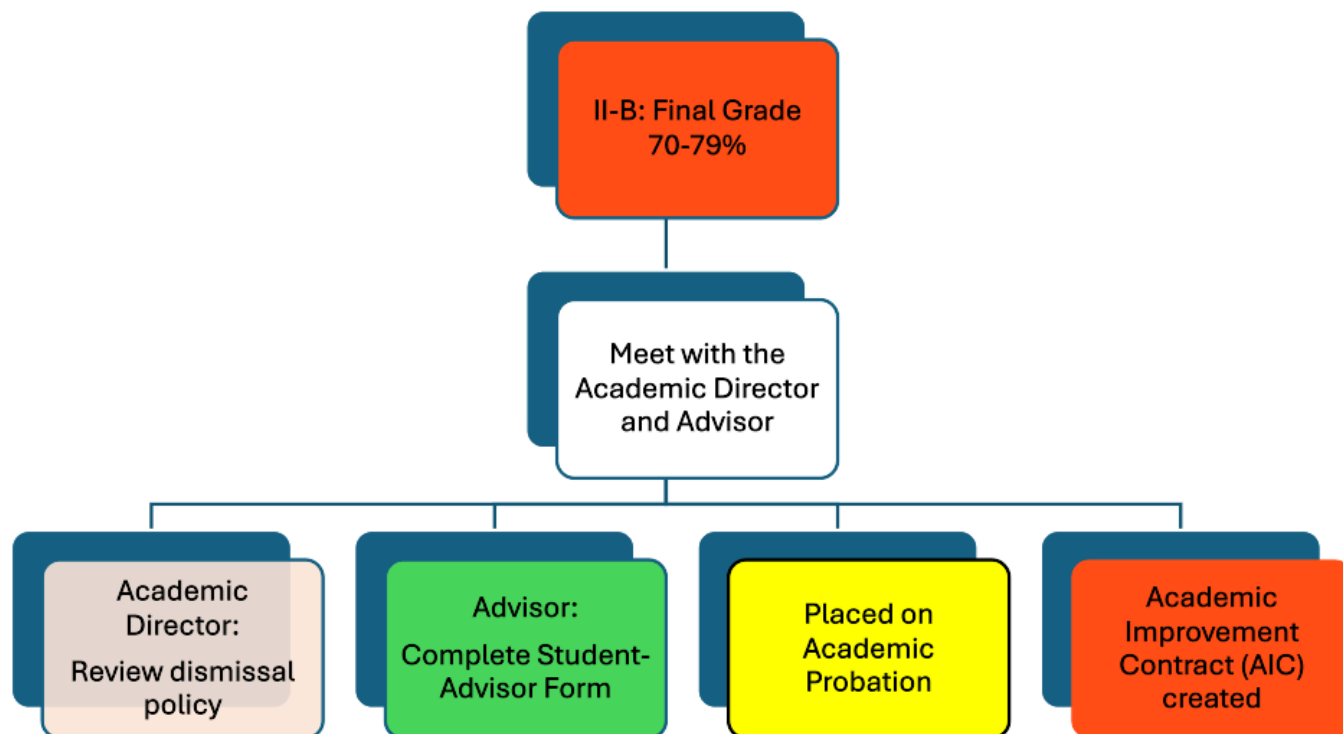
The AIC must be finalized and signed within 10 business days of the joint meeting with the Academic Director and advisor.

Successful completion and adherence to all terms of the Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) are paramount for students in Phase II-B remediation. While the primary goal is academic improvement, continued failure to meet the terms of the AIC or to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress may lead to further academic sanctions, including, but not limited to, suspension or dismissal from the institution, as per the established dismissal policy. The Academic Director will oversee the monitoring of the AIC and make final determinations regarding academic standing.

### Responsibilities

- **Students:** Are solely responsible for actively engaging in the remediation process, adhering to all terms of the Academic Improvement Contract, utilizing all recommended resources, and demonstrating significant academic improvement.
- **Academic Director:** Is responsible for overseeing the Phase II-B remediation process, reviewing dismissal policies, approving and monitoring AICs, and making final decisions regarding academic standing and potential dismissal.
- **Faculty Advisors:** Play a critical role in guiding students through the AIC development and implementation, providing ongoing support, monitoring progress, and communicating with the Academic Director regarding student performance.

## Didactic Phase II-B Remediation



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

This policy outlines the procedures for academic remediation for students who demonstrate significant and sustained academic difficulty, specifically those who score below 70% in an entire course or achieve a final course grade of 70-79% in two or more courses. Phase III remediation involves referral to the Grading & Promotions Committee, potential academic dismissal, and, if retained, a highly structured plan for academic recovery, including academic probation, a revised degree plan, and an Academic Improvement Contract (AIC). The goal is to address severe academic challenges and ensure students can meet the rigorous academic standards of the institution.

Phase III remediation is triggered when a student meets either of the following criteria:

- Achieves a final course grade of less than 70% (<70%) in an entire course OR
- Achieves a final course grade between 70% and 79% (inclusive) in two or more courses.

#### **Referral to Grading & Promotions Committee**

Upon identification of a student meeting the Phase III criteria, their academic record will be immediately referred to the PA Program's Grading & Promotions Committee. This committee is responsible for reviewing cases of significant academic difficulty and making determinations regarding a student's academic standing, including potential dismissal.

#### **Committee Review and Determination**

The Grading & Promotions Committee will conduct a thorough review of the student's academic history, including:

- All course grades and examination scores.
- Previous remediation efforts (e.g., Phase 1A, 1B, IIA, IIB).
- Any relevant documentation from instructors or advisors.
- Student-submitted statements (if permitted by committee procedures).
- 

Following this review, the committee will make one of two determinations:

##### **1. Subject to Dismissal**

- If the committee determines that the student's academic performance is insufficient to continue in the program, the student will be subject to academic dismissal. The student will be formally notified by the Program Director of this decision, and the institutional dismissal policy and appeal process will be explained in detail.

##### **2. If Retained**

- If the committee determines, based on a comprehensive assessment, that the student has the potential for academic recovery and should be retained, the following rigorous conditions and procedures will be immediately implemented:
  - **Revised Degree Plan**
    - A Revised Degree Plan will be created and will result in student deceleration. This plan will be designed to:
      - **Address Academic Deficiencies:** Strategically schedule courses to address foundational knowledge gaps or areas of repeated difficulty.
      - **Optimize Course Load:** Potentially reduce course load to allow for more focused study and remediation.
      - **Incorporate Remediation:** Integrate specific remediation activities directly into the academic schedule.

- **Set Clear Milestones:** Establish clear academic milestones and benchmarks for progress.
  - This revised plan must be approved by the Program Director.
- **Placed on Academic Probation upon Return:**
  - The student will be formally placed on Academic Probation upon return. This status will be noted on the student's academic record and will carry strict conditions and expectations as outlined in the Academic Improvement Contract (AIC). The terms of probation will be clearly communicated to the student.
- **Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) Created**
  - A highly intensive and comprehensive "Academic Improvement Contract (AIC)" will be created for the student. This AIC will supersede any previous remediation plans and will be the primary guiding document for the student's academic recovery. Developed collaboratively by Grading & Promotions Committee, the AIC will include:
    - **Extremely Rigorous, Measurable Goals:** Highly specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) academic goals, often including minimum required grades for all subsequent courses, mandatory attendance at support sessions, and specific performance metrics.
    - **Detailed, Mandatory Action Steps:** A comprehensive breakdown of all required tasks, including strict timelines (e.g., mandatory weekly tutoring, daily study logs, regular progress reports to advisor/director, participation in specific academic skills workshops).
    - **Mandatory Resources and Support:** A list of all mandatory resources and support mechanisms the student *must* utilize, with documented proof of engagement.
    - **Frequent Monitoring and Review Schedule:** A very strict schedule for frequent check-ins and progress reviews with the faculty advisor and Academic Director, potentially involving the Grading & Promotions Committee for periodic updates.
    - **Explicit and Immediate Consequences:** Clearly stated and immediate consequences for any failure to meet the terms of the AIC, which will likely include immediate academic dismissal without further review.
  - **Signatures:** The AIC must be signed by the student, faculty advisor, and Program Director, signifying absolute understanding and commitment to the terms.
- The AIC must be finalized and signed within 10 business days of the committee's decision to retain the student.

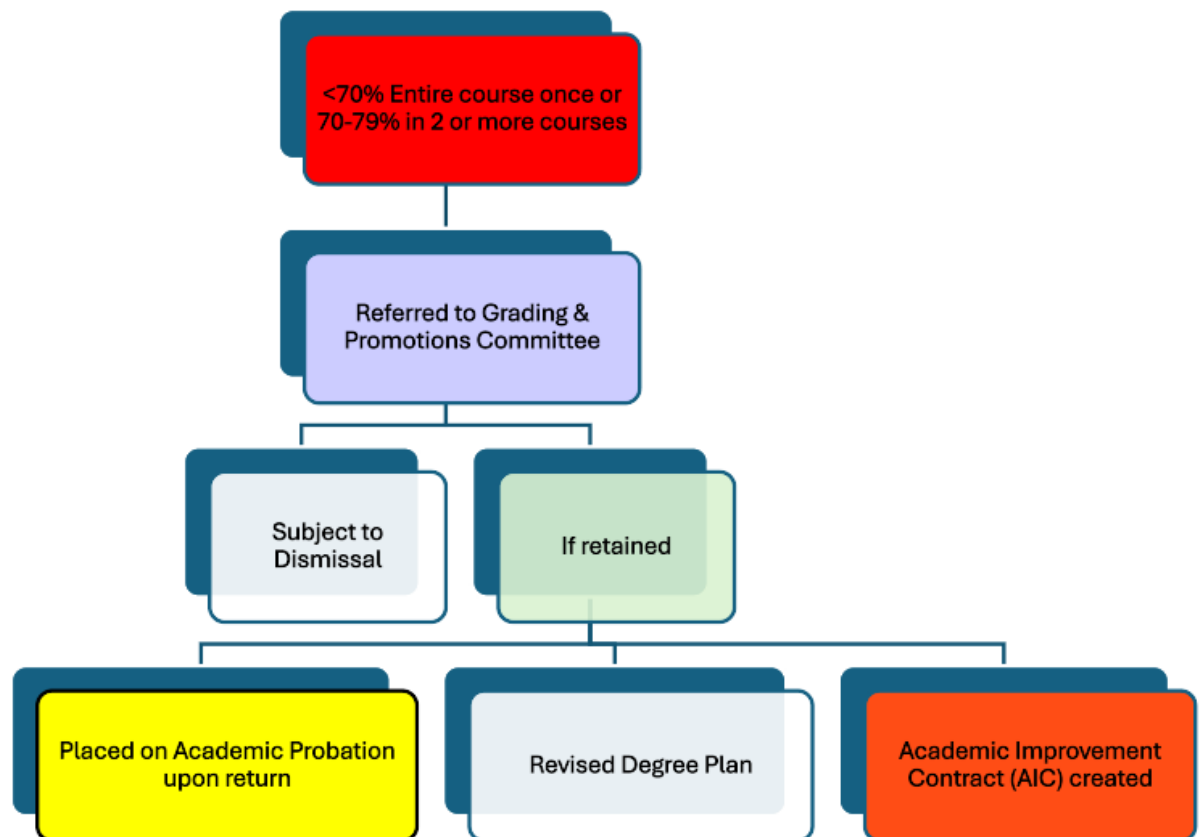
For students in Phase III remediation who are retained, successful and unwavering adherence to all terms of the Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) is absolutely critical. The primary goal is to facilitate a complete academic turnaround. Any failure to meet the terms of the AIC, or to demonstrate consistent and significant academic progress as defined by the AIC, will result in immediate academic dismissal from the program. The Academic Director, in consultation with the Program Director, will oversee the monitoring of the AIC and make final determinations regarding academic standing.

## Responsibilities

- **Students:** Bear the ultimate responsibility for their academic recovery. This includes full compliance with all aspects of the Revised Degree Plan and the Academic Improvement Contract, proactive engagement with all required resources, and consistent demonstration of academic improvement.

- **Grading & Promotions Committee:** Is responsible for reviewing all Phase III cases, making retention or dismissal decisions, and, if retaining, providing input on the AIC.
- **Academic Director:** Is responsible for overseeing the entire Phase III remediation process, reviewing dismissal policies, approving and monitoring AICs and Revised Degree Plans.
- **Faculty Advisors:** Play a crucial and intensive role in guiding students through the Revised Degree Plan and AIC development and implementation, providing continuous support, rigorously monitoring progress, and reporting regularly to the Academic Director and, if necessary, the Grading & Promotions Committee.

## Didactic Phase III Remediation



## **FAILURE WHILE ON ACADEMIC PROBATION - Didactic**

This policy outlines the procedures and consequences for students who fail to meet the terms of their academic probation or incur further academic deficiencies while on probation. It emphasizes the critical nature of academic probation as a final opportunity for remediation and adherence to institutional academic standards.

Failure while on academic probation is triggered when a student meets any of the following criteria:

- Achieves a final didactic course grade of less than 80% (<80%) while currently on academic probation.
- Fails to meet any of the specific terms or conditions outlined in their Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) or other probation agreements.
- Exceeds the maximum allowed duration for academic probation, which is limited to:
  - One (1) semester during the didactic curriculum.
  - One (1) semester during the clinical curriculum.

Upon a student meeting any of the criteria for failure while on academic probation, the following steps shall be implemented:

### **1. Referral to Grading & Promotions Committee**

The student's academic record will be immediately referred to the program's Grading & Promotions Committee. This committee is the ultimate authority responsible for reviewing cases of severe academic difficulty and making determinations regarding a student's program progression, including potential dismissal.

### **2. Composition of the Grading & Promotions Committee**

The Grading & Promotions Committee is comprised of:

- The Program Director
- The Medical Director
- All principal faculty members

### **3. Committee Review Process**

The Grading & Promotions Committee will conduct a thorough and comprehensive review of the student's academic and professional progress, including but not limited to:

- All course grades, examination scores, and clinical evaluations.
- The terms of the student's current academic probation and their adherence to those terms.
- Any previous remediation efforts or academic improvement plans.
- Relevant documentation from instructors, advisors, and the Academic Director.
- Any student-submitted statements or appeals (if permitted by committee procedures and submitted within the specified timeframe).

### **4. Committee Determination**

Following the review, the Grading & Promotions Committee will vote to recommend a course of action regarding the student's program progression. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to:

- **Continuation:** Under exceptional circumstances, and with new, more stringent conditions.
- **Deceleration:** A modification of the student's academic timeline.
- **Dismissal:** Termination of the student's enrollment in the program.
- **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from the institution.
- Other actions as deemed necessary by the committee.



## Outcomes and Consequences

### 1. Subject to Dismissal

Students who fail while on academic probation are formally subject to dismissal from the program. The decision of the Grading & Promotions Committee regarding dismissal is final, subject only to any institutional appeal processes.

### 2. Limitations on Extracurricular Activities

A student who has been placed on academic probation, regardless of whether they have subsequently failed probation, may not participate in the PA mission trip or other similar high-profile, program-sponsored extracurricular activities without explicit written approval from the Program Director. This restriction ensures that the student's primary focus remains on academic recovery.

### 3. Responsibilities

- **Students:** Are responsible for understanding and adhering to all terms of their academic probation. Failure to do so will initiate the procedures outlined in this policy.
- **Faculty Advisors:** Are responsible for monitoring student progress on probation and promptly referring students who fail to meet probation terms to the Grading & Promotions Committee.
- **Academic Director:** Is responsible for overseeing the academic probation process and ensuring that students who fail probation are appropriately referred to the Grading & Promotions Committee.
- **Grading & Promotions Committee:** Is responsible for the thorough review of student cases and making final determinations regarding program progression or dismissal.

## CLINICAL formal academic remediation policies:

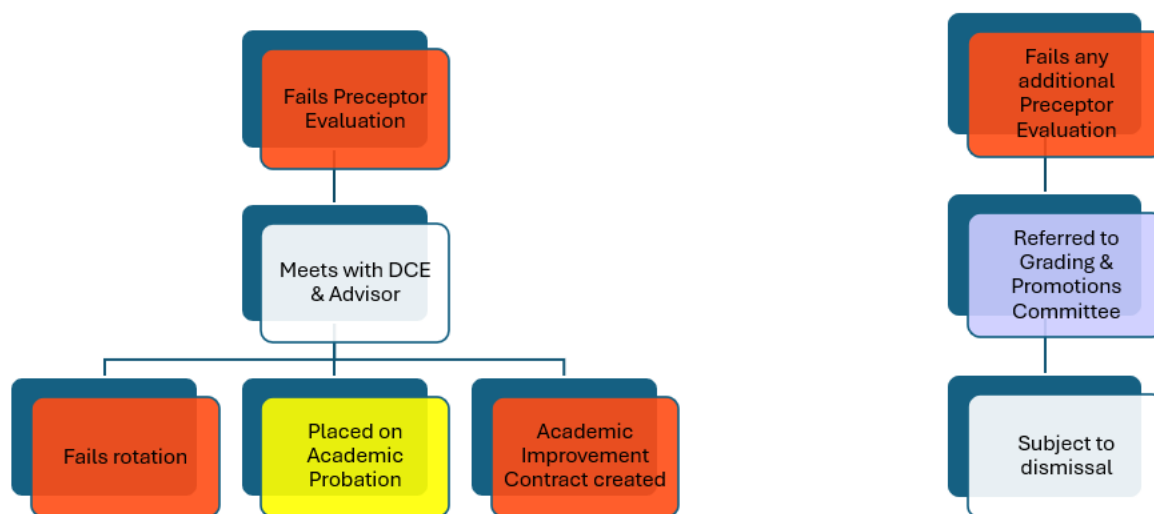
### PRECEPTOR EVALUATIONS:

Preceptor evaluations will be completed for each clinical rotation and must be passed with a grade of 80% or higher for students to receive credit for the rotation. If a student earns a grade of <80% 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. An Academic Improvement Contract for improvement of clinically related skills and proficiency will be implemented prior to the repeat rotation.

If a student earns an evaluation score "incompetent" or "unable to assess" on any learning outcome on the preceptor evaluation, the student will be required to remediate the learning outcome. The student will receive and Incomplete ("I") until the student can demonstrate competency of the course learning outcomes. This remediation could occur prior to the next rotation, at the end of the semester, or during the final Fall semester prior to graduation. Once competency has been demonstrated, the incomplete grade will be changed to the final grade earned from the clinical rotation.



# Clinical Year Remediation – Preceptor Evaluation



## 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 remediation activities. Remediation activities will be developed for successful completion of assignment(s) or repeat of assignment(s) prior to credit being awarded for a clinical course. The original grade will not be changed.

## 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. OSCEs given at the end of each clinical semester are formative in nature. Students who do not demonstrate competency with the formative OSCEs will be remediated until competency is demonstrated.

The summative OSCE will be administered during the last four months of the program as part of the Professional Practice Preparation course. Students must demonstrate competency on the summative OSCE to demonstrate their readiness to enter clinical practice and graduate from the program. If a student does not demonstrate competency, they are required to meet with the course instructor for remediation, an Academic Improvement Plan will be created, and the student will undergo reassessment within 2 weeks. If a student fails to demonstrate competency with the reassessment, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal.

## END OF ROTATION (EOR) EXAMINATIONS:

PAEA End of Rotation exams are a set of objective standardized evaluations intended to serve as one measure of the medical knowledge students gain during supervised clinical practice experiences. Each EOR exam consists of 120 multiple-choice questions, 100 of which are scored. The other 20 questions are unscored pretest questions used to gather statistics which aid in future exam construction. Material for the End of Rotation Exam is based on the topics addressed in this syllabus as well as exam material from the Assessment Institute of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). Additional information as well as exam blueprint and topic list can be found at [End of Rotation™: Content | PAEA](#)

The EOR exam is administered on the Thursday of each EOR callback day. The exam will be administered in person at the HSU PA Computer Lab. The End of Rotation Exam makes up 35% of the final grade for the rotation. Grade calculation will be based on the student's performance compared to the national mean. PAEA EOR exams are reported as a scaled score. The scaled score will be converted to a Z-score by subtracting the PAEA student score from the national mean and then divided by the national standard deviation. The calculated Z-score will then be converted to a percentage based upon the grading scale below.

Percentage	Student Calculated Z-Score
100%	$\geq +2.00$ above the PAEA national average
95%	+1.50 to +1.99 SD above the PAEA national average
90%	+1.00 to +1.49 SD above the PAEA national average
86%	+0.51 to +0.99 SD above the PAEA national average
83%	+0.1 to +0.50 SD above the PAEA national average
80%	- 0.09 to PAEA national average to +0.09
77%	-0.1 to -0.49 SD below the PAEA national average
75%	-0.50 to - 1.00 SD below the PAEA national average
73%	-1.01 to -1.50 SD below the PAEA national average
70%	-1.51 to -1.69 SD below the PAEA national average
69%	-1.70 SD or more below the PAEA national average

### **Supporting Student Success: Addressing Low Pass Scores on EOR Exams**

At the HSU Physician Assistant Program, we're committed to ensuring every student develops the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. To this end, we've identified a "low pass" range for the End of Rotation (EOR) exam. This applies to students scoring between 70% and 73%, which translates to -1.01 to -1.69 standard deviations below the national average.

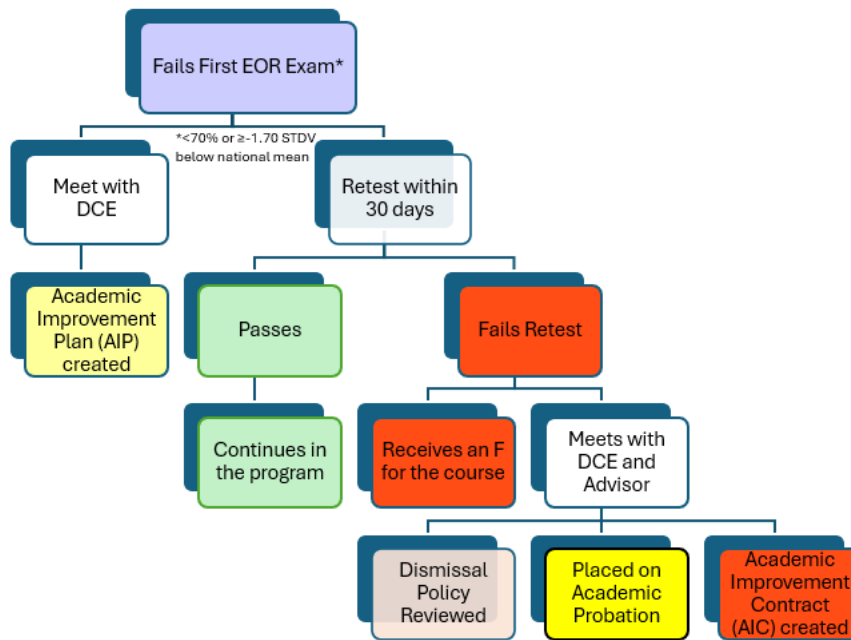
If a student falls within this range, they'll meet with the Director of Clinical Education. This meeting is a chance to openly discuss current exam preparation strategies. Together, they'll then develop a personalized action plan aimed at helping the student master the course material and ultimately boost their success in the program.

### **Policy on EOR Exam Failure (<70%)**

#### **Initial EOR Exam Failure**

Students who score below 70% on an EOR examination (more than -1.69 standard deviation below the national average) and are in good academic standing will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for counseling and remediation. An Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) will be created with clearly defined action plans to support future success. Students must take a repeat EOR examination within 30 days of the initial exam failure to demonstrate competency of the material. If a student passes the repeat EOR examination ( $\geq 70\%$ ), the original exam grade will not be replaced when calculating the final course grade.

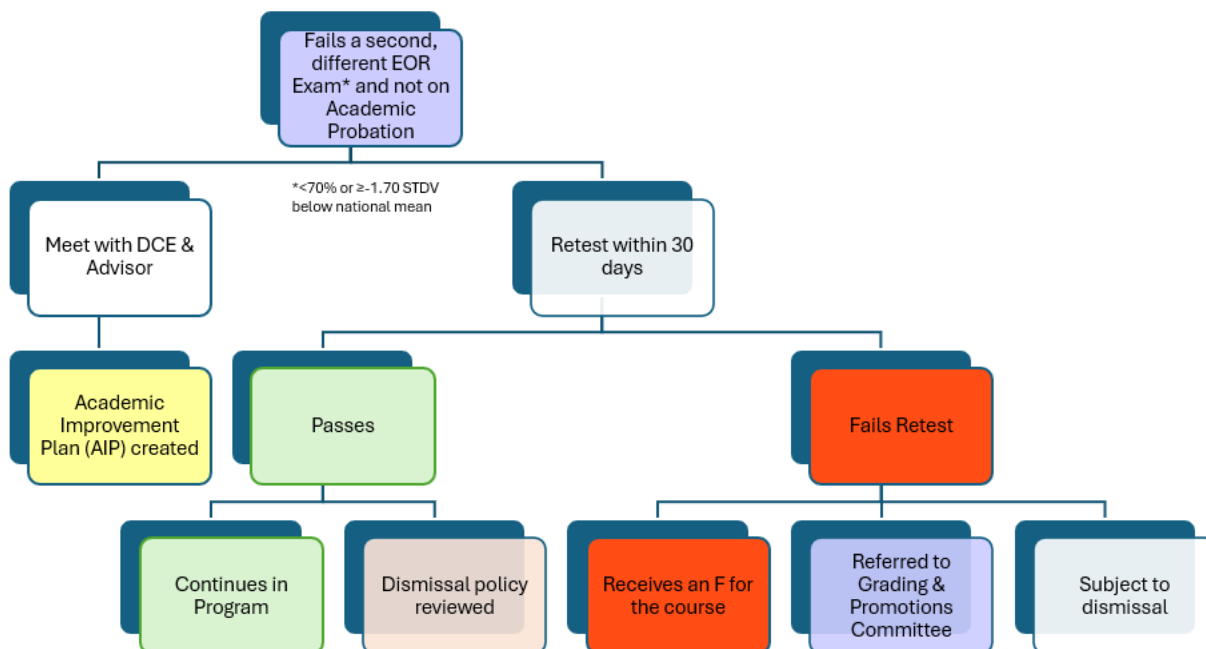
## Clinical Year EOR Remediation – Initial EOR Failure



### Failure of Repeat EOR Exam

Students who fail the repeat EOR examination (scoring below 70%), the final clinical rotation grade will be recorded as an “F”, and the student will be placed on Academic Probation the subsequent semester. An Academic Improvement Contract (AIC) will be created. The clinical rotation must be repeated, and graduation may be delayed.

## Clinical Year EOR Remediation – Repeat EOR Failures



### Multiple EOR Exam Failures

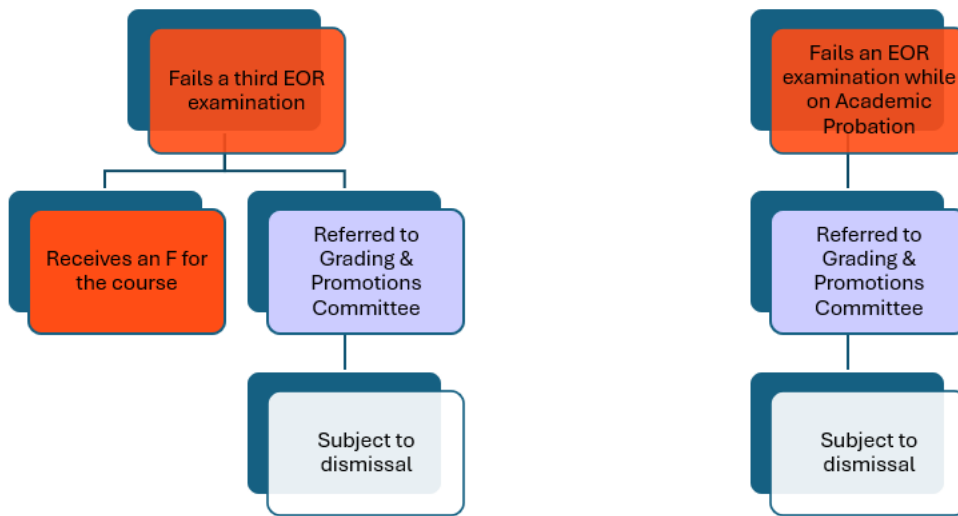
If a student, while in good academic standing, has previously failed an EOR exam and subsequently fails a second EOR exam in a different clinical course, they will be required to meet with both the Director of Clinical Education and their academic advisor for counseling and remediation. An Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) will be created with clearly defined action plans to support future success. The student will be eligible to take a repeat EOR examination within 30 days of the initial exam failure. If a student passes the repeat EOR examination, the original exam grade will not be replaced when calculating the final course grade.

Failure of a third EOR exam will result in an “F” for the clinical rotation, and the student will be referred to the Grading & Promotions Committee, which may result in dismissal from the program.

### EOR Exam Failure While on Academic Probation

If a student fails an EOR exam while on Academic Probation (even if it is the first failure), they will be referred to the Grading & Promotions Committee and may be subject to dismissal from the program.

## Clinical Year EOR Remediation



End of Rotation™ exams, their content, and all of their question items are proprietary and copyrighted by PAEA. They may not be copied, distributed, or otherwise disclosed without permission from PAEA. All exam materials and content remain at all times the property of PAEA. Likewise, all student exam data (including activity, scores, and contact information) that is stored in the ExamDriver system will be secured, and every effort will be made to prevent its disclosure to unauthorized individuals or entities in compliance with the US Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Students will consent to abiding by the PAEA Exam Honor Code.

## **FAILURE WHILE ON ACADEMIC PROBATION - Clinical**

A student on academic probation who fails any of the following will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and may be subject to dismissal:

- An EOR examination (a score of less than 70% or  $\geq -1.7$  standard deviations below the national mean).
- A preceptor evaluation (a score of less than 80%).
- An overall final clinical rotation grade of less than 70%.

## **SUMMATIVE EXAMINATION:**

Before graduating, students must pass a summative evaluation to assess their readiness for clinical practice. This comprehensive assessment measures a student's proficiency in **medical knowledge, problem-solving, clinical reasoning, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and professional behaviors**.

The evaluation consists of four components:

- A summative written examination.
- A demonstration of clinical and technical skills competency.
- A summative professional evaluation.
- A summative practical evaluation (OSCE).

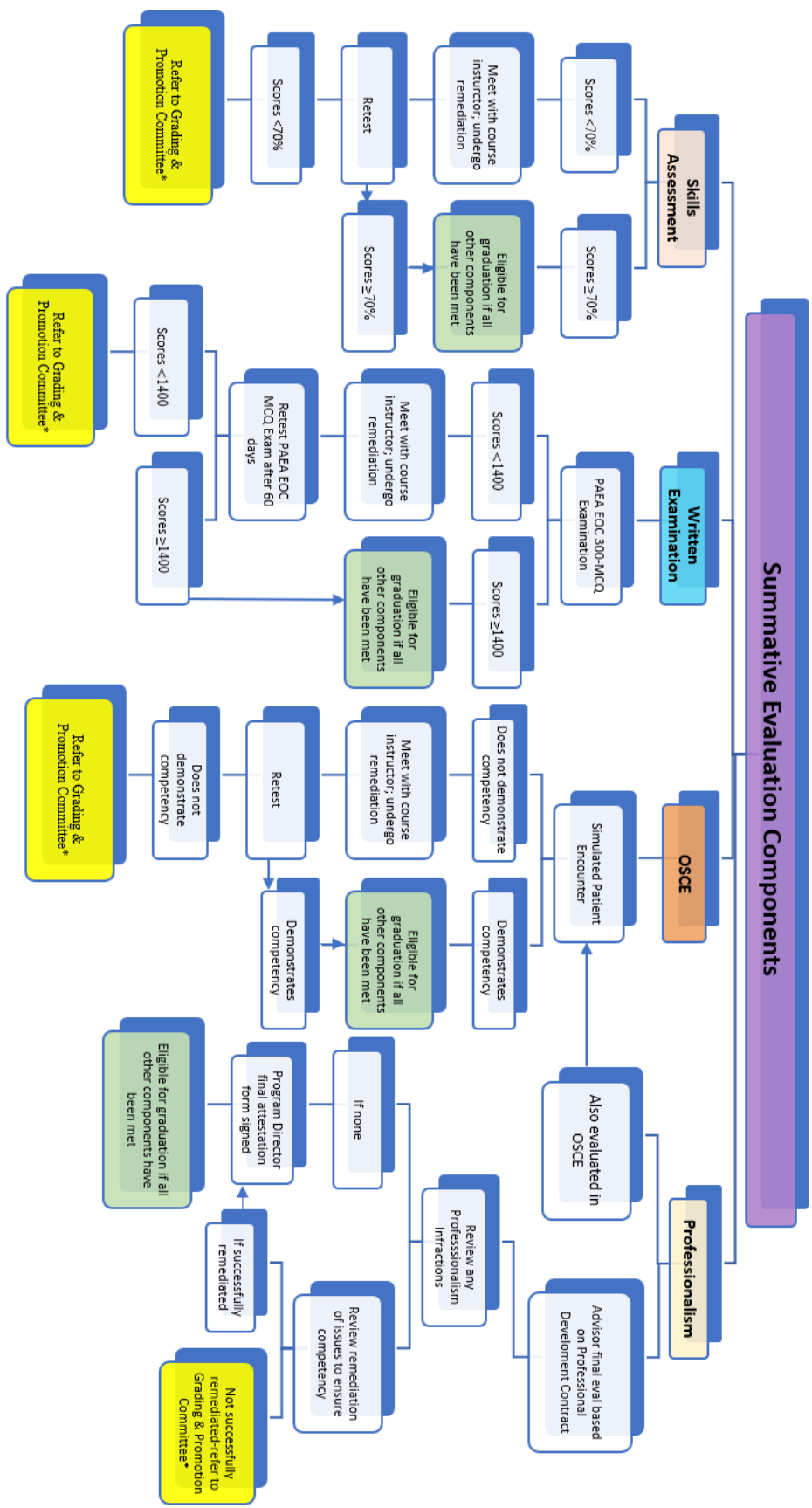
All components of this evaluation must be passed to successfully complete the program. The examinations will be administered during the final four months of the program.

## **Remediation and Failure Policy**

Failure to pass any part of the summative evaluation will result in **formal remediation and a reassessment within two weeks**. This may delay graduation.

Failing the reassessment will lead to a **referral to the Grading and Promotions Committee** and may result in dismissal from the program.

**SUMMATIVE  
EXAMINATION  
GRAPHIC**



\*Student may be subject to dismissal, delay of graduation, or subject to additional remediation plans†

## DISMISSAL POLICY:

The HSU PA Program, in alignment with university standards and the rigorous demands of the medical profession, has established clear and transparent policies regarding student progression and, when necessary, dismissal from the program. Student progress is consistently monitored by the Grading and Promotions Committee to ensure that all students meet the academic and professional standards required for entry into clinical practice.

### Grounds for Dismissal

A student may be subject to dismissal from the HSU PA Program for failure to comply with the established academic and/or professional standards. Dismissal may occur at any time during the didactic or clinical phases of the curriculum.

#### 1. Academic Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the program for any of the following academic reasons:

- **Failure to meet the terms of academic probation:** The Grading and Promotions Committee will place a student on academic probation if their academic performance falls below program standards. Failure to meet the specific requirements of this probationary period may result in dismissal.
- **Failure to meet published academic standards while on academic probation:** Students on academic probation must adhere to all published academic standards. Any further academic issues while on probation may lead to dismissal.
- **Failure to meet the published academic improvement contract:** If a student is required to complete an Academic Improvement Contract, failure to successfully fulfill its terms may result in dismissal.
- **Final grade deficiencies in the didactic curriculum:**
  - Earning a final grade of a "C" in two or more didactic courses during the same semester.
  - Earning a final grade of "C" while on academic probation
  - Earning a final grade of "F" in any didactic course.
- **Cumulative GPA requirement:** Failure to maintain or raise the cumulative 3.0 GPA required by the university.
- **Clinical year examination failure:** Failure of a third End of Rotation (EOR) examination during the clinical year.
- **EOR failure while on academic probation:** Failing an EOR exam while a student is on academic probation will result in dismissal.
- **Final grade deficiencies in the clinical curriculum:**
  - Earning a final grade below a "C" while on academic probation
  - Earning a final grade below a "C" in a second clinical course
- **Failure to pass summative evaluation:** Failure to pass the reassessment of any portion of the summative evaluation may result in dismissal.

#### 2. Professional Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the program for any of the following professional reasons, as determined by the Grading and Promotions Committee:

- **Egregious violations of the Standards of Professional Conduct:** This includes, but is not limited to, actions that pose a risk to patient safety, demonstrate a lack of professional judgment, or severely violate ethical principles.
- **Repeated violations of the Standards of Professional Conduct:** A pattern of unprofessional behavior, even if individual incidents are minor, can lead to dismissal.

- **Violation of the Academic Integrity Policy:** Any violation of the university's academic integrity policy, including cheating or plagiarism, may result in immediate dismissal.
- **Preceptor evaluation failure:** A second failure of a preceptor evaluation during the clinical year .
- **Intoxication or use of illegal substances:** Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances during any program activity, including class, lab sessions, or clinical rotations, is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal.
- **Misrepresentation:** Misrepresenting themselves as a licensed medical provider, either verbally or in writing, is a direct violation of professional standards and will lead to dismissal.
- **Failure to meet technical standards:** Failure to meet the program's published technical standards, even with reasonable accommodations, may result in dismissal.

## 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, Academic 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.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

Our institution, teaching, and evaluation methods rely on the use of computer to assist with common work tasks every day. However, when used in lieu of individual thought, creation, and synthesis of knowledge by falsely submitting a paper written (all or in part) as one's own original work, this will result in an academic integrity violation.

Hardin-Simmons University is committed to the maintenance of the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Students are responsible for their own work. Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for coursework is considered a violation of the University's Academic Honesty policy and Student Conduct Code since the work is not your own. **The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) is not permitted and is considered a form of plagiarism which is defined as using outside resources or using others' work that is not your own and not properly cited.**

- Forms of artificially generated information include:
  - The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to generate artificial content in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or other assessments.
  - The submission of student work for evaluation as his/her own that was produced through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools without permission from the instructor.
  - Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose the discussion board assigned.
  - Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
  - Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.
- An instructor may give you permission to utilize AI in a classroom activity or assignment. However, unless permission is granted, one should follow the policy outlined above.

[Academic Resources - Hardin-Simmons University](#)  
[Current Students - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

### **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:

### Academic Grievance Policy

The following measures should be taken with respect to an academic grievance pertaining to a course offered by the University. A student may seek remediation for the following:

- a. **Grade Appeal:** A student who feels that the grading policy for a class is unfair or has been unfairly administered and that the result is a course grade lower than deserved has the right to contest the professor's decision. This process is only for appealing the final course average; consequently, grades on individual projects may not be challenged.
- b. **Course-Related Concern:** Any complaint, beyond the parameters of a grade appeal, which involves an experience occurring within the context of an academic course offered by the University also comes under the purview of the Academic Grievance Policy.

Arbitration for either (a) Grade Appeal or (b) a Course-Related Concern follows the same procedure, with exceptions noted below.

### Informal Measures

The University encourages matters to be resolved informally and judiciously whenever possible. If such an agreement is unable to be reached, then a student may file a formal complaint. Each step must be taken in order. Failure to follow the procedure may obviate the appeal.

**Step 1.** The student discusses the matter with the professor. If possible, the matter is reconciled at this point.

**Step 2.** If dissatisfied with this discussion, the student voices concern to the department head in a conference scheduled by the student. (If no department head exists, or if the department head is a disputant, then the student consults with the dean of the college or school in which the course under consideration is offered.) The department head (or, if applicable, the dean) discusses the matter with the professor.

**Step 1 and Step 2** attempt to find an amicable resolution to the academic grievance informally—be it either (a) Grade Appeal or (b) a Course-Related Concern—without a formal, written complaint. If no resolution occurs in the first two steps, then formal measures may be taken beginning with **Step 3**.

### Formal Measures

**Step 3.** If no resolution occurs at the department level (Step 2), the student then submits a written petition to the dean of the area. If the complaint is against a dean, the complaint will go to the provost. The student's letter of petition must include a straightforward narrative (one to three pages in length) detailing (a) the circumstances surrounding the contested grade or course-related concern, (b) reasons why the student believes the complaint is warranted, and (c) what possible outcome or resolution, from the student's perspective, will resolve the issue at hand.

If the grievance is a grade appeal, then all graded projects in the class—tests, essays, projects, etc.—that are in the student's possession must be submitted along with the cover letter along with the student's personal record of attendance in the class.

Upon the dean's notification that a student has filed a formal grievance, the department head forwards a written summation of the matter to the dean, along with a recommendation for a resolution to the

problem. (If no department head exists, or if the department head is a disputant, then a letter from the department head is not necessary.)

**Step 4.** In writing, the dean apprises the professor of the course under dispute regarding the student's grievance and provides a summary of the points of concern.

**Step 5.** The professor submits a written response to the student's grievance in a straightforward narrative (one to three pages in length) detailing his or her own account of (a) the circumstances surrounding the contested grade or course-related concern, (b) reasons why the professor believes the complaint either warranted or unwarranted, and (c) what possible outcome or resolution, from the professor's perspective, will resolve the issue at hand. If the grievance is a grade appeal, then the professor appends the student's projects in the professor's possession, grades on all work done in the course, the student's attendance record in the class, and a copy of the class syllabus with the contested policy clearly marked.

**Step 6.** The dean will meet with each party separately, or jointly, to seek a viable solution.

**Step 7.** If no solution can be reached with Step 6, then (a) a formal Grade Appeal goes to arbitration before the Academic Grievance Committee. The dean submits all materials involved up to this point, along with a written recommendation for a solution to the problem to the committee.

#### Membership of the Academic Grievance Committee:

The committee includes three professors from different academic areas with one specified to the chair and two senior students with grade point averages of at least 3.0. The chair of the committee will schedule meetings and preside over deliberations. Neither the professor nor the student will have counsel at the meetings.

#### Duties of the Academic Grievance Committee:

The committee will review materials submitted by both student and professor before coming together in session and convene at a time convenient for all involved for the purpose of hearing both parties present their cases. Committee members will then hold an executive session to reach a decision. The chair of the committee will inform the student, the faculty member, and the provost of their decision in writing. If a grade is to be changed, the provost will see that the proper forms are submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The ruling of this committee is final with respect to grade appeals.

A formal Course-Related Concern goes directly to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer for resolution. The dean submits all materials involved up to this point, along with a written recommendation for a solution to the problem to the Provost, who will then review materials submitted by both student and professor before scheduling a time, convenient for all involved, for the purpose of hearing both parties present their cases. The provost, at his or her own discretion, may seek additional counsel as appropriate.

**The ruling of the provost is final.**

Refer to the HSU Student Handbook at [Current Students - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

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

The program utilizes the system of early concern notes and letters of concern for documenting violation of the HSU PA Program professionalism and academic policies or 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 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 Academic 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.

## **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 cadavers 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 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:

[Isolation Precautions Guideline | Infection Control | CDC](#)

### **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 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 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: [CDC Healthcare Workers: Bloodborne Infectious Disease Risk Factors](#)

### **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 (Appendix D), 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.

### **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.**



## COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Hardin-Simmons University PA Program strongly values community service as a core part of its mission. All students must complete a minimum of **50 community service hours** before graduation.

- **20 hours** must be completed by the end of the didactic year.
- The remaining hours can be completed anytime during the program.
- Service can be performed in various local or global settings.

Students must have their community service activities approved and recorded with their assigned student advisor.

## PROGRESSION POLICY: Didactic to Clinical Phase

Progression from the didactic phase to the clinical phase of the program is contingent upon the successful completion of the following requirements:

- **Community Service:** Students must complete a minimum of 20 community service hours.
- **Didactic Coursework:** Students must successfully complete all required didactic courses as outlined in the curriculum.
- **Compliance Documents:** Students must complete and submit all required compliance documents and forms prior to the start of the clinical phase.
- **Immunizations:** Students must ensure all required immunizations are current and uploaded in EXXAT.

## CLINICAL YEAR INFORMATION:

During the clinical year, students 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 whom 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 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 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 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 Clinical Guidelines

### 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 must always act professionally. The student will strive to be competent, reliable, responsible, and respectful when caring for any patient.
2. The student must 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, HSU Student 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 weekends/ holidays, the student is expected 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 they are 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.
  - 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.
  - 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. Students 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.

## 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*.

Patient Encounter Type:	Minimum Number to be Logged
Preventive Care	50
Emergent Care	80
Acute Care	150
Chronic Care	150
<b>Care Across Lifespan:</b>	
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 Coordinator and the Director of Clinical Education will determine the best possible placement of students, with the aid of a computer placement software, 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 for arranging housing, transportation, and/or meals for students.
4. If a clinical site must cancel its availability, the Director of Clinical Education 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 Director of Clinical Education will meet with the student to discuss options.
5. Once the clinical rotation schedules have been released, students have 10 business days to notify the Director of Clinical Education if there is a conflict of interest with any of their assigned preceptors/sites.
6. Although changes after the reveal of the clinical rotation schedule 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 submitted on the Clinical Rotation Placement Change Request Form (Appendix E). Students may submit only one Clinical Rotation Placement Change Request Form. The form must be submitted a minimum of six (6) weeks before the start of the proposed clinical rotation change. All request forms will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education and/or the clinical team, Program Director, and faculty. The request will be considered based on information submitted by the student; the ability to make the change requested without impacting other rotation placements and/or other students; and based upon preceptor/site availability. If the change is approved, the student will be notified in writing.



**PRECEPTOR SOLICITATION POLICY:**

Students are **NOT** required to recruit, provide, or solicit clinical sites or preceptors for their supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs). The Hardin-Simmons University PA Director of Clinical Education and clinical team coordinate, recruit, provide, and solicit clinical sites and preceptors for the program-required rotations. Students may provide contact information to the Director of Clinical Education and/or the clinical team about potential clinical sites and preceptors for the clinical team to determine if the clinical site or preceptor meets the program's requirements.

**TRAVEL TO CLINICAL SITES POLICY:**

The HSU PA Program offers students a wide variety of supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs) in diverse settings, including hospitals, clinics, private offices, and emergency departments. These rotations are located in the Abilene area, across the state of Texas, and out-of-state locations.

Students should be prepared for rotations that may require travel.

- All students are required to complete at least one SCPE in a rural or underserved area.
- All students may be assigned up to three (3) SCPEs between 200-500 miles from the program.
- Students may be assigned up to two (2) SCPEs more than 500 miles from the program.

Students are responsible for all travel and housing expenses related to their SCPEs, including any airfare if they choose to fly. The clinical team works to reduce this financial burden by using student input on housing availability when making clinical rotation assignments. Data is collected annually from current clinical students to provide estimates of additional travel and housing expenses, and this information is included in the estimated cost of attendance.

**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.

## **PROGRESSION POLICY: Requirements to Complete in the Clinical Year**

1. **Successfully complete and meet the Learning Outcomes for 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 Surgery
  - PA 6552 Emergency Medicine
  - PA 6554 Elective 1
  - PA 6556 Elective 2
  - PA 6560 Professional Development
2. **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.
3. **Demonstrate competency on the clinical semester OSCEs**
  - **Fall**-Adult/Emergent
  - **Spring**-Infant/Preventative
  - **Summer**-Adolescent/Acute

## **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 [Home - NCCPA](#).

### **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, [Texas Medical Board](#) 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:**

A student's readiness to advance from the didactic to the clinical phase and to graduate from the PA program is determined by several key performance indicators. These include: successfully completing all courses, achieving the required grade point average, demonstrating proficiency in clinical and technical skills, exhibiting consistent professionalism, fulfilling volunteer hour requirements, passing all summative examinations, and completion of all requirements for the Capstone Research Project.

Students who have been recommended for graduation by the HSU PA Program Grading and Promotions Committee will be awarded the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree provided they have met all of the following conditions and adhere to the policies outlined in the PA student handbook and the Hardin-Simmons University Graduate handbook.

### **Requirements for Graduation**

1. Satisfactory completion of 21 courses during the didactic phase of the curriculum earning 53 credit hours and achieving a minimum overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA).
2. Satisfactory completion of all 10 clinical rotations and three additional post-clinical courses for a total of 13 courses, earning 59 credit hours, and achieving a minimum overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA).
3. Completion of three formative Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) during the clinical phase of the curriculum.
4. Documentation of competency of all required technical skills within the didactic and clinical phases of training as denoted by instructional or principal faculty.
5. Satisfactory completion of all course requirements for the Capstone Research project.
6. Satisfactory demonstration of the ethical, professional, behavioral, and personal characteristics as documented on the professionalism evaluation forms listed below.
  - End-of-semester professional evaluation forms during the didactic year,
  - Preceptor evaluation forms during the clinical year, and

- The final summative professional assessment by the Program Director within 4 months of graduating.
7. Satisfactory completion of all summative assessment components administered within 4 months before graduation from the program with a grade of 70% or greater.
    - summative OSCE,
    - end of curriculum written exam, and
    - clinical & technical skills assessment
  8. Completion of a minimum of 50 hours of community service hours of which 20 hours must be completed by the end of the didactic year.
  9. Completion of a diploma card with the Hardin-Simmons University Registrar's office.
  10. Satisfactory payment of all fees due to the University and meets all requirements for commencement per university policy.
  11. Completed any terms of Academic Probation and/or Remediation if applicable.

Students unable to fulfill these requirements by the day of graduation will not be allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony without the permission of the PA Program Director. Students will not be considered graduates in any capacity until they have completed all of the above requirements.

#### **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: [Campus Regulations - Hardin-Simmons University](#)

#### **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  
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: \_\_\_\_\_



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**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) Date ____/____/____
<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) ***** <b>If not immune:</b> 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>COVID-19 Vaccination (most recent dose)</u></b>	Date ____/____/____ (Health care provider initials)
<b><u>Meningococcal</u></b>	Date ____/____/____ (Health care provider initials) *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) ***** <b>If not immune:</b> 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) ***** <b>If not immune:</b> Vaccine #1 ____/____/____ (Health care provider initials Vaccine #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!**

## Immunization Verification Document Instructions

This form is used to verify your immunization history. Please review the instructions carefully and have your healthcare provider complete the relevant sections. If you have received immunizations from multiple providers over the years, gather all your immunization records and bring them with you to your appointment when this form is being completed. **Do not send or upload medical records.**

### Tuberculin Skin Test (PPD)

- **Date:** Enter the date the PPD test was administered in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider administering the test must initial here.
- **PPD Results:** Enter the actual measurement of induration (the hardened, raised area) in millimeters (mm).
  - *Note:* Please provide the actual measurement, even if it is 0 mm.

### Alternative to PPD (IGRA Results)

- *Note:* This section is **not required** if a PPD test was already performed.
- **IGRA Results:** Check either "Positive" or "Negative" based on the result of the IGRA test.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who ordered or reviewed the IGRA results must initial here.
- **Date:** Enter the date the IGRA test was performed or the results were reviewed in the format MM/DD/YYYY.

### Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis Vaccination (Tdap) & Td Booster

- **Tdap Date:** Enter the date you received your Tdap vaccination in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the Tdap vaccine must initial here.
- **Td Booster Date:** Enter the date you received your Td booster vaccination in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the Td booster must initial here.
  - *Guidance:* You should receive a one-time dose of Tdap if you have not received it previously, regardless of when your last Td dose was. After that, Td boosters are recommended every 10 years.

### Hepatitis B Vaccination

- *Note:* If serology does NOT show protection from Hepatitis B, please consult with your healthcare provider to restart the series and provide documentation of the repeat series in progress.
- **+If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.**
- **Date of Serology testing:** Enter the date of your Hepatitis B serology test in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **Anti-HBc:** Check "Immune" or "Not Immune" based on your serology results.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who reviewed your serology results must initial here.
- **If not immune:**
  - **Vaccine #1 Date:** Enter the date of your first Hepatitis B vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
  - **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.



- **Vaccine #2 Date:** Enter the date of your second Hepatitis B vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.
- **Vaccine #3 Date:** Enter the date of your third Hepatitis B vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.

#### Influenza Vaccination

- **Date:** Enter the date you received your most recent influenza vaccination in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.

#### COVID-19 Vaccination (most recent dose)

- **Date:** Enter the date of your most recent COVID-19 vaccination in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.

#### Meningococcal

- **Date:** Enter the date you received your Meningococcal vaccination in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.
  - *Required if age is <22 years old.*

#### MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) Vaccinations

- **If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.**
- **Date of serology testing:** Enter the date of your MMR serology testing in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **Measles:** Check "Immune" or "Not Immune."
- **Mumps:** Check "Immune" or "Not Immune."
- **Rubella:** Check "Immune" or "Not Immune."
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who reviewed your serology results must initial here.
- **If not immune:**
  - **Vaccine #1 Date:** Enter the date of your first MMR vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
  - **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.
  - **Vaccine #2 Date:** Enter the date of your second MMR vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
  - **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.

### Varicella Vaccination

- **If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.**
- **Date of serology testing:** Enter the date of your Varicella serology testing in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **Varicella:** Check "Immune" or "Not Immune."
- **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who reviewed your serology results must initial here.
- **If not immune:**
  - **Vaccine #1 Date:** Enter the date of your first Varicella vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
  - **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.
  - **Vaccine #2 Date:** Enter the date of your second Varicella vaccine dose in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
  - **(Health care provider initials):** The healthcare provider who administered the vaccine must initial here.

### Medical Contraindication

- **Check box:** If the patient has a medical contraindication to receiving a vaccine, check the box.
- **Indicate which vaccine:** Clearly state which vaccine has a medical contraindication.

### Healthcare Provider Certification

- **Healthcare Provider Signature:** The certifying healthcare provider must sign here. This signature certifies that all immunization dates and/or vaccine contraindication(s) provided on the form are accurate.
- **Date:** Enter the date the healthcare provider signed the form in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- **Healthcare Provider Name Printed:** Print the full name of the certifying healthcare provider.
- **Address:** Enter the full address of the healthcare provider's practice.
- **City:** Enter the city of the healthcare provider's practice.
- **State:** Enter the state of the healthcare provider's practice.
- **Zip Code:** Enter the zip code of the healthcare provider's practice.
- **Telephone Number:** Enter the telephone number of the healthcare provider's practice.

### Student Signature

- **Student Signature:** The student (or patient) must sign here.
  - **Date:** Enter the date the student (or patient) signed the form in the format MM/DD/YYYY.
- 

**For annual vaccinations, a new form may be printed each year. Vaccinations that are not required to be repeated can be marked as N/A (Not Applicable).**



#### Health Clearance Form

Provider's  
Initials

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

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.

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

Healthcare provider signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Please print the following information:

Healthcare Provider Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



**HARDIN-SIMMONS**  
UNIVERSITY  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

**APPENDIX D**

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

Clinical Rotation Placement – Change Request Form

Clinical Rotation Placement – Change Request Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class of (Year): \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Rotation Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Rotation Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Preceptor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rotation Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Rotation Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Elective \_\_\_\_\_ Core (Circle Specialty)

Family Medicine	Internal Medicine	Pediatrics	Prof. Development
Women's Health	Emergency Medicine	Mental Health	Surgery

**Note: Change of rotation/rotations will not be granted for the following reasons: financial need, lack of transportation, lack of housing, special events, family functions, etc. (refer to student handbook)**

Request to change rotation placement for the following reason(s):

**Conflict of Interest** (an existing personal or professional relationship with preceptor)

**Illness** Are you requesting a leave of absence? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Family Hardship** Are you requesting a leave of absence? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Other**

Please explain:

**Faculty/Staff Use Only:** The above request has been discussed with the Director of Clinical Education and/or clinical team, Program Director, and faculty. The request was considered based on the above information provided, the ability to make the change request without impacting other rotation placements and/or other students, and based upon preceptor/site availability.

The request for clinical rotation placement change has been:

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Denied due to the following:

Comments:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Clinical Education or Clinical Team Representative

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

\*\*Form submission does not guarantee approval