

Western University of Health Sciences

College of Health Sciences

**Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS)
2026/2027 Catalog**

Conditions of Accuracy

The information within is accurate at the time of publication and reflects standard operating conditions for the academic year. Students are responsible for informing themselves of and satisfactorily meeting all requirements pertinent to their relationship with the University. Students and others who use this catalog should be aware that the information changes from time to time at the sole discretion of Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) and that these changes might alter information contained in this publication. More current and complete information may be obtained in the appropriate department, school, or administrative offices. Some changes can also be found on the Western University of Health Sciences website. Western University of Health Sciences reserves the right at any time, without advance notice, to change any part of the catalog; no vested rights shall run or be created by the catalog, including the right to notice of any modification, novation, amendment, supplementation, or other change of any term, provision, or content of the catalog; such right of Western University of Health Sciences to enact changes shall include but not be limited to (a) attendance or curriculum requirements; (b) changes to tuition and fees; (c) changes in the academic calendar; (d) changes in admission and registration requirements; (e) changes in the regulations and requirements governing instruction in and graduation from Western University of Health Sciences; (f) changes of instructors and faculty; (g) changes of rules and regulations governing the students and student body organizations; (h) changes of on-campus facilities; (i) changes of extra-curricular student activities, programs, and offerings; (j) conduct or academic standing; and (k) changes of any other program or regulation affecting students or other interested parties. Western University of Health Sciences further reserves the right to make such changes should economic conditions, health conditions, changes in law, government orders, or a local, state, or national emergency make it necessary to do so. Such changes may supplement and supersede any inconsistent provisions found in this Catalog, and will be published using typical communication channels, including mail, email, publication to the university web site, press releases, and other channels as deemed appropriate. This catalog does not constitute a contract, or terms or conditions of contract between the student, staff, and/or faculty and Western University of Health Sciences.

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College of Health Sciences

The College catalog serves as a supplement to the University catalog. The College faculty, staff, and students must abide by the content of the University catalog in addition to the College catalog. The 2026-2027 catalogs supersede previous versions, and all students are held responsible for the information contained in both the University and the College 2026-2027 catalogs.

Mission

To achieve an optimal community of educators and health professionals, WesternU College of Health Sciences provides an environment that stimulates and produces grounded and empowered changemakers, to serve the health demands of a diverse population, while collaborating inter-professionally, engaging in best practices, and accurately disseminating healthcare information. Our educators and health professionals listen, refine, and innovate to the changing needs of both our students and the community.

Goals

1. To educate an allied health workforce that helps to meet the healthcare and educational needs of the State of California and the west.
2. To achieve an environment and culture that supports all members of the College.
3. To ensure an environment and culture that empower all persons in the College to maximize their potential as contributing members in the education of students, in research and clinical activities, and in service to the community.

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

Department of Physician Assistant Education

Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Western University of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Western University of Health Sciences**. 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 2033**. 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 <https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-western-university-of-health-sciences/>.

To file an unresolved and/or unaddressed complaint or concern with ARC-PA regarding the PA Program, please use the following link: <https://www.arc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Policy-for-inclusion-in-letters-2021-1.pdf>.

General Information

Mission Statement

The Department of Physician Assistant Education supports the University's mission by educating Physician Assistants to deliver high quality, competent, and compassionate health care as team members within the health care delivery system.

Our mission is to cultivate exemplary physician assistants who lead with innovation, compassion, and integrity. Through rigorous education and mentorship by distinguished faculty, a capable student body will be empowered to deliver comprehensive and equitable primary care. Committed to lifelong learning and service, our faculty, graduates, and students will actively shape the future of healthcare, advancing the PA profession on local, state, and national levels.

Vision

Western University of Health Sciences' Department of Physician Assistant Education aspires to be a leader in healthcare education, setting the standard for excellence in training compassionate, skilled, and innovative healthcare professionals. We are committed to fostering an environment where cutting-edge technology, evidence-based practices, and humanistic care converge to enhance patient outcomes and promote well-being. Through a dedication to continuous learning, and transformative teaching, we aim to empower our students to thrive in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape and serve as catalysts for positive change in the communities they serve.

The Physician Assistant Role

Physician Assistants, also known as Physician Associates, are health care professionals who are authorized by a state to practice medicine in collaboration with physicians and other healthcare providers. PAs are certified by the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants and are licensed, certified, or registered in the state in which they practice. PAs deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services including conducting physical exams, obtaining medical histories, diagnosing, and treating illness, ordering, and interpreting tests, counseling on preventive health care, assisting in surgery, and prescribing medications.

The role of the PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills, and the capacity to react to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. An attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare are essential attributes.

The specific tasks performed by an individual PA cannot be delineated precisely because of variations in practice requirements mandated by geographic, political, economic, and social factors. At a minimum, however, PAs are educated in biomedical science, critical clinical reasoning, and patient education. PA practice is characterized by clinical knowledge and skills in the areas traditionally defined as family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, women's health, emergency medicine, general surgery, and psychiatry/behavioral medicine.

PAs practice in inpatient, outpatient, and long-term settings. They provide health care services to diverse patient populations of all ages with a range from acute to chronic medical and surgical conditions. PAs acquire knowledge and skills, which allow them to function effectively in an ever-changing health care environment.

Services performed by physician assistants include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **Evaluations:** eliciting a detailed and accurate history, performing an appropriate physical examination, ordering appropriate diagnostic studies, delineating problems, developing management plans, and recording and presenting data.
2. **Diagnostics:** ordering, performing, and/or interpreting diagnostic studies to identify and follow pathophysiologic processes.
3. **Monitoring:** implementing patient management plans, recording progress notes, and participating in the process of the continuity of care.
4. **Therapeutic:** performing therapeutic procedures and managing or assisting in the management of medical and surgical conditions, which may include assisting in surgery and taking initiative in performing evaluations and therapeutic procedures in life-threatening procedures.
5. **Patient Evaluation:** counseling patients regarding issues of health care management to include compliance with prescribed therapeutic regimens, normal growth and development, family planning, and emotional problems of daily living.
6. **Referral:** facilitating the referral of patients to other health care providers or agencies as appropriate.

Certification/Licensure

The written examination for certification as a physician assistant is administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Successful completion requires that the applicant achieve the passing score established by the NCCPA for that examination. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that certification of their examination score is received by the Physician Assistant Board (PAB). The NCCPA phone number is 678-417-8100 and their website address is <http://www.nccpa.net/>. The PAB phone number is 916-561-8780 and their website is <http://www.pab.ca.gov>.

To practice as a physician assistant in California, one must apply for and receive licensure from the Physician Assistant Board (PAB) and pass the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE). The PAB does not issue interim permits to practice as a PA.

Graduates seeking licensure outside of California must follow the specific requirements, application process, and regulations established by the respective state licensing board in which they intend to practice.

Program Competencies

WesternU's PA Program Competencies represent the required medical knowledge, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, and professional behaviors that each graduate must achieve to practice as a PA. Each graduate must demonstrate these skills in order to complete their PA education.

The competencies were developed through integration of the PAEA *Core Competencies for New Physician Graduates*, and the AAPA *Competencies for the PA Profession* (amended in 2021). The competencies align with the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) definition of program competencies.

PA students and graduates are educated to provide health care to all patient populations. PAs work collaboratively with physicians and other healthcare providers as outlined by the law. The education provided by the program will prepare the entry-level graduate with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to perform in a primary care setting and function in a variety of roles within numerous clinical settings. Educating individuals to serve as PAs in primary care medicine is founded on the understanding that the broad-based education needed to prepare an individual to serve in a primary care setting is the most effective form of initial preparation. Primary Care education also permits the development of attributes that will serve the graduate in the greatest spectrum of potential employment opportunities.

1. Medical Knowledge (MK):

Graduates of the WesternU PA program will be able to apply comprehensive knowledge of biologic and clinical sciences to provide acute, chronic, urgent, and emergent, patient-centered care to include women's health, prenatal care, and care across the life span (infants, children, adolescents, adult, and the elderly).

2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS):

Graduates of the WesternU PA program will be able to communicate effectively with patients, families, and health team members, incorporating respect through cultural humility and compassion to build meaningful therapeutic and interprofessional relationships.

3. Clinical and Technical Skills (CTS):

Graduates of the WesternU PA program will be able to demonstrate the clinical and technical skills required to provide age-appropriate assessment, evaluation, and management of patients.

4. Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving Skills (CRPS):

Graduates of the WesternU PA program will be able to analyze and synthesize relevant clinical, diagnostic, cultural, and contextual information in order to diagnose and manage patients across the lifespan (prenatal, infant, children, adolescents, adult, and the elderly).

5. Professional Behaviors (PB):

Graduates of the WesternU PA program will be able to demonstrate integrity, deep understanding of the practice environment, and a commitment to lifelong learning that enables them to provide high quality, equitable care for individuals and communities.

The program has also incorporated elements of osteopathic philosophy into PA education. These elements include:

1. Caring for, and appreciation of, the patient as a whole person.
2. Emphasis on those aspects of health education that stress health promotion and disease prevention.
3. An appreciation of the role of physical assessment in the diagnosis and management of illness.

The curriculum is designed to accomplish the preceding goals. Students attain these goals as they progress through the curriculum.

Functions and Tasks of PA Graduates

General Entry-Level Competencies Expected of a Graduate

The PA graduate will be able to:

- Elicit a comprehensive history and perform a complete routine physical examination on patients of any age; elicit a pertinent and accurate history and perform a problem-oriented physical examination in situations requiring an interval evaluation.
- Select, perform, and/or interpret the appropriate routine patient laboratory and diagnostic studies/procedures.
- Identify patient problems, organize, and integrate data, and record patient findings.
- Accurately present an oral case.
- Implement a management plan.
- Instruct and counsel patients regarding physical and mental health to include diet, health maintenance, therapy, normal growth and development, family planning, referral, and follow-up services.
- Provide life support and emergency evaluation/care in response to life-threatening situations in the absence of a physician and/or other appropriate health professionals.
- Initiate and follow up on appropriate referrals to specialists.

Personal Competencies for Admission and Matriculation (Technical Standards)

A candidate for admission or retention to the Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) program must possess, or be able to achieve through reasonable accommodation, certain observation, communication, motor, sensory, cognitive, and psychological functions, that would enable the individual to carry out the activities described in the sections below. Upon matriculation to the program, the student must continue to possess, or be able to achieve through reasonable accommodation, the personal competencies outlined below throughout their progression in the PA program. Graduation from the program signifies that the individual is prepared for entry into clinical practice or into postgraduate training programs. Therefore, graduates must have the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of diagnostic and therapeutic care. The candidate must be able to integrate - consistently, quickly, and accurately - all information received by whatever sense(s) are employed. In addition, they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, critically analyze, and synthesize data. As such, the following technical standards have been adopted for admission, promotion, and graduation from the program.

This program requires the performance of specific essential functions, which include, but are not limited to, the following: observation; communication; motor and sensory; intellectual, cognitive, integrative, and quantitative; behavioral and social; and adherence to the ethical, professional and legal standards.

For candidates or students who require a reasonable accommodation to meet the competencies outlined below, please contact the Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy (^{HF}CDHP) at [Disability Accommodations \(e-mail\)](#) or (909) 469-5441 or visit the [^{HF}CDHP web site](#). Accommodations must be approved by ^{HF}CDHP and are not provided retroactively (if approved after the start of the program/semester). Reasonable accommodation is determined on an individualized basis and may not result in an undue administrative or financial burden. A fundamental alteration of a course or program is not considered a reasonable accommodation.

Under all circumstances, a candidate or student must have the capacity to manage their lives and anticipate their own needs and should be able to perform the following in a reasonably independent manner, with or without reasonable accommodation:

Observation

A candidate must be able to directly obtain information from demonstrations in pre-clinical and clinical coursework through lectures, labs, and experiments in the basic sciences. Candidates should be able to assess a patient accurately and completely at a distance and close at hand; evaluate observational findings, detect changes in patient behavior, physical and mental status. Candidates must be able to obtain and interpret information through a comprehensive assessment of a patient's status and responses to provide appropriate care. Such observation and information acquisition usually requires functional use of visual, auditory and somatic sensation.

Communication

Candidates must exhibit communication and interpersonal skills to enable effective dialogue. Candidates and students should be able to communicate intelligibly and observe patients closely in order to elicit and transmit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive non-verbal communications. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients both in person and in writing. Additionally, they must be able to utilize computerized information technology to access and manage on-line medical information, participate in computerized testing as

required by the curriculum, prepare multimedia presentations, and participate in the management of computerized patient records and assessments.

Motor

A candidate must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers necessary to complete a full physical examination. These maneuvers may require reaching, bending, pushing, pulling, lifting, kneeling, standing, and sitting. The candidate/student must have motor function sufficient to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Such actions require manual dexterity and coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and use of the senses of touch, hearing, and vision. The candidate/student must be able to demonstrate physical strength and stamina necessary to perform physically demanding procedures, endure prolonged periods of sustained posture and physical presence in diverse clinical settings. The candidate must be capable of using and manipulating instruments, such as, but not limited to a stethoscope, an ophthalmoscope, an otoscope, speculum, and a sphygmomanometer. The Candidate must be capable of performing clinical procedures such as, but not limited to: suturing simple lacerations, pelvic examination, digital rectal examination, drawing blood from veins, giving intramuscular injections, basic and advanced cardiopulmonary life support (CPR) (requiring forceful and sustained chest compressions), and simple gynecological procedures. The candidate must be capable of performing basic laboratory tests, using a calculator and a computer, interpreting an ECG, and interpreting common imaging tests. The applicant must be able to move and otherwise physically respond in the clinical setting so as to act quickly in emergencies.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

A candidate and student must have sufficient cognitive capacity to comprehend, retain, apply, and assimilate detailed and complex information presented through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom and laboratory instruction; small group, team and collaborative activities; individual study; medical literature review; preparation and presentation of reports; and the use of electronic technology. They must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information across modalities. Candidates and students should recognize and draw conclusions about three-dimensional spatial relationships and logical sequential relationships among events. They must be able to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios, demonstrate sound medical decision making, and be able to use problem-solving skills in a timely manner despite stressful distractors, consistently encountered in the medical environment.

Emotional, Behavioral and Social Attributes

A candidate/student must demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for full use of their intellectual abilities. A candidate must possess emotional stability and health to exercise good judgment, complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and tolerate the physical, mental, and emotional stress often experienced during training and patient care. A candidate must be able to work effectively, respectfully, and professionally as part of the healthcare team, and to interact with patients, their families, and healthcare personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. A candidate must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and long work hours, to function effectively under stress, and to display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments, technology, and clinical practice guidelines. A candidate must be capable of regular, reliable, and punctual attendance and actively engage in all educational and clinical activities. A student must accept responsibility for his/her learning; accept constructive feedback from others; be able to manage their own emotions and take personal responsibility for making appropriate decisions. A candidate/student must demonstrate

sufficient interpersonal skills to interact positively with people from all levels of society, all ethnic backgrounds, all belief systems, all ages and genders, and all dispositions.

Ethical, Professional and Legal

A candidate and student must behave in an ethical, professional, and moral manner consistent with the values and standards of the PA profession. Students must adhere to universal precaution measures. Students must be able to comply with all requirements set forth by the institution, the program, and the law. A candidate/student must meet the legal standards to obtain a license to practice medicine as a PA. As such, candidates for admission must strictly comply with instructions on reporting criminal offenses or disciplinary action taken against them prior to matriculation

Criminal Background Investigations or Live Scan Fingerprinting

To meet state and industry specific requirements, hospital facilities, school districts, and clinical sites, may require students to complete criminal background checks, including Live Scan fingerprinting, prior to beginning rotations/clinical experiences and/or during their enrollment at WesternU. Consequently, to assure patient safety, students admitted to programs with clinical training requirements will be required to complete a criminal background check prior to matriculation and/or as a component of the scheduling of the rotation/clinical experiences. If a criminal conviction or other relevant sanction is shown on a background check, hospital facilities and clinical sites have broad discretion to restrict an individual from being assigned to the facility/site for the rotation/clinical experience. Therefore, please be aware that certain convictions may prevent students from entering hospital facilities or clinical sites, which may directly hinder a student's ability to complete their academic program successfully. Furthermore, certain convictions may also prevent students from obtaining licensure in the State of California or other states. Applicants and current students are advised to check with the appropriate State(s) licensing boards to determine whether their backgrounds may be a barrier to future licensing. Procedures for obtaining a background investigation will be provided to the student by the appropriate academic program staff. Students have an affirmative obligation to report all arrests and convictions to their College administration to proactively identify solutions (if possible) and/or determine the impact on future licensure. For further information related to criminal convictions, please see the Standards of Student Conduct section.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

Admission to the PA program is on a competitive basis and is open to citizens and permanent residents of the United States and international students. For technical guidelines, please see Personal Competencies for Admission and Matriculation.

Notice of Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

In accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) is committed to ensuring a campus community free from unlawful discrimination. WesternU strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination in all its programs, activities, admissions, and employment. WesternU prohibits discrimination based on the following characteristics:

- Race (including traits associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles)
- Ethnicity, Color, and National Origin
- Immigration Status and Ancestry
- Sex, Gender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Age
- Religion (including religious dress and grooming practices)
- Medical Condition and Genetic Information
- Marital Status
- Pregnancy (including childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions)
- Military or Veteran Status
- Perceived Characteristics - Discrimination is prohibited if an individual is perceived to have any of the above characteristics.
- Association with Protected Groups – Discrimination based on association with a person or group with one or more protected characteristics is also prohibited.
- Other Legally Protected Classes – WesternU complies with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances regarding discrimination.

WesternU has designated the Associate Vice President for the [Office of Title IX and Equal Opportunity Compliance Initiatives \(OTIXEO\)](#) to coordinate WesternU's compliance with federal and state civil rights laws regarding protected characteristics. Inquiries about WesternU's prohibitions against discrimination, harassment, and retaliation can be directed to Associate Vice President (AVP) for the Office of Title IX and Equal Opportunity Compliance Initiatives (OTIXEO) or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Reasonable Accommodations During the Admissions Process

Candidates seeking accommodations during the admissions process, including Interview Day, must contact the Office of Admissions with sufficient advance notice for ^{HF}CDHP to evaluate the request and arrange any approved accommodations. Certain accommodations, however, require scheduling through external vendors and cannot be arranged on short notice or the day of the event. Requests submitted without sufficient advance notice may limit WesternU's ability to provide some accommodations for that activity; although ^{HF}CDHP and Admissions will continue to explore reasonable alternatives whenever possible. The Office of Admissions coordinates accommodation requests with ^{HF}CDHP. Admissions does

not evaluate disability status or review medical documentation; its role is limited to referring applicants to HFCDHP and implementing HFCDHP approved accommodations for specific admissions activities. All requests for accommodations will be handled in a manner that is consistent with the university's policies and in full compliance with the ADA, ADAAA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and applicable state laws. For additional information regarding HFCDHP's registration process, please refer to <https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/registration-process/>, or review the Student Disability Accommodation Process section.

Application Requirements

The application requirements shown in this catalog apply to applicants who are seeking entry for the 2026/2027 academic year. Current admission and application requirements for the MSPA program, including prerequisite coursework requirements, can be located on the MSPA Application website, [Application Requirements](#).

The admissions committee will consider applicants with a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution or who will complete their bachelor's degree before matriculation. The minimum overall GPA required is 3.0, the minimum science GPA is 3.0, and the minimum prerequisite GPA is 3.0, all on a 4.00 scale. As the applicant pool GPA is very competitive, those meeting minimal GPAs may not be invited for interviews. Grades of "C-" or lower in any of the prerequisite courses are not accepted. Candidates should possess the oral and written communication skills necessary to interact with patients and colleagues.

1. Prerequisite Courses

Course	Credit Hours
College English and English Composition*	6 semester credit hours, a full year sequence
College Algebra*	3 semester credit hours
General Biology (with Lab optional)**	6 semester credit hours, a full year
Human Anatomy with Lab**	3 semester credit hours
Human Physiology with Lab**	3 semester credit hours
Microbiology with Lab	3 semester credit hours
General or Inorganic Chemistry with Lab	6 semester credit hours, a full year sequence
Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry	3 semester credit hours
Psychology (General or Introductory only)	3 semester credit hours
Sociology (General or Introductory only)	3 semester credit hours
Humanities	9 semester credit hours
Introductory Statistics***	3 semester credit hours
Genetics	3 semester credit hours
Medical Terminology	1 semester or term

* English prerequisites must be taken from the English department. English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are not accepted for the English prerequisites.

** Anatomy and physiology must be taken out of the anatomy, physiology, A&P, biology, or zoology departments. If anatomy and physiology are combined, a minimum of five semester credit hours is required.

****Preferably from math or statistics department.*

A seven (7) year time limit is enforced for all science prerequisites and labs (anatomy, physiology, chemistry, microbiology, and genetics). The courses must be completed within seven years of the application deadline to be accepted.

All science laboratories are to be completed on campus. Virtual/online laboratories are not accepted for science prerequisites requiring a laboratory. In response to the COVID-19 challenges experienced by institutions from 2020 to 2022, the program will accept online laboratories if taken during Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022. Labs taken prior to Spring 2020 and after Spring 2022 must be taken on campus/in person.

Advanced placement, transfer of credit, CLEP examination, or credit for experiential learning is not recognized by the program as meeting these prerequisites, nor is it recognized as acceptable within the PA curriculum.

Introductory level courses in the sciences are not acceptable (i.e., courses taken in the sciences for non-science majors).

Prerequisite courses must be transferable. Transferable courses are those designated for baccalaureate credit by the college or university offering the courses.

2. 120 hours of Community Service

Competitive applicants should be able to demonstrate ongoing community service.

This may include volunteering and all trends of community service and may include the following:

- Homeless Shelters / Soup kitchens / Food Banks
- Community Outreach
- Veteran Programs
- Clinical (emergency assistant, patient visitor/escort, etc.)
- Tutoring
- Youth Mentoring
- Senior Citizen Home
- Church (missionary trips/outreach)

Although the minimum requirement is 120 hours, applicants continue to accumulate approximately 500 hours over the course of one to two years. More competitive applicants have accumulated well over 500 total hours within the same length of time and continue ongoing community service up until the time they matriculate.

3. Patient Care Experience (PCE)

Effective for the entering cohort of 2026, the Physician Assistant (PA) Program requires applicants to complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of Patient Care Experience (PCE) through direct patient care activities. This experience is essential to ensure that candidates possess a foundational understanding of patient care and develop the necessary skills for the rigorous clinical training

within the program. This requirement further reflects the program's commitment to preparing students with a strong, hands-on clinical foundation, ensuring they are ready to succeed in the PA profession.

Preference will be given to applicants with experience in roles such as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), medical scribes, back office medical assistants, certified nursing assistants, patient care extenders, phlebotomists, respiratory technicians, radiology technicians, and other similar healthcare positions that involve direct patient interaction and clinical support.

Applicants must provide verification of their PCE hours and duties performed into the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) portal.

Additionally, applicants selected for admission will be subject to the following:

Criminal Background Checks During the Admissions Process

Your admission into the MSPAS program will be contingent upon a satisfactory criminal background check, which is to be completed and submitted prior to matriculation. The background check is required to verify that your history is consistent with the University's Standards of Student Conduct, and to ensure that you will be qualified to participate in the required clinical education experiences. The College of Health Sciences reserves the right to rescind an offer of admission based on the results of a criminal background check or if it is not completed in a timely manner prior to matriculation.

If a criminal conviction or other relevant sanction is shown on a background check, hospital facilities and clinical sites have broad discretion to restrict an individual from being assigned to the facility/site for the rotation/clinical experience. Therefore, please be aware that certain convictions may prevent students from entering hospital facilities or clinical sites, which may directly hinder a student's ability to complete their academic program successfully. Furthermore, certain convictions may also prevent students from obtaining employment and/or licensure in the State of California or other states.

Applicants are advised to check with the appropriate State(s) licensing boards to determine whether their backgrounds may be a barrier to future licensing. Supplemental or additional background checks may be required during the course of the MSPAS program to meet the requirements of clinical education sites. Procedures for obtaining a background investigation will be provided to the student by the appropriate academic program staff. Students have an affirmative obligation to report all arrests and convictions to College of Health Science administration to proactively identify solutions (if possible) and/or determine the impact on future licensure. For further information related to criminal background checks including those required during enrollment, please see the Criminal Background Investigations or Live Scan Fingerprinting section of this Catalog and the University Catalog.

Application Procedures and Deadlines

The Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) was created by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) as a service to applicants and member programs. CASPA will collect one set of materials from each applicant. CASPA will then authenticate, photocopy, and distribute them to each member school an applicant designates. WesternU's application deadline for all admission materials to be received by CASPA is November 1 of the year prior to beginning the PA program. Applicants are

considered without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or gender. Decisions regarding the admission of applicants are final and not subject to appeal.

To request program information and/or information about the CASPA application, contact the Office of Admissions or the CASPA office at:

Office of Admissions

Western University of Health Sciences
309 E. Second Street
Pomona, CA 91766-1854
(909) 469-5335

<https://www.westernu.edu/health-sciences/programs/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies/>
<https://www.westernu.edu/health-sciences/programs/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies/apply/>

CASPA

<https://caspa.liaisoncas.com/>

(617) 612-2080

Applicants who have undertaken any coursework outside of the United States, including French Canadian institutions, must submit their transcripts for evaluation to World Education Services (WES). In preparation for CASPA, a course-by-course evaluation is required, and all course work must be designated as undergraduate, graduate, or professional. Western University of Health Sciences will only honor evaluations from the above service. The evaluation must be submitted to CASPA and include a calculation of the cumulative/overall GPA.

Once the applicant's file is reviewed, the applicant may be granted an on-campus interview. During the interview process, the applicant meets individually with interview teams, which may consist of the PA Program Director, PA faculty, University faculty, University administration, students, PA alumni, and community PAs. Each interview team will ask the applicant questions regarding academics, personal preparedness, self-awareness, integrity, and commitment to the PA program and the PA profession. Interviewees are rated on a standard evaluation form relative to each of these variables. At the conclusion of the interviews, the evaluation forms are reviewed by the PA Admissions Committee representatives, which decides to admit, deny admission, or place the applicant in an alternate pool. An applicant previously in the alternate pool must reapply for admission into the PA Program. The WesternU PA program does not accept transfer students. The PA program generally does not allow a candidate to defer their initial enrollment to a later term. Notwithstanding, in extenuating circumstances, the PA Program may offer the option of deferment to an entire admitted cohort. Decisions of the PA Admissions Committee regarding the admission of applicants to the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program are final. Candidates accepted to WesternU must submit updated official transcripts by mail or email to the Admissions Office no later than July 1 of the year of matriculation in the PA program. For your information, CASPA retains the original set of transcripts it receives from applicants.

Acceptance Deposit

Applicants accepted to the PA program must pay a non-refundable “acceptance” deposit of \$1,000.00 by the due dates provided by the Admissions Office.

International Applicants

International applicants who are not U.S. citizens and who are living in the U.S. should be prepared to provide proof of legal U.S. residency at the time of interview. Proof of legal U.S. residency is required prior to any offer of acceptance. International applicants who require an F-1 student visa to study in the U.S must contact the Office of International Students and Scholars within seven days of notification of an offer of admission. For detailed information, please visit our web page for [International Students](#).

Transfers from Other Schools

The Department of Physician Assistant Education does not accept transfer PA students.

Transferability of Courses Taken at WesternU

Whether WesternU course credits transfer to another institution is at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the degree or certificate you earn at WesternU is also at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. Further information regarding the transferability of courses taken at WesternU can be found in the University catalog.

Registration

All WesternU students are required to register by the registration deadlines specified by the University Registrar. Registration dates are posted on the [Registrar's Office](#) website. Failure to register by the deadline may be grounds for administrative withdrawal. All students registering after the posted deadline will be assessed a \$30.00 per business day late fee.

Full tuition and fees and all prior debts must be paid in full on or by posted deadlines each academic year. Matriculation is subject to the satisfactory completion of all academic requirements and payment of all outstanding debts to the University. The receipt of the final transcript(s) from all colleges/universities attended and a physical examination with documentation of required immunizations (if applicable) prior to registration are additional requirements for incoming students.

Registration Late Fee Appeals

If you are assessed late fees for a registration period, you may submit an appeal to the Registrar. For additional information on the appeal process, please see the [Registration Late Fees](#) page on the Registrar's Office website.

Student Health Insurance Requirement

All full-time students at Western University of Health Sciences are required to have active health insurance while enrolled. All students are automatically assessed half of the entire year's insurance premium and will be enrolled in the student health insurance plan until they submit proof of coverage that meets the University's requirements. For additional information on student health insurance requirements and/or waiving out of the student health insurance plan, please see the [Student Health Insurance](#) page on the Registrar's Office website.

New Student Orientation/Welcome Week

Attendance at all Welcome Week activities is mandatory for all incoming first-year students. Failure to attend any required part of Orientation/Welcome Week without prior approval from the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs may result in the forfeiture of the class seat.

Student Initiated Changes in Enrollment Status

Voluntary Leave of Absence

A student may request a Voluntary Leave of Absence (LOA) with the occurrence of a medical emergency or illness, personal issues, financial hardship, military service, or pursuit of academic research opportunity. For additional information on requesting a Voluntary Leave of Absence, please see 'Student Initiated Changes in Enrollment Status' in the University Catalog, General Academic Policies and Procedures section.

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student may request to fully separate from WesternU at any time by submitting a Voluntary Withdrawal form. Students interested in initiating the Voluntary Withdrawal process must begin by contacting their College Dean, or designee. The College will submit the signed Voluntary Withdrawal form to the Registrar's Office for processing and distribution. Please note that once processed, WesternU email address, MyPortal access, and all other online services are inactivated immediately following withdrawal

from the University. For additional information on the Voluntary Withdrawal process, please see 'Student Initiated Changes in Enrollment Status' in the University Catalog, General Academic Policies and Procedures section.

Full-Time Status

All MSPA students enrolled in at least one class/rotation are considered full-time students.

Time Limits

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program is designed to be completed in two (2) years of full-time study. The requirements for the degree must be fulfilled within 3 years from the initial date of matriculation to the program. Students who are unable to meet the 3-year time limit for the MSPA program will be referred to the Student Performance Committee and may be subject to administrative withdrawal.

Administrative Withdrawal

Please see 'Administrative Withdrawal from University/Program' section in the University Catalog.

Tuition and Fees

By action of the Board of Trustees, MSPAS tuition and fees for the 2026/2027 academic year (subject to change) are as follows:

Institutional Fees

\$57,513.00	Annual Tuition
\$4,979.00	Clinical Fees, Year 2
\$40.00	Student Body Fee, Year 1
\$20.00	Student Body Fee, Year 2
\$565.00	Lab Fee (All Students)
\$978.00	Student Service Fee (All Students)
\$475.00	Required Graduation Fee, Year 2

Non-institutional Fees

\$1,364.68	Medical Equipment, Year 1
\$70.00	Ultrasound Butterfly Academy, Year 1
\$75.00	Complete Anatomy, Year 1
\$80.00	Exam Delivery Software, Years 1 & 2
\$349.00	Digital Media & License Fee, Year 1
\$550.00	Digital Media & License Fee, Year 2
\$1,945.00	Books and Supplies, Year 1
\$350.00	Books and Supplies, Year 2
\$550.00	PANCE Board Exam Fee
\$60.00	Criminal Background Investigation (Approx.), Years 1 & 2
\$60.00	Drug Screen (Approx.), Years 1 & 2
\$1,000.00	Laptop Computer
\$50.00	Computer privacy screen
\$3,010 - \$3,054.00	Estimated Loan Fees, Years 1 & 2
\$150.00	CPR (BLS & ACLS) (Approx.), Year 1 & 2
\$30.00	Registration Late Fee (Per Business Day)
\$50.00	Late Payment Fee (per month)
\$470.00	Annual Parking Permit (Automobile)
\$235.00	Annual Parking Permit (Motorcycle)
\$10.00	Student ID Replacement Fee

Additional PA Program Education Requirements

All students are required to have a laptop computer with internet access. Course assignments and examinations will be given that necessitate access to a computer and the internet. Minimum specifications required by the PA program can be found on the university's IT website at: [Laptop Requirements](#)

Classroom Audience Response System

The Department of PA Education requires that each PA student participate in a classroom audience response system that will be identified during the first week of school. Classroom responders are electronic devices or applications, such as smart phones or laptops that will be used to enhance interactive learning in classrooms. The device or application will enable faculty to gauge student understanding of concepts, introduce more innovative teaching and assessment methods, improve student involvement in learning, and facilitate classroom learning to become more dynamic. The system may also be used to administer and score assessments and take attendance as needed.

Modified Curriculum/Repeated Coursework Tuition Rates

Students enrolled in a modified curriculum or who are directed to repeat one or more courses but not the entire academic year are charged a per credit hour tuition rate. This rate is calculated by dividing the total credit hours required for a class year by the annual tuition. The per-credit hour rates for 2026/2027 are shown below:

\$1,017.93	MSPA Year 1 per credit hour charge
\$1,307.11	MSPA Year 2 per credit hour charge

General Academic Policies and Procedures

These policies are designed to promote academic excellence, professional behavior, and a supportive learning environment. All policies are subject to periodic review and may be updated in accordance with accreditation standards and evolving best practices.

Academic Advisement

1. Assignment and Responsibilities:

- Each student will be assigned a dedicated faculty advisor at the start of the program.
- Advisors are responsible for providing timely, accurate, and actionable guidance on academic, career, and personal matters.
- Students must come to each meeting prepared with questions and provide updates on progress.

2. Meeting Frequency and Documentation:

- Students should meet with their advisor periodically or as needed but are expected to meet at least once a month if placed on Academic Probation.
- Meetings with students on academic or professional probation require documented follow-ups with both the faculty advisor and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

3. Advisor Change Protocol:

- a. Requests for a change in advisor/advisee relationships must be submitted in writing to the Associate Program Director/Program Director, with a clear explanation of the need for change.

Student Employment

1. Policy Rationale:

- Given the demanding nature of PA education, students are strongly discouraged from working during the program.
- Employment may negatively impact academic performance and clinical competency.

2. Policy and Enforcement:

- No student shall substitute for or work for the PA program as instructional faculty, clinical, or administrative staff during any phase of enrollment.

Attendance and Absences

1. The PA program is a full-time, in-person program requiring students to be present and available to fulfill their academic responsibilities including coursework, clinical activities, and other academic responsibilities as directed by the College of Health Sciences.
2. General Expectations:
 - All students are required to attend in person all Welcome Week activities, which include University Orientation, College of Health Sciences Orientation, MSPA Program Orientation, and the CHS White Coat Ceremony. Failure to attend any required part of the Orientation/Welcome Week without prior approval from the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs may result in a forfeiture of the class seat.
 - All students are required to attend Commencement activities in person, which include graduate awards and the CHS Commencement Ceremony.
 - Attendance is MANDATORY for all students and applies to every scheduled class session. Please note that attendance is also MANDATORY for all scheduled clinical rotation

(SCPE) shifts assigned by the student's preceptors. Exceptions may be made only for absences that are pre-approved by the Program or deemed excused in accordance with the Program and University policies. Failure to adhere to this policy is considered unprofessional behavior and may result in a grade reduction, as outlined in the Professionalism Rubric.

Special Note: If a medical condition or disability requires accommodations, such as more than the allowed absences per academic year, the student should complete the ^{HF}CDHP registration process as soon as possible. ^{HF}CDHP is the authorized entity at WesternU to approve reasonable accommodations under the ADA and Section 504. Registration includes the interactive process, which may include implementation of appropriate accommodations. The time off process does not constitute an authorization of reasonable accommodations and cannot serve as a substitute for the ^{HF}CDHP registration process.

3. Absence Notification and Documentation:

The College recognizes that occasionally a student must miss a mandatory curricular activity due to a required or unavoidable circumstance. If a student needs to be excused for any length of time, the request must be submitted prior to the start of the missed activity via the Time-Off Request Form (TOR). If this is not possible, the student must text or call the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs prior to the start of the missed activity. Some activities cannot be made-up, therefore, even with an approved TOR, the student may forfeit the points from an activity (e.g., quiz, lab activity, etc.).

The Office of Student Affairs will monitor students with frequent absence requests to ensure optimal academic performance. The Office of Student Affairs may limit excused absence privileges or require additional documentation if deemed necessary.

It is required that students observe the following attendance policies:

- All unanticipated absences due to illness, accident, or other unexpected events must be reported to the program and clinical site, if applicable, at the time the unanticipated absence occurs. A phone call or an email to the department will serve as acceptable notification formats. If ill, and absent for three or more days, a note from a medical provider is expected to be submitted to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs when returning to the program or rotation site.
- Absences requested for physician/dentist appointments for students or dependents will be considered only if requested at least one week in advance of the appointment. Due to the intense nature of the curriculum, students are strongly encouraged to schedule appointments for evening and Saturday hours to avoid class conflicts.
- All anticipated absences for any reason, including religious holidays, regardless of length, must have prior approval by the faculty. All requests for anticipated absences must be submitted in writing to the instructor and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at least one week prior to the proposed absence. Requests will be considered on an individual basis and written notification of approval or disapproval will be provided to the student within one week of receipt of the request. For further information related to requesting religious

accommodations, student should refer to the Religious Accommodations policy in the University Catalog.

- When an absence is the result of a sudden, unavoidable circumstance (i.e. illness, accident, or other unexpected event), the program should be notified within 24 hours and provided with documentation explaining the reason for absence.

Failure to meet attendance requirements in courses where attendance is graded or required as a threshold criterion may constitute a failure to meet Standards of Academic Progress and may result in referral to the Student Performance Committee under the Evaluation of Student Performance (Academic Hearing Process). Non-compliance with attendance requirements which reflect a pattern of unexcused absences may result in the student being referred to the Student Performance Committee for appropriate action which may include disciplinary action including failure of a course, repeating a course, or dismissal from the program.

Anticipated Absences:

- If repeat offenses to the attendance policy occur after the student has been informally or formally warned by the instructor, the instructor may deduct up to a 3% deduction from the overall course grade for that student..

4. Clinical Rotation (SCPE) Specifics:

- All absences during clinical rotations (anticipated or unanticipated) must be communicated to the PA Program and the preceptor.
- All time missed on a rotation due to excused or unexcused absence must be made up.
- Three or more excused or unexcused absences in a SCPE will trigger a review and may necessitate make-up of those missed days or repetition of the entire SCPE (if applicable) in August, unless mitigating circumstances are formally documented. Any failure of the student to make up the missed day or the SCPE will refer in a referral to the Student Performance Committee.
 - This may result in extension of the program completion date.

Requesting Religious Accommodation

In keeping with the University's commitment to humanism, WesternU recognizes and supports the provision of academic reasonable accommodation based on a person's sincerely held religious belief. A reasonable accommodation is one that can be implemented without materially interfering with the University's legitimate educational or operational objectives. The most common request for academic religious accommodation concerns class attendance during the observance of major religious holy days and celebrations.

Students wishing to be excused from class attendance for religious observances must submit a written request to the official WesternU email address of the instructor prior to their absence and receive a written response from the instructor acknowledging receipt prior to any absence as stated in the policy above. Alternative request methods, including but not limited to verbal communication, text messages, hard copy letters, notes, phone calls, and voicemail, will not be accepted. Students are responsible for satisfying all academic requirements for a course as defined by the instructor.

It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor(s) about requests for excused absences within the first two weeks of the class each semester after reviewing course syllabi for potential scheduling conflicts. If such conflicts occur during the first two weeks of classes in the semester, the student must notify the instructor(s), in writing at least three calendar days (72 hours) before the date that they will be absent.

The faculty of WesternU shall accommodate students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from any curricular activities. It is the responsibility of the instructor(s) to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed due to the absence.

Religious accommodation requests are not limited to holiday observances and may arise from a wide range of faith-based practices and commitments, including but not limited to scheduled prayer, dietary restrictions, fasting periods, religiously mandated dress or grooming, ritual purification practices, and deeply held theological or philosophical beliefs. Because the nature and scope of such requests vary considerably, each will be evaluated individually based on its particular circumstances. In such instances, students should contact the College Assistant Dean of Student Affairs to discuss such religious accommodation requests. The Office of Humanism is available as a resource throughout this process and may be engaged as circumstances warrant.

Retaliation is Prohibited. The University prohibits retaliation against students who request a religious accommodation or who participate in an approved accommodation. An employee who violates this anti-retaliation provision may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Grievance Procedure: In the event that agreement cannot be reached regarding an academic religious accommodation, the student should bring the issue to the relevant college dean and to the Office of Student Success and Student Life via email studentlife@westernu.edu for review and resolution as applicable. If advice in resolving the issue is needed, the Office of Humanism will be consulted, as appropriate.

Examination and Assessment Conduct

1. In-Person Examinations:

- a. Students must refrain from any form of communication during examinations and must always face forward. No questions will be permitted during the examination period.
- b. **Electronic Devices:**
 - i. All electronic devices besides laptops are to be turned off or set to silent mode.
 - ii. **Laptop Screen Protectors**
 1. Students must use **privacy screen protectors** on their laptops during exams.
 2. Failure to have a screen protector may result in disqualification from the exam.
 - iii. Once an examination is completed, students must submit all materials as directed; re-entry is prohibited until the exam session concludes.
- c. **Scratch Papers**
 - i. The program will provide each student with a half-sheet of blank paper to use for notes or scratch work during the exam.

- ii. Students must write their name clearly in the top left corner of the provided sheet prior to beginning the examination.
- iii. At the end of the exam, students are required to submit the sheet to the exam proctor before exiting the classroom.
- iv. Failure to return the sheet will be considered a violation of the examination policy.

d. Additional Exam Security Measures

- i. No unauthorized materials or devices are allowed in the testing area. (including but not limited to personal notes and electronic devices such as smartwatches, tablets, cell phones)
- ii. Assigned seats may be implemented periodically throughout the year.

e. Any violation of exam policies may result in disciplinary action.

2. Remote Exam Protocol:

a. Pre-Exam Requirements:

- i. Students must prepare a private, uncluttered, and well-lit area with a reliable internet connection.
- ii. A secondary device (e.g., tablet or smartphone) must be positioned to capture a 360-degree view of the workspace, including a clear image of the student's keyboard, desk, and whiteboard.
- iii. The student must put their secondary device in Do Not Disturb mode after connecting to the Zoom session. This will allow the student to concentrate without interruptions to the student or the video feed. Any disruptions to the video feed during the exam will be deemed "suspicious activity" which could be subject to review by the Instructor of Record and/or the Department Chair.
- iv. All personal notes, reference materials, or unauthorized aids must be removed from the exam area.

b. During the Exam:

- i. Students must log in at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- ii. The secondary device must remain on with the student's video continuously active.
- iii. The Zoom profile must display the student's full legal name, and the private chat function will be used exclusively for communicating technical difficulties or emergencies.

c. Whiteboards

- i. Whiteboards will be permitted but we require that you use a fine point dry erase marker only.
- ii. Whiteboards should be clean at the beginning of the exam and the end of the exam.
- iii. Please show the clean whiteboards to the exam proctor along with your green screens prior to exit.

d. Post-Exam Verification:

- i. Upon submission, students must demonstrate via their secondary device that their exam has been uploaded (or logged off) and that their workspace is cleared.
- ii. Any suspicious activity or breach of protocol will trigger an immediate investigation by the Instructor of Record and may result in a zero score for the exam and referral to the Student Performance Committee (SPC).

Remote Learning and Zoom Policies

1. General Zoom Attendance:

- a. Students are required to attend all Zoom lectures and lab sessions using their university-provided account.
- b. Devices used for Zoom must be laptops or desktops; use of mobile phones is discouraged except under exceptional circumstances.
- c. Zoom recordings may occur during or throughout the instructional period.

2. Professional Conduct on Zoom:

- a. Full name display, appropriate professional attire, and a distraction-free environment are mandatory.
- b. The camera must remain on and the student in direct view at all times during the instructional period.
- c. The “raise hand” feature must be used for questions.
- d. Private chat is disabled unless the instructor permits its use for operational issues only.

3. Consequences for Non-Compliance:

- a. Any violation of Zoom policies (e.g., failure to maintain video, inappropriate attire, or use of unauthorized devices) may result in loss of participation points and could be escalated for review by the Student Performance Committee.

Communications and Campus Interactions

1. Official Communication Channels:

- a. The WesternU email account is the only approved method for official program communications.
- b. Students must check their email at least twice daily and promptly update any contact information changes with the Registrar, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and PA department staff.

Practice Partners and Clinical Simulations

1. Participation Requirements:

- Students must participate as practice partners during physical examination sessions and clinical skills activities, as assigned by the instructor.
- Modest exposure is strictly limited to professional boundaries; no examinations will involve areas such as breasts or genitalia.

2. Pairing Guidelines:

- Standard pairing is by gender (female/female) to ensure comfort and professionalism; however it is reasonable to expect that male/female pairings may occur by necessity.
- Any requests to change pairings must be reviewed and are subject to approval by the PA Program leadership based on documented need.

Leave of Absence and Re-Entry Procedures During Phase II or Phase III

Return from Leave of Absence:

1. Students returning from a leave of absence during the clinical phase (three months or longer) must complete a mandatory ½-day review session before resuming clinical education.
2. The review session will assess proficiency in core competencies (e.g., complete physical exam, problem-oriented physical examination with a SOAP note) and cover critical topics such as universal precautions and sterile techniques.

3. A follow-up session will be scheduled if any deficiencies are noted.

Student Disability Accommodation Process

The Harris Family Center for Disability and Health Policy (HFCDHP) values the uniqueness of each student as an integral member of our diverse WesternU community and is the designated office responsible for determining and approving reasonable academic modifications or accommodations. WesternU does not discriminate on the basis of disability and complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and applicable state laws.

HFCDHP's role in the accommodation process is to engage in an interactive process and to provide students with disabilities with the legally mandated and necessary support to afford equal access to the University's programs and activities. Only accommodations approved through HFCDHP constitute official reasonable accommodations under the ADA and Section 504. Instructional personnel may, at their discretion, provide temporary or informal academic flexibility; however, such measures do not replace or supersede the formal accommodation review and approval process administered by HFCDHP.

A student's disclosure of a disability or health-related condition alerts the University to a potential need for accommodation; however, students must complete the HFCDHP registration process for accommodations to be formally reviewed, approved, and implemented. Disclosure of a disability or the submission of documentation in response to a process or procedure established by their respective college or program, does not, by itself, constitute a formal request for accommodations.

Students must be able to perform all the essential functions of the program with or without reasonable accommodation. Essential functions are defined in the program's published personal competencies and are assessed on an individualized basis through the interactive process.

The University will provide reasonable accommodations but is not required to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of essential requirements of a program, result in an undue burden, or pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others. A fundamental alteration of a course or program is not considered a reasonable accommodation.

Students must adhere to the enrollment and documentation procedures set forth by HFCDHP to formally request accommodation. In the event a student discloses a disability to instructional personnel or administrators outside of HFCDHP, the student will be referred to HFCDHP for guidance on the accommodation request process. Requests for academic consideration related to circumstances other than the student's own disability (e.g., family bereavement or common illness) are not considered requests for reasonable accommodation under the HFCDHP Provision of Academic Accommodation(s) Policy and Procedure, the ADA, or Section 504 and are governed by separate institutional or program policies.

Accommodation determinations for clinical, laboratory, and experiential education are made on an individualized basis and may involve coordination with clinical training sites. Approved accommodations must be consistent with program requirements, personal competencies, and patient safety obligations. The availability and implementation of accommodations in clinical settings may vary by site and setting.

Requests are reviewed on an individual basis in accordance with applicable law. Accommodations are implemented prospectively following approval by HFCDHP.

Students may file a grievance with ^{HF}CDHP regarding the denial or implementation of disability accommodations or concerns about access or discrimination. Grievances should be submitted promptly, no later than 30 calendar days from the decision or activity being appealed. Filing a grievance will not result in retaliation. Information, including the right to file with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, is available at <https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/grievance-procedures/>.

To request accommodations and initiate the interactive process at WesternU, students are encouraged to visit <https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/> to learn more about the registration process, requirements for disability documentation, and to complete the Student Intake Form. ^{HF}CDHP will promptly engage with students in the interactive process to review and implement accommodation requests. All inquiries are handled confidentially, and students may obtain general information without registering.

To schedule an appointment with ^{HF}CDHP, please email disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu. For the Pomona campus, students may call (909) 469-5441, or visit in person at 309 E. Second Street, Building 390, Pomona CA, 91766. Center hours are Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm. For more information, please visit <https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/>.

Videotaping, Audiotaping, Still Photography and Digitized Note Taking in Laboratories and Lecture Halls, or Associated Academic Activities

Videotaping, audiotaping, still photography and digital note taking are not permitted in the University laboratories, lecture halls, or clinical sites without the expressed permission of the involved instructor or through approved accommodations from the ^{HF}CDHP office. For further details, please refer to this policy in the University Catalog.

Protocol for Input on Matters of Student Concern

When an issue or dispute arises between students, the issue/dispute resolution process starts with communication among the involved students. If a satisfactory resolution is not arrived at that level, the matter should then be addressed with the faculty advisor. If the problem is not resolved at the faculty advisor/course director level, the matter should be brought to the appropriate college's Student Affairs personnel, then the College Dean, or Dean's designee. If the matter has not been resolved at those levels, the final arbiter is the Provost.

Students → Assistant Dean of Student Affairs → Associate Program Director → Program Director → CHS Dean → Provost

When an incident arises involving a faculty member, the first step in the issue/dispute resolution process is discussion with the faculty member. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at that level, then the matter should be referred to the Department Chair, then Dean, or Dean's designee, in that order. The final arbiter is the Provost. Please note that grade appeals cannot be handled under this protocol.

Faculty → Associate Program Director → Program Director → CHS Dean → Provost

When an incident arises involving a staff member, the dispute resolution process begins with the Supervisor/Department Chair followed by the Dean, or Dean's designee. The Office of Human Resources is the final arbiter.

Staff → Program Director → CHS Dean → Provost

Failure to follow this sequence of steps will only serve to delay the appropriate resolution of the issue or dispute as the matter will only be referred back to the correct level in this chain of responsibility.

This protocol does not apply to concerns involving discrimination, harassment or retaliation. For information related to complaints involving discrimination, harassment and retaliation, including community resources, emergency and on-going assistance; mental health services; reporting options and other available support are as follows and can be located on the University's Title IX resource website.

Tutorial Assistance Program (TAP) and Academic Support

A Tutorial Assistance Program (TAP) has been established to assist students experiencing academic difficulty. Students will be recommended for this program by a faculty advisor, professor, or administrator. Students may self-identify to TAP to receive assistance by following LEAD protocol to obtain TAP support. Group tutoring is the methodology most used by the TAP department. For assistance, contact the Department of Learning Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD). TAP support is contingent upon availability of tutors and the support of the college program.

Student Injuries and Illnesses in Clinical Settings

In the event of a student injury or illness (e.g., needle stick, puncture wound, slip/fall, etc.) during a clinical experience the following should be followed:

- Students are to immediately notify their preceptor and their College's Clinical Rotations Office. As soon as possible, students are to submit an Incident Report (https://webapp.westernu.edu/incident_report).
- Obtain medical treatment (e.g., blood draw). It is the student's choice where they obtain medical treatment. They can do so, if possible, at the clinical site, Urgent Care, local hospital or from their primary care provider.

Follow-up care should be continued at the contracted clinical facility as needed and ordered by the evaluating health care professional. Expenses incurred are to be submitted to the student's personal insurance as the primary coverage and to the university as the secondary insurance, for the reported incident only. The [Incident Report Form](#) can be found on the university website and must be completed by the student and/or faculty and submitted electronically. There may also be a requirement to fill out a more detailed report within the student's program of study (please refer to specific program clinical handbook).

Criminal Background Investigations or Live Scan Fingerprinting

To meet state and industry specific requirements, hospital facilities, school districts, and clinical sites, may require students to complete criminal background checks, including Live Scan fingerprinting, prior to beginning rotations/clinical experiences and/or during their enrollment at WesternU. Consequently, to assure patient safety, students admitted to programs with clinical training requirements will be required to complete a criminal background check prior to matriculation and/or as a component of the scheduling of the rotation/clinical experiences.

If a criminal conviction or other relevant sanction is shown on a background check, hospital facilities and clinical sites have broad discretion to restrict an individual from being assigned to the facility/site for the

rotation/clinical experience. Therefore, please be aware that certain convictions may prevent students from entering hospital facilities or clinical sites, which may directly hinder a student's ability to complete their academic program successfully. Furthermore, certain convictions may also prevent students from obtaining licensure in the State of California or other states.

Students are advised to check with the appropriate State(s) licensing boards to determine whether their backgrounds may be a barrier to future licensing. Supplemental or additional background checks may be required during the course of enrollment to meet the requirements of clinical education sites. Procedures for obtaining a background investigation will be provided to the student by the appropriate academic program staff. Students have an affirmative obligation to report all arrests and convictions to their College administration to proactively identify solutions (if possible) and/or determine the impact on future licensure. For further information related to criminal convictions, please see the Standards of Student Conduct section in the University Catalog.

Drug Screenings

WesternU students who are required to complete clinical rotations as part of their program of study may be subject to drug testing as a condition of placement at clinical rotation sites. In accordance with the [Drug and Alcohol on Campus Policy](#), students who receive a positive drug test result will be required to take affirmative steps to validate that result by submitting appropriate documentation within the timeframe and manner specified by the Student and Employee Health Office (SEHO). The illegal or unauthorized use or abuse of drugs that impair a student's ability to perform academically or disrupts others in the performance of their work or academic endeavors is strictly prohibited. Any failure to comply with a validation directive from SEHO may result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism. Further, any failure to appropriately validate a positive drug test may be considered a violation of the [Drug and Alcohol on Campus Policy](#) and will be referred for to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism. Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from their program of study.

Drugs and Alcohol on Campus Policy

The Drugs and Alcohol on Campus Policy can be found in the University Catalog. Students will be required to complete a drug screening along with a background check on an annual basis to be permitted to begin any clinical practice experiences. This is in addition to what is outlined in the University or College Catalog. Students are expected to be aware of, and abide by, both University and applicable College policies. For further information related to Drug Screening, please review the [Drugs and Alcohol Policy](#) and the Student Health and Safety section in the University Catalog.

Service Animals on Campus

In accordance with university policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals with disabilities are permitted to bring service animals, as defined under the ADA. Emotional support animals and pets are generally prohibited on campus and at clinical rotation sites. Students seeking further information should consult the Animals on University Property Policy, available at <https://www.westernu.edu/cdhp/service-emotional-support-animals/>, or contact the ^{HF}CDHP for additional guidance at disabilityaccommodations@westernu.edu.

Standards of Academic Integrity, Professionalism and Student Conduct (“Standards of Student Conduct”)

The Standards of Student Conduct encompass three components: the Standards of Academic Integrity, the Standards of Professionalism, and the Standards of Student Conduct. Collectively, these three components are referred to as the Standards of Student Conduct and are located in the [University Catalog](#). Students are expected to make themselves aware of and abide by the expectations contained in the Standards of Student Conduct and related policy statements. Ignorance is not a justification for violating the Standards of Student Conduct.

Because of the professional nature of a graduate health degree program, WesternU expects a higher standard of student conduct. The Standards of Student Conduct articulates violations that are most common and/or readily identifiable. Conduct violating the Standards of Student Conduct that are not specifically mentioned may still be subject to disciplinary action. Any questions regarding interpretation of the Standards of Student Conduct defined in the University Catalog should be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism.

Professionalism Concerns and Non-Disciplinary Interventions

The College of Health Sciences recognizes that professional behavior is a core competency of graduate health professions education. Accordingly, the College may evaluate reports that raises professionalism concerns, including but not limited to professional demeanor, accountability, respect, effective interpersonal skills, and ethical behavior. Upon identifying such concerns, the College retains discretion to determine the appropriate response and course of action, provided that resulting action constitutes a non-disciplinary measures, which may include but is not limited to mentoring, coaching, a written advisement, a Professional Behavior Improvement Plan, or other non-disciplinary approaches. These measures are educational in nature and are intended to serve as constructive interventions and/or advisements designed to support the student's professional development. Non-disciplinary measures do not constitute, and shall not be construed as, formal sanctions as defined under the Standards of Student Conduct set forth in the University Catalog.

Students are expected to engage in good faith with any non-disciplinary measures implemented by the College. A student's failure or refusal to comply with such measures may result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism for further review pursuant to the applicable University student conduct process.

Reporting Violations to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism

Western University of Health Sciences has centralized the student conduct process under the **Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism**. Previously, student conduct matters were managed at the college level; all such matters are now handled centrally by the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism to ensure a consistent, fair, and transparent process across all colleges and programs.

All student conduct reports, including concerns related to alleged violations of the Standards of Academic Integrity, Professionalism or Student Conduct, contained in this College Catalog and the University Catalog should be submitted directly to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism using the [WesternU Student Conduct and Professionalism Incident Report Form](#). The Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism will review each report and determine the appropriate course of action in accordance with University policies and procedures.

Students, faculty, staff, and administrators are encouraged to direct any questions about the conduct process to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism. Additional information regarding the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism and the Student Conduct Process is available in the University Catalog.

CHS Student Performance Committee (CHS SPC)

Composition and Leadership

- **Membership:**
 - **Voting Members:** Primarily based at the Pomona campus.
 - **Non-Voting Members:** May include ex-officio members as designated.
- **Leadership Appointments:**
 - The **Chair** and **Vice-Chair** are elected by the voting members of the Student Performance Committee.
- **Meeting Protocol:**
 - The SPC convenes at the request of the Chair or Vice-Chair.

Primary Responsibilities

1. **Periodic Review of Student Performance:**
 - a. Evaluate comprehensive evidence of academic and professional performance and progress for all CHS students, with a special focus on those experiencing academic difficulty. Performance is defined to include both academic achievement and behavioral-conduct aspects.
2. **Monitoring Student Performance:**
 - a. **Reporting:** receive reports from the Office of Student Conduct & Professionalism of students whose conduct is deemed unsatisfactory as determined through the student conduct process outlined in the University Catalog. Appropriate student conduct is defined by the University's and College's Standards of Student Conduct standards and handled in alignment with the Student Conduct Procedures in the University Catalog .
3. **Review and Recommendation Process:**
 - a. **Action Recommendations:**
 - i. Possible recommendations include promotion, probation, remediation, course or rotation repetition, suspension, dismissal, administrative withdrawal, medical assessment, or educational assessment.
 - ii. Additional actions may be recommended based on the situation.
4. **Graduation Recommendations:**
 - a. **Faculty Notification:** Recommend to the college faculty the awarding of degrees upon satisfactory completion of all graduation requirements as stated in the College Catalog.

Special Note: The SPC is not authorized to evaluate medical conditions or disabilities through its review process. Evaluating medical information and disability-related claims is designated exclusively to the HFCDHP office, not the SPC. If you have a medical condition or disability that you believe is relevant to your academic situation, you should complete the [HFCDHP Student Intake Form](#) as soon as possible. Submitting this form initiates the interactive process with HFCDHP and, if appropriate, the implementation of reasonable accommodations (which are not retroactive). The HFCDHP accommodation process is separate from and independent of the SPC review process.

Evaluation of Student Academic Performance – SPC Procedures

CHS SPC Standard of Procedure: The CHS Student Performance Committee (SPC) reviews matters of academic performance, professionalism, and conduct for students enrolled in the MSPAS program. A student may be referred to the SPC based on trigger events such as failure to meet course or clinical requirements, professionalism concerns, or violations of university or college policies.

When a matter is referred to the CHS Student Performance Committee (CHS-SPC), the student will be notified in writing that a review has been initiated. The student will be provided with an opportunity to submit any information they deem relevant, in writing, for the SPC's consideration. If potential outcomes include suspension, repeating a year, dismissal, or any action that could delay academic progress or incur financial costs, the student will be invited to appear before the CHS-SPC and present any information they deem relevant for the CHS-SPC's consideration. The student may be accompanied by a mentor for support at the CHS-SPC hearing. It is the student's responsibility to make the request to the Chair of the Committee in writing, and to identify the proposed mentor. The role of the mentor is to advise the student. A mentor is not permitted to ask questions of witnesses or to participate directly in the hearing.

Criteria / Triggering events for CHS SPC referral;

1. If a student receives a "U" or NCR in any Didactic courses and/or SCPEs.
2. If a student's GPA is less than 3.0 for two or more consecutive or non-consecutive semesters.
3. If a student demonstrates academic deficiency or violation, as defined in the Standards of Academic Progress section.

The CHS-SPC will forward its recommendations to the CHS Dean or CHS Dean's Designee. The CHS Dean or CHS Dean's Designee has the authority to accept the recommendations or make other decisions they deem appropriate under the circumstances. The CHS Dean or CHS Dean's Designee will issue a decision, in writing, to the student.

Appeals Process

Students may request an appeal of the Dean's, or Dean's designee's, decision to the Provost by following the process defined in the 'Student Appeal Process' section of the University Catalog. Decisions related to the imposition of academic probation and any associated terms/conditions of such probation, or administrative withdrawal are considered final and not appealable to the Provost (See University Catalog, Student Appeal Process).

Standards of Academic Progress².

The Standards of Academic Progress for the Department of Physician Assistant Education provides a comprehensive framework to guide students toward successful academic and professional achievement. These standards are designed to ensure a consistent, high-quality education and maintain the program's integrity, whether delivered in person or through remote learning modalities due to extraordinary circumstances. In the event of a change in the curriculum delivery, it is expected that the students will exercise flexibility to embrace the new change. Good academic standing implies that a student has not been requested to withdraw and is not under academic/professional probation/suspension.

General Standards

Good academic standing implies that a student is not subject to withdrawal, probation, suspension, or dismissal due to academic or professional deficiencies. All students are expected to meet or exceed the following criteria:

1. A student is considered in **Good Academic Standing** if they:
 - a. Earn a **grade of "C" (70%) or higher** in all didactic courses of any given semester
 - b. Maintain a **minimum cumulative and semester GPA** of 2.75 or higher.
 - c. Achieve a **grade of "B" or higher** in all SCPE(s).
 - d. Complete all coursework and program requirements **within the designated program timeline** (typically two years, with a maximum allowable completion time of three years).
2. **Mastery of Program Competencies:** Students must demonstrate proficiency in the areas of medical knowledge, clinical reasoning, technical skills, interpersonal communication, and professional behavior, as outlined in the Program's Competencies.
3. **Adherence to Professional Conduct:** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethical, moral, and professional behavior as defined by program policies and the broader healthcare profession.
4. **Compliance with Attendance Requirements:** Students must adhere to attendance policies, including on-campus sessions, clinical rotations, and any approved remote learning activities.

Phase I: Didactic Phase

1. **Course Performance:** Students must achieve a minimum grade of "C" or "CR" in each course. Any grade of "U" or "NCR" is considered substandard and must be remediated (refer to the Remediation Policy (See Remediation policy in MSPA Catalog). Failure to achieve a passing grade after remediation may result in dismissal.
2. **Grade Point Average (GPA):**
 - Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
 - Students with a GPA below 3.0 will be placed on Academic Probation by the Program Director or the Associate Program Director.
 - Students with a GPA below 3.0 will be placed on an Academic Improvement Plan by the PA Student Success Committee.
3. **Advancement to Phase II:** Students must successfully remediate all deficient course grades and meet all Phase I course requirements before progressing to the Clinical Phase.

Phase II and III: Clinical Phases

1. **Rotations:** Students must achieve a minimum grade of “C” in all clinical rotations. A grade of “U” will require remediation and may delay progression and/or program completion.
2. **Professional Conduct:** Students must demonstrate professionalism, including punctuality, preparedness, and respect for SCPE site policies.
3. **Clinical Rotation Attendance:** All absences must be reported to and approved in advance by the Clinical Education Faculty, except for emergencies. Missed time must be made up as determined by the Clinical Education Faculty.

Promotion and Progression

1. **Criteria for Promotion:** Students are eligible for promotion to the next academic phase upon:
 - o Successful completion of all required courses and SCPEs.
 - o Demonstration of required competencies and professional behavior.
2. **Probationary Status:** Students placed on academic probation must:
 - o Be placed on an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) by the PA Student Success Committee.
 - o Adhere to all terms outlined in the probation notice and AIP.
3. **Non-Compliance:** Failure to comply with probation terms may result in Adverse Actions (see below) and/or a referral to the CHS SPC for appropriate action.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate and be conferred with a Degree in Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies, students must:

1. Successfully complete all didactic and clinical components with a passing grade.
2. Has completed all Interprofessional Education (IPE) activities required for graduation. MSPAS 2027 students must complete 2 credits of IPE 5000 and 5100. MSPAS 2028 students must successfully participate in designated IPE co-curricular activities throughout their first year to fulfill this graduation requirement.
3. Pass all required summative examinations/assessments in Phase III.
4. Successfully demonstrate readiness to practice through achievement of program competencies as evaluated by program faculty and preceptors.
5. Fulfill all financial obligations to the University.

Adverse Actions

The PA Program recognizes the importance of addressing deficiencies in academic performance or professional conduct promptly and consistently. Adverse actions are categorized into the following levels, depending on the severity and circumstances of the deficiency:

1. Warning

- a. A written warning serves as a formal notification to the student about specific deficiencies.
- b. The warning includes a clear explanation of the issue, expected corrective actions, and a timeline for improvement.
- c. Failure to address the outlined deficiencies within the specified period may result in escalation to probation or other adverse actions.

2. *Academic Probation*

- a. **Criteria for Academic Probation:** Students may be placed on probation for:
 - 1) If a student accumulates **two or more “U” grades (<70%)** in any Phase I didactic semester course by the **mid-semester**, they will be placed on **Academic Probation**.
 - 2) Failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher each didactic semester.
 - 3) Unsatisfactory performance in didactic courses or clinical rotations (SCPEs), including failure of End of Rotation exams during Phase II and Phase III.
 - 4) A pattern of unexcused absences from scheduled learning activities (lectures, workshops, and SCPEs) is demonstrated.
- b. **Terms of Academic Probation:**
 - 1) Students must meet regularly with their faculty advisor to review progress (at minimum each month).
 - 2) Students must meet regularly with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs (at minimum each month or at their discretion).
 - 3) Students will be placed on an Academic Improvement plan by the PA Student Success Committee, outlining specific benchmarks for resolution.
 - 4) Restrictions, such as limitations on extracurricular activities or clinical assignments, may be imposed.
- c. **Duration:** Academic Probation lasts a minimum of one semester but may be extended if satisfactory progress is not achieved.
- d. **Removal from Academic Probation:**
 - 1) At the end of the first semester of the first year provided that they have attained a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
 - 2) After one semester, provided they have regained both a semester and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
 - 3) When all “U” or “NCR” grades have been satisfactorily remediated according to the Reassessment and Remediation policy of the Catalog.
 - 4) When 2nd year students are on probation for a SCPE grade of “U”, they will be removed from probation when they have met the terms of their probation.
 - 5) Notwithstanding any of the above criterion, a student on Academic probation will not be removed from probation until the student satisfactorily resolves the issue(s) that caused them to be placed on probation.

4. *Conduct Probation*

Conduct Probation is defined as a period, specified by the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism, during which the student’s conduct will be closely monitored due to a violation of the Standards of Student Conduct.

The terms of conduct probation will be specified at the time the student is placed on conduct probation. When a student is placed on conduct probation, they will be notified in writing and the notification will be sent electronically to the student’s WesternU email address. Copies of the letter will be placed in the student’s educational record and distributed to the Chair of the Student Performance Committee, the College Dean, and the student’s Faculty Advisor. The Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism will consider when the terms of the conduct probation have been satisfied and recommend rescission of the conduct probation. A student on conduct probation may not serve as an officer of any official University or College club or organization and should not engage in time-consuming extracurricular activities.

3. *Reassessment & Remediation*

Purpose: Reassessment & Remediation aims to address specific academic or clinical deficiencies and provide additional support to help students meet program standards. Reasonable efforts will be made to give each student opportunities to demonstrate competency in each area of the academic program. However, remediation is to be regarded as a privilege that must be earned by a student through an active participation in the educational program as demonstrated by regular attendance, individual initiative, and utilization of resources available to them.

Didactic Courses Unit Reassessment Policy

1. Eligibility for Reassessment

- Any student scoring **below 70%** on a **Phase I Didactic course unit exam** on their first attempt must undergo **reassessment** to demonstrate achievement of the unit's learning outcomes.

2. Format and Administration of Reassessment

- Reassessment may be administered as any of the following, a combination of but not limited to:
 - a. A **short-answer essay exam, or**
 - b. A **multiple-choice exam, or**
 - c. **Oral exam, or**
 - d. **Practicum, or**
 - e. **An assignment**
- The **course director** has sole discretion over the reassessment format.
- The reassessment exam will be **proctored in person**.
- Students are allowed **only one (1) reassessment attempt** per unit exam in any didactic course.

3. Scheduling of Reassessments

- All reassessment exams, as defined by the course director, must be scheduled **before Finals Week** of the semester.

4. Performance Requirements & Special Assignments

- To successfully pass a reassessment exam/assignment, the student must achieve a **minimum score of 75%**.
- Failure to achieve a minimum score of 75% on the reassessment exam/assignment will result in the student being subject to the Didactic Course Remediation Policy.
 - A student will be given a comprehensive remediation exam per course if they qualify (overall grade >68%). See Didactic Course Remediation Policy for details.
 - A student must pass the comprehensive course remediation exam with 75% or higher to complete the course, regardless of their current overall course grade.
 - If the student is unsuccessful in achieving a minimum of 75% on the comprehensive course remediation exam, they may be subject to academic suspension or dismissal.
- If a student **fails a unit reassessment exam (<75%)** in a course during a given semester, the student will not be permitted to reassess any subsequently failed unit exam in that

same course, as they are subject to a comprehensive course remediation exam per the Didactic Course Remediation Policy.

5. Grade Replacement Policy

- The highest possible replacement grade for a reassessed unit exam is **75%**.
- A student may **only replace one (1) failed unit exam grade per course**.
- If a student **scores below 75%** on the reassessment exam, their original exam grade **will not** be replaced with the new exam grade.

6. Academic Intervention and Support

- A student failing **more than two (2) unit exams** in any Phase I didactic course will be **identified by the PA Student Success Committee** and placed on an **Academic Improvement Plan**.

7. Ongoing Assessment and Academic Probation

- The Program conducts ongoing student assessments.
- If a student accumulates **two or more “U” grades (<70%)** in any Phase I didactic semester course by the **mid-semester**, they will be placed on **Academic Probation**.
 - See Probation Policy in **MSPA Catalog 2026/2027** for further details

Didactic Course Remediation Policy

1. Notification of Remediation and Probation

- If a student receives a final “U” or “NCR” grade in a Phase I Didactic course, the **Program Director, Associate Program Director, or Assistant Dean of Student Affairs** will formally notify the student in writing regarding remediation requirements and probationary status.
- The student must acknowledge receipt of the remediation plan by signing and returning the document to the designated administrator.

2. Eligibility for Remediation

- A “U” grade between **68 – 70%** is **remediable**, allowing the student to attempt remediation.
- A “U” grade **below 68%** is **non-remediable**, and further action will be determined.

3. Remediation Examination

- Students who qualify for course remediation (Phase I Didactic Course grade of **68% – 70%**) may attempt a **comprehensive course remediation exam** to demonstrate competency in the course content.
- Students must achieve a minimum score of 75% in the comprehensive course remediation exam.
- The maximum course grade a student can earn through remediation is **C** or “**CR**” (Credit). This grade will be recorded on the transcript alongside the original grade (e.g., “U/C”).

4. Ineligibility for Remediation (<65%)

- Students who do not qualify for remediation will be subject to PA Faculty Executive Committee review. The PA Faculty Executive Committee will issue recommendations to the College of Health Sciences (CHS) Student Performance Committee (SPC) with appropriate next steps. These may include:
 - a. **Repeating the course** in the following academic year.
 - b. **Repeating the academic year** to reinforce foundational knowledge.
 - c. **Dismissal from the program** due to the overall academic performance defined by a GPA < 2.5.

5. Determination of Academic Progression

- The Program Director and Associate Program Director, in consensus with program faculty, will determine whether the student is eligible for promotion to the next semester based on overall academic performance and student conduct.

6. Restrictions on Progression

- A student must achieve 75% or higher in a comprehensive course remediation exam to pass the course and progress to the next semester.
- A student who fails to achieve a minimum of 75% on a comprehensive course remediation exam, regardless of their current overall course grade may be subject to Academic Suspension or Dismissal based on their overall academic performance.
- A student **cannot** progress to **Phase II (clinical rotation/SCPEs) or Phase III** until all "U" grades from Phase I have been successfully remediated.
- Remediation will delay the student's entry into the **clinical year (Phase II)** and extend the student's program completion date.

7. Financial Considerations

- Students repeating a course(s) will be **charged full tuition** for the course(s).
- Additional tuition fees may be assessed for remediation efforts, including exam retakes or additional instructional support.

8. Academic Standards and Consequences of Remediation Failure

- Failure to achieve a minimum grade of **C** or "CR" in any course after the comprehensive course remediation exam may result in the PA Faculty Executive Committee recommending the following:
 - a. **Eligible for dismissal from the program or**
 - o Subject to the Evaluation of Student Academic Performance – SPC Procedures
 - b. **Eligible for Academic Suspension**
 - o Subject to the Evaluation of Student Academic Performance – SPC Procedures.

9. Multiple Course Remediations

- A student with two or more "U" grades at any point throughout the 24-month curriculum may be recommended for dismissal from the program.
 - The PA Faculty Executive Committee will provide recommendations to the CHS Student Performance Committee (CHS-SPC).

- See Dismissal Policy in MSPA 2026/2027 catalog for further details.

10. Suspension or Dismissal Consideration

- If the PA Faculty Executive Committee deems a student eligible for suspension or dismissal due to academic performance, the recommendation and referral notice will be sent in writing to the CHS Student Performance Committee (CHS-SPC)

End of Rotation (EOR) Exam Reassessment Policy

- Eligibility for Reassessment
 - A student **must reassess and retake** an EOR Exam if they fail to achieve the **program-defined passing score of 74.5%** on the first attempt.
 - This applies to the following SCPEs:
 - o **PA 7010** – Family Practice
 - o **PA 7030** – Internal Medicine
 - o **PA 7040** – Emergency Medicine
 - o **PA 7050** – Pediatrics
 - o **PA 7070** – Women’s Health
 - o **PA 7080** – Surgery
 - o **PA 7015** – Behavioral Health
- Reassessment Timeline & Attempt Limits
 - **EOR Reassessment must be completed within 15 days** of the original EOR exam date.
 - A student may reassess a **maximum of two EOR Exams** throughout the clinical phase.
 - o **If a student fails more than two EOR Exams, any further failures will result in a failed SCPE.**
- **Grading Policy**
 - The highest possible replacement grade for a reassessed EOR exam is **74.5%**.
 - Failure to earn 74.5% or higher on any EOR reassessment will result in a Repetition of the Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE).
- Failure to earn at least an overall grade of **“C”** or higher on any SCPE after reassessment may result in **Repetition of the Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE)**.

Repetition of the Failed Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Policy

1. Notification & Documentation

- Notifications will be sent via email or hand-delivered, requiring the student's signature for acknowledgment

2. Criteria to repeat SCPE

- A student receiving a **“U”** grade for any SCPE will be required to repeat the entire SCPE.
- If a student needs to repeat two or more SCPEs during the 24-month curriculum, they may be recommended for dismissal from the program.

3. Program Completion & Financial Implications

- Repeating SCPE(s) will delay the student's program completion date.
- Students are responsible for the financial costs associated with repeating a SCPE and extended study.
 - Additional tuition fees may be applied.

4. Grading Policy

- The grade earned on the repeat SCPE will be recorded as the official grade on the transcript.
- Both the failed SCPE grade and the repeat SCPE grade will be recorded on the transcript.

5. Academic Review & Oversight

- All decisions regarding failed SCPE will be subject to the recommendations of PA Faculty Executive Committee.
- The recommendation from the PA Faculty Executive Committee will be sent to the College of Health Sciences Student Performance Committee, and may include a student referral to the SPC for handling under the Evaluation of Student Academic Performance – SPC Procedures

4. Suspension

Temporary Suspension of Student Clinical Privileges

The University recognizes that student participation in clinical education occurs within environments where patient safety, clinical integrity, and professional standards are paramount. Accordingly, a College Dean or designee is authorized to immediately suspend a student's clinical privileges where there exists a reasonable basis to believe that the student's continued presence in a clinical setting poses a risk to patient safety.

A suspension of clinical privileges is an interim administrative action and does not constitute a final disciplinary determination or academic sanction. The suspension shall take effect immediately upon the decision of the Dean or designee and is not subject to appeal. This action shall remain in place pending referral to and resolution by the appropriate body (i.e., the College SPC for academic matters or the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism for conduct matters), whose determination shall supersede and replace the temporary suspension. In the event a student appeals the outcome reached by the appropriate body, the temporary suspension may remain in effect pending the resolution of that appeal.

The College shall provide the student with written notice of the suspension as soon as practicable, which shall include a brief statement of the basis for the suspension and the anticipated next steps (i.e. referral to the College Student Performance Committee for academic matters or referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism). A suspension of clinical privileges may affect a student's ability to satisfy program requirements, complete required clinical hours, or progress within their program. The College shall make reasonable efforts to advise the student of the potential academic impact of the suspension and any available options for remediation or make-up, subject to program requirements and accreditation standards. The University makes no guarantee that suspended clinical hours or experiences can be recovered within a student's originally anticipated program timeline. A temporary suspension of clinical

privileges will remain in place until the conclusion of the academic or conduct process and any related appeals.

Academic Suspension

Purpose: Academic suspension is the temporary removal of a student from the program due to inadequate academic performance or failure to meet progression standards. Suspension allows the student time to meet conditions for reinstatement while ensuring the integrity of academic and professional standards. A student may be placed on academic suspension under the following circumstances:

1. Failure to Progress in the Curriculum

- a. Inability to meet the minimum Standard of Academics required for progression in the program.
- b. Requirement to repeat an academic year due to unsatisfactory performance in multiple courses or SCPEs.
- c. Failure to remediate academic deficiencies within the timeframe specified by the program in the MSPA Catalog.

2. Impact of Suspension on Enrollment & Financial Aid

- a. While on suspension, students are not considered actively enrolled in coursework and may not participate in clinical rotations or any academic activities.
- b. Students on academic suspension are ineligible for financial aid during the suspension period.
- c. If a student violates any terms of the suspension (e.g., unauthorized participation in coursework or clinical activities), the Program may deem the student eligible for dismissal and the student would be referred to the CHS SPC for review under the Evaluation of Student Academic Performance – SPC Procedures.

3. Reinstatement from Academic Suspension

- a. Students who are placed on academic suspension may be reinstated to the program based on the terms set forth by the Dean of the College of Health Sciences.
- b. **Complete all required remedial actions** as outlined in the suspension notice.
- c. **Submit a formal reinstatement petition** to the Program Director, detailing corrective actions taken and commitment to professional standards.

Conduct Suspension

A conduct suspension is a period of time when a student is barred from enrollment in an academic program because of a violation of applicable University or College conduct policies. The duration of the conduct suspension will be communicated to the student at the time the suspension is imposed, either as a specified period of time or until the student has satisfactorily completed all the terms and conditions imposed to remedy the violation. A student may not receive financial aid during any time of suspension.

Summary Suspension

Actions that threaten or endanger, in any way, the personal safety, and/or well-being of self or others, or that disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the College or University are cause for immediate disciplinary action. Either the University President, Provost, or Dean, or Dean's designee, has the authority to summarily suspend a student when the student admits to guilt or when, in the opinion of these entities, such action is appropriate to protect the health or safety of any individual, or to preserve the orderly operation of the University. Further details regarding the summary suspension action can be found in the University Catalog.

5. Dismissal

Purpose: Dismissal from the Physician Assistant (PA) Program is a serious action taken when a student fails to meet the standards necessary for program completion and future practice in the field. The program upholds high standards to ensure that graduates demonstrate competence, professionalism, and integrity in both academic and clinical settings.

Grounds for Dismissal: A student may be eligible for dismissal under the following non-exhaustive circumstances

1. Academic Performance Deficiencies
 - a. Failure to Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress
 - i. Earning two or more unacceptable course grades (“U’s” or “NCR’s”) at any point during the 24-month program.
 - ii. Attaining a semester or cumulative GPA below 3.0 for two or more semesters during the 24-month program (consecutive or non-consecutive).
 - b. Failed Remediation Attempts and/or Course Failures:
 - i. Failure to pass a course remediation exam or a repeated course as required by the program.
 - ii. Exceeding the maximum number of allowed course remediation attempts.
2. Professional & Ethical Violations
 - a. Demonstrated lack of professionalism:
 - i. Engaging in unprofessional behavior that is deemed inappropriate for the profession or the learning environment.
 - ii. Failure to uphold the professional attributes expected of PA students, including integrity, responsibility, and respect for peers, faculty, staff, and patients.
 - iii. Misrepresentation of Credentials: Presenting oneself as a physician or engaging in any fraudulent misrepresentation of professional qualifications.
 - b. Probation & Violation of Expectations:
 - i. Any event that would lead to academic probation when the student is already on a probation.
 - c. Violation of probation terms, including failure to comply with remediation requirements, behavioral expectations, or clinical performance standards.
 - d. Violation of the University and/or College student conduct standards, policies, or procedures, in alignment with the University’s Student Conduct Procedures (See University Catalog)

Financial Aid Warning Policy (Title IV and Title VII)

Academic Probation Policy. If a student is not making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) they will be placed on “Financial Aid Warning” status for the next payment period and continue to receive financial aid for that period. Financial Aid is any financial assistance offered to the student for paying for their education, such as loans, scholarships, Federal Work-Study, Grants, and stipends (based on the criteria of the stipend). Students who fail to make SAP by the end of that payment period lose financial aid eligibility.

It is the policy of the Financial Aid Office (FAO) that once a student has been placed on academic probation for not meeting SAP standards as defined by the College, the Financial Aid Office will automatically place

the student in a Financial Aid Warning status. During the next academic term if the student does not meet SAP standards and the College places the student on academic suspension the student will no longer be eligible for financial aid. If the student appeals the academic suspension and the appeal is approved, financial aid will be reinstated. If the student is directed to audit courses, those courses will not be charged tuition for the audited courses. Students that are required to repeat coursework are encouraged to meet with a financial aid counselor with respect to their financial aid eligibility.

Repeat Coursework and Federal Financial Aid Eligibility. Federal regulations governing repeat coursework apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional under the definition of a full-time student in 34 CFR 668.2(b). For term-based programs (not subscription-based), a student's full-time workload may include repeating previously passed coursework, but only one repetition of a previously passed course may be counted toward enrollment status and paid with Title IV aid.

For financial aid purposes, a course is considered "passed" if the student earns a grade of D or better, regardless of the institution's academic standards. For example, while many graduate programs require a B or better to meet academic requirements, the Department of Education (ED) considers a D passing for Title IV eligibility. In addition to letter grades, the non-letter grades Credit (CR) and Pass (P) are also considered passing by ED for Title IV purposes.

Non-letter grades such as Unsatisfactory (U), Incomplete (I), No Pass (NP), No Credit (NCR), In Progress (IP), and Withdrawal (W) are not considered passing by ED and therefore do not count as successful completion for Title IV eligibility.

Once a course is considered passed, it may be repeated only once with federal aid. This policy does not require institutions to change their academic grading standards, but it does limit how many times a previously passed course may be included in enrollment status for financial aid purposes.

Students who are considering repeating a course should consult with the Financial Aid Office to understand how this may affect their aid eligibility and ensure compliance with federal guidelines.

Clinical Education

Required Clinical Education Rotations

1. PA 7010 Family Practice
2. PA 7015 Behavioral Health
3. PA 7030 Internal Medicine
4. PA 7040 Emergency Medicine
5. PA 7050 Pediatrics
6. PA 7070 Women's Health
7. PA 7080 Surgery
8. Selective 1
9. Selective 2

Out-of-Area Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Policy

A SCPE site that is more than a 180-mile radius in any direction from the Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona Campus is considered an out-of-area site. An out-of-area SCPE is considered a **privilege, not a right**, and is **entirely optional**. The Clinical Education Faculty retains full authority to grant, deny, or revoke out-of-area rotations based on the criteria outlined below.

1. Eligibility Requirements for Out-of-Area Rotations:

To be eligible for an out-of-area rotation, students must meet and maintain the following standards:

- 1. Professional and Ethical Conduct**

- i. Exhibit exemplary ethical and professional behavior throughout both the didactic and clinical education phases.

- 2. Academic Performance**

- i. Achieve and maintain a minimum semester and cumulative GPA of 3.00 for the entire program.
- ii. Hold a GPA of 3.00 or higher at the time of rotation scheduling.
- iii. Earn a grade of "B" or better in all SCPEs.
- iv. Maintain a grade of "B" or better in Senior Seminars I, & II.

Student Travel Policy for Required Rotation (SCPE) Sites

As part of the clinical education experience, students must travel to assigned clinical rotation sites. Clinical rotation placements may be located up to a 120-mile radius from the program's campus, and travel distance is measured from the campus (not the student's residence). Students must complete a minimum of nine (9) clinical rotations, each spanning five (5) weeks, as a condition of program progression and graduation.

Transportation and Lodging Requirements

- Students are solely responsible for arranging and maintaining reliable transportation to and from all assigned clinical rotation sites.
- All travel-related expenses, including but not limited to fuel, tolls, parking, vehicle maintenance, lodging, and meals (collectively "Travel Expenses"), are the exclusive financial responsibility of the student.
- The program and the institution do not provide reimbursement for any Travel Expenses incurred by a student related to clinical rotations.

- Students are expected to plan in advance to ensure their ability to meet all clinical attendance obligations.

Lodging and Personal Expenses

- Students assigned to clinical rotation sites that reasonably require overnight stays are responsible for securing and funding their own lodging.
- All personal and living expenses incurred during clinical rotations, including but not limited to rent, hotel or lodging costs, utilities, internet, food, and parking (collectively “Personal Expenses”), are the exclusive financial responsibility of the student.
- The program and the institution do not assume responsibility for or provide reimbursement for any Personal Expenses incurred by a student related to clinical rotations.

Financial Assistance

- Students experiencing financial hardship related to Travel or Personal Expenses are encouraged to contact the Office of Financial Aid to discuss potential options for financial assistance or budgeting strategies.
- Financial support, if available, is not guaranteed and is subject to institutional policies, eligibility requirements, and funding availability.

Liability and Insurance

- Students are responsible for their own safety and conduct while traveling to, from, and in between clinical rotation sites and must comply with all applicable laws, clinical site rules, and institutional policies.
- The institution assumes no responsibility or liability for any loss, injuries, accident, or incident that may occur during travel, lodging, or any off- campus activities related to clinical rotations.
- Students are strongly encouraged to maintain adequate automobile insurance and, if applicable, renter’s insurance for any temporary lodging or off-campus housing arrangements.
- In the event of a student injury or illness (e.g., needle stick, puncture wound, slip/fall, etc.) during a SCPE:
 - Students are to immediately notify their preceptor and their College’s Clinical Rotations Office.
 - As soon as possible, students are to submit an Incident Report (https://webapp.westernu.edu/incident_report).
- Obtain medical treatment (e.g., blood draw). It is the student’s choice where they obtain medical treatment. They can do so, if possible, at the clinical site, Urgent Care, local hospital or from their primary care provider. Students are responsible for verifying that their health insurance policy is active throughout their SCPE. Should an incident occur and medical expenses are incurred, the student’s personal health insurance policy is the primary coverage.

Compliance and Program Progression

- Completion of an assigned clinical rotation is a mandatory component of the curriculum.
- Students who are unable or unwilling to meet these requirements may experience delays in program progression or graduation due to incomplete clinical obligations.
- Failure to comply with this policy does not obligate the program or institution to provide alternative placements, adjustments, or financial relief/modifications.

Institutional Disclaimer

This policy outlines student responsibilities regarding travel and lodging for clinical education experiences. The institution reserves the right to revise or update this policy at any time. Noncompliance with this policy does not create institutional liability and does not alter or waive student responsibilities described herein.

Authority to Reassign or Revoke SCPE

1. The Clinical Education Faculty reserves the right to revoke or reassign any out-of-area SCPE at any time if a student fails to meet or uphold the above criteria.
2. Any student who receives one or more “C” grades in SCPE or in Senior Seminar I & II may have the remainder of their SCPEs reassigned at the discretion of the Clinical Education Faculty.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Assignment

For students whose semester or cumulative GPA falls below 3.00, SCPEs will be assigned exclusively by the Clinical Education Faculty in collaboration with the Associate Program Director.

Appeal Process for SCPE Assignment

A student may submit a formal request (email) to the Associate Program Director for a change in SCPE assignment under the following circumstances:

1. Rotation Quality Concerns

- o After completing **one full week**, the student **determines and provides evidence** that the rotation lacks educational quality.
- o The student should inform the Clinical Education Faculty and the Associate Program Director promptly.
- o The **Clinical Education Faculty will investigate and verify** the concerns before making the decision.

2. External Student-Generated Referral (SGR) Request

- o The student requests a rotation under a **specific preceptor or medical group not affiliated with the PA Program**.
- o The SGR requests **must be submitted at least 90 days before** the scheduled rotation start date.
- o The Clinical Education Faculty will review and respond within 1 week of receiving the request.
- o Please refer to the Clinical Education Manual for further details.

3. Improper Use of Student Labor

- o The student is being used as a **substitute for regular clinical or administrative staff**, violating program standards.
- o The student should inform the Clinical Education Faculty and the Associate Program Director promptly.
- o The **Clinical Education Faculty will investigate and verify** the concerns before making the decision.

Rotational Clinical Education Observation Policy

Any student who has been **deemed unsafe** in a clinical setting may be **immediately placed in observational status** for the remainder of their current rotation. This designation means the student may observe but will not be permitted to participate in direct patient care or hands-on clinical activities.

- **Duration Limit:** A student may remain in observational status for a maximum of **one month**.
- **Escalation to Suspension:** If concerns regarding safety, competency, or professionalism persist beyond this period, the student may face **summary suspension** from the SCPE and/or the program. See the University Catalog – Summary Suspension for further information.

This policy ensures that patient safety, clinical integrity, and institutional standards remain the highest priority.

Personal Appearance Policy

Professional appearance is **critical** in establishing credibility and trust with both healthcare professionals and patients. The **presentation of a single individual reflects upon the entire profession**, making adherence to the following dress code an **expectation, not a suggestion**. Attire worn in observance of a student's religion is not subject to this policy.

1. General Requirements

- Name Tags/Badges: Program name tags/badges must be worn at all times while on campus and at all SCPE sites. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
- White Coats: Students must wear a short white coat at all times beginning in Phase II of the curriculum. The only exception is while actively participating in a surgical suite.

2. Appropriate Attire

- Professional Dress:
 - i. Slacks (must reach the ankle) or other appropriate dress attire or skirts (minimum knee-length).
 - ii. Shirts with modest necklines and professional blouses are required.
 - iii. Shirt and tie are considered appropriate attire in patient-care settings.
- Scrubs:
 - i. Scrubs may only be worn with the approval of the preceptor.
 - ii. When scrubs are permitted, the short white coat must be worn over scrubs at all times, except in the surgical suite.
- Footwear: Only professional or closed-toe footwear is acceptable.

3. Prohibited Attire

- Denim: "Blue jeans" or any form of denim clothing is strictly prohibited during clinical rotations.
- Footwear: No open-toe shoes or sandals are allowed.
- Unprofessional Appearance:
 - i. Hairstyle, Facial Hair, & Nails: Hair must be clean, neatly groomed, and secured if long. Beards and mustaches must be well-maintained and neatly trimmed. Nails should be short and adhere to the facility policy.
 - ii. Jewelry & Accessories: Accessories should be minimal and professional. Excessive jewelry, facial piercings, and overly large or distracting accessories are not appropriate.

Students are expected to uphold these **professional appearance standards** at all times during clinical training. If a student requires a religious accommodations in relation to this policy, student should refer to the Religious Accommodations policy in the University Catalog. **Failure to comply may be considered a violation of the Standards of Student Conduct, result in immediate removal from the SCPE site, and a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism .**

Professional Conduct During Clinical Education

Professional and ethical conduct is a non-negotiable expectation for all students in clinical education. A student's behavior directly reflects upon the institution, profession, and patient care standards. Professionalism is a **core competency** of the Physician Assistant profession. Students who fail to uphold these standards **jeopardize their educational and professional future**. Compliance with this policy is **mandatory**, as the Program has **zero tolerance for unethical, unsafe, or unprofessional behavior**.

1. Professional Expectations: Students must demonstrate professionalism through the following:
 - a. **Professionalism & Interpersonal Conduct**
 - Maintain **timely attendance** during all SCPEs during the clinical phase.
 - Demonstrate **cooperation and respect** in all interactions with preceptors, office & hospital personnel, fellow students, and patients.
 - Exhibit a **proactive, engaged, and professional attitude** toward assigned responsibilities.
 - Adhere to **all institutional and clinical site policies and procedures**.
 - Students must abide by all the rules, codes, and policies established by the university both on and off campus.
 - In the clinical phase of the program, program policies supersede clinical site policies.
 - **Unethical, immoral, or inappropriate behavior** is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
 - b. **Communication & Clinical Responsibilities**
 - Students **cannot contact program-established preceptors** or program sites on their own. If unsure of affiliation with the PA program, ask the Clinical Education Faculty and Staff.
 - **Pre-Rotation Contact:**
 - Students **must contact the assigned preceptor/contact person 30 days prior** to the start of their rotation to confirm details.
 - A follow-up contact must be made **7 days prior** to confirm the meeting time and location for the first day.
 - **Patient & Staff Interaction:**
 - Students **must introduce themselves** as "Physician Assistant Students" or "PA Students" to all patients and staff.
 - Students **must be able to clearly and confidently explain** the role of a PA to patients and staff.
 - **The Program may deem the student eligible for summary suspension and/or dismissal for misrepresenting oneself as a physician or physician assistant, subject to applicable procedures outlined in the University Catalog.**
 - **Supervision Requirement:**

- Every patient seen by a student **must be reviewed by the supervising preceptor**—this is the student’s responsibility to ensure.
- c. **Dress Code & Identification**
- Students **must wear appropriate business attire** in clinical settings.
 - A short **white coat** must be worn while providing patient care.
 - WesternU **identifying name tags must be worn at all times** in clinical settings.
- d. **Removal from Rotation**
- If a student is removed **from a rotation** due to a violation of this policy, the Clinical Education faculty will gather the appropriate facts and the matter will be referred to the SPC for review and handling, in accordance with the SPC procedures for evaluation of academic evaluation.
 - If the removal is deemed valid, the student will receive a **grade of “U” (Unsatisfactory)** for that rotation. A **“U” grade requires remediation**, which will extend the student’s program completion date and result in **additional tuition fees**.

As this policy pertains to clinical education, any reported non-compliance may result in a report to the Office of Student Conduct & Professionalism, or where there is a graded component, may be reported to the SPC for evaluation under the SPC procedures for evaluation of the student’s performance during the clinical course.

Confidentiality of Medical Records and Health History Information

Protecting patient confidentiality is a legal, ethical, and professional obligation for all Physician Assistant students. Any breach of patient privacy or any of the areas listed below is considered a serious violation and will result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Professionalism.

Patient Confidentiality & Medical Records

- **Privileged Information:** Students are expected to comply with all patient confidentiality obligations, including but not limited to HIPAA. All data regarding a patient’s medical condition, history, and treatment is **strictly confidential** and should be accessed and used only for **legitimate clinical and educational purposes**.
- **Prohibited Discussions:**
 - Students **must not discuss** patient information—verbally, electronically, or in any written form—with **anyone not directly involved in the patient's care**.
 - Discussions regarding patient cases should only occur in **appropriate, private clinical settings**, never in public areas such as hallways, elevators, cafeterias, or social media platforms.
- **Record Handling & Security:**
 - **Patient charts, medical records, and test results must never be removed** from the hospital or clinical setting under any circumstances.
 - **Unauthorized photography, screenshots, or recordings** of patient records, including electronic medical records (EMR), is strictly prohibited.

Patient Records – Physician Review & Countersignature

- **Mandatory Review & Supervision:**
 - Students **must ensure** that every patient they assess is also **reviewed by the supervising practitioner**.
 - **All medical notes written by students must be reviewed and countersigned** by the supervising practitioner **before** the patient is discharged from outpatient care or transferred/discharged from inpatient services.
- **Electronic Health Records (EHR) Usage:**
 - Students **must use their own login credentials** provided by the clinical site.
 - Students must never share their login credentials with others.
 - **Students are strictly prohibited from using a preceptor's personal login** for entering, modifying, or viewing patient data.
- **Restrictions on Medical Orders & Prescriptions:**
 - **Students must never initiate or sign medical orders** (including diagnostic study orders, prescriptions, and treatment plans) without immediate **preceptor consultation and countersignature**.
 - **Students are not permitted to sign drug prescriptions or accept medication samples** from pharmaceutical representatives under any circumstances.
- **Falsification of Medical Records:**
 - **Knowingly falsifying patient examination findings or medical records constitutes a serious breach of professional conduct** and will result in disciplinary action, which may include program dismissal.

Title Identification & Professional Representation

- **Clear Role Identification:**
 - Students must **clearly identify themselves** in all professional interactions to **prevent misrepresentation**.
 - **Acceptable self-introduction:**
 - "Physician Assistant Student" or "PA Student"
 - **Professional interactions with patients and others:**
 - Using appropriate titles such as **Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., or PA Student**, followed by their surname.
- **Charting & Documentation:**
 - When documenting in patient records or medical forms, students **must use the designation "PA-Student" (PA-S)** following all entries.
- **Identification & Name Badges:**
 - Students **must wear a program-issued name badge** that clearly identifies them as a **PA Student** at all times during clinical rotations.
 - **Exception:** Name badges may be removed while in an **operating room** if required by sterile field protocols.

Evaluation and Grading

To ensure graduates of the program demonstrate competency in accordance with the **Program Goals**, the curriculum is structured to assess students through a combination of written, practical, and clinical performance evaluations. The assessment framework is designed to measure knowledge acquisition, skills proficiency, and professional development throughout the **24-month curriculum**.

Evaluation Methods

Students are assessed using a combination of the following methods:

- 1. Written Examinations:**
 - a. Examinations may include multiple-choice, short-answer, matching, essay, oral, and patient management questions.
 - b. Assessments can be interval-based or comprehensive, per the course syllabus.
 - c. Any form of academic dishonesty during examinations will result in immediate disciplinary action, including potential dismissal from the program.
- 2. Workshops / Practicum / OSCEs:**
 - a. Students will be observed conducting **history-taking and physical examinations** on standardized, simulated patients, or peers.
 - b. Problem-solving abilities will be assessed through clinical case scenarios.
 - c. Competency in performing clinical and technical skills will also be evaluated.
- 3. Student Presentations:**
 - a. Students will deliver individual or group presentations on assigned topics, including patient cases and research findings.
 - b. Oral presentations may require the submission of a written report.
- 4. Written Reports:**
 - a. Assignments include **case write-ups, SOAP notes, research papers, discharge summaries, patient histories, and a Master's Thesis project**.
 - b. All written work must adhere to professional medical documentation standards and be reflective of the individual's own work.
- 5. Professional Development Assessments:**
 - a. Students will undergo **formative and summative evaluations** to assess their academic, professional, and interpersonal growth.
 - b. Professionalism and Interpersonal communication skills will be key components of assessment.
- 6. Clinical Evaluations:**
 - a. Supervising preceptors will evaluate students' clinical competencies in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
 - b. Students must obtain and submit completed clinical evaluations from their preceptors on time per syllabi.
 - c. Failure to secure a preceptor evaluation will result in a missing ("M") grade, which must be resolved before advancing to the preceptorship phase (Phase III).
 - d. Students must review the evaluations with their preceptors and sign for acknowledgment prior to uploading them on the Learning Management System.
- 7. Patient Write-ups:**
 - a. Students must submit a minimum of one patient case write-up per SCPE in the SOAP format.
 - b. Selected cases must align with the module's learning objectives.

- c. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted and impact the student's overall SCPE grade.
- 8. Literature Review Assignments:**
 - a. Students may be assigned **evidence-based critiques** of medical literature.
 - b. Evaluations will be based on content relevance, clarity, validity, and application to clinical practice.
- 9. Final Comprehensive Examination:**
 - a. A **summative PAEA end-of-curriculum examination** will be administered in **Senior Seminar III**.
 - i. The format **mimics the NCCPA certification exam** and includes **multiple-choice questions** and clinical competency assessments.
 - b. The exam will assess accumulated medical knowledge, clinical reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

Grading Policies

- 1. Grade Reports:**
 - a. Official grades are recorded by the **Department of PA Education** and submitted to the **Registrar** for entry into the online student records system (BanWeb) at the end of the clinical year.
 - b. Due to **variable** CORE SCPE assignments, the grades after each SCPE completion will be available on the Learning management system.
 - i. All preceptor evaluations **must be submitted on time** for the grade calculation.
- 2. Grading of Examinations:**
 - a. **Multiple-choice exams** will be graded within **five (5) business days unless otherwise specified**.
 - b. **Essay-type exams and SOAP notes** will be graded within **ten (10) business days**.
 - c. Faculty discretion applies to exam review policies.

Grading Scale

All final course grades are assigned using the **4.0 grading scale**:

Grade	Percentage	GPA Points
A	90-100%	4.00
B	80-89%	3.00
C	70-79%	2.00
U	<70%	0.00 (Fail)
CR	Credit	N/A
NCR	No Credit	N/A

The PA program utilizes a grading scale that aligns with the program's academic standards. The following grading system is used to evaluate student performance and progression through the program:

- **A (90-100%):** Students receiving an "A" grade demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and ability to apply the knowledge and skills expected at each stage of the program. This grade indicates superior performance in both didactic and clinical components.
- **B (80-89%):** Students with a "B" demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in applying knowledge and skills and meet or exceed the program's expectations. Although some improvement areas may exist, the student consistently meets competency requirements.

- **C (70-79%):** Students achieving a "C" show minimal competency in required skills and knowledge. This grade suggests that, while the student meets minimum expectations, they may benefit from additional support to strengthen understanding and performance.
- **U (Unsatisfactory) – Equivalent to D/F (<70%):** A "U" reflects insufficient understanding or application of the course material and is equivalent to failing the course. This grade requires the student to either reassess (for a Unit exam) or remediate (for a course) or repeat the course (unsuccessful course remediation), depending on specific program guidelines and the academic review process.
- **U/C:** When a student remediates a course, U/C takes place of the original course grade of U.
- **CR:** If a class is a pass or fail class, upon successful completion; students achieve the grade CR.

Administrative Grades:

Grade	Meaning
AU	Audit (No Credit)
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal
M	Missing

- 1. Clinical Rotation Education Grading Criteria:**
 - a. Clinical grades are based on **preceptor evaluations, SOAP notes, and End-of-rotation examinations.**
 - b. Any grade of **“C” or lower in a clinical rotation** may result in a reassignment or extended program completion.
- 2. Missing Grades:**
 - a. A grade of **“M” (Missing)** will be recorded if a grade is not submitted by the deadline.
 - b. The **“M” grade will not factor into the GPA** but must be resolved before progression.
 - c. If the grade earned is not reported within six calendar months of the course end date, the grade of **“M”** will be converted to an unsatisfactory/no credit grade, contingent upon the course’s grading scale.
- 3. Incomplete Grades:**
 - a. A grade of **“I” (Incomplete)** will only be granted if:
 - i. At least **80% of coursework** has been completed.
 - ii. The student submits a **formal petition (email)** to the instructor at least **two (2) weeks** before the semester ends.
 - b. The incomplete coursework **must be completed by the following semester**, or the grade will convert to a **“U” or “NCR”**.
- 4. Audit (AU)**
 - a. An **“AU” (Audit)** designation is assigned to students who:
 - i. **Attend all required class activities** but does not complete examinations or graded assignments.
 - ii. **Do not receive course credit** or have the course factored into their GPA.
 - b. **Exceptions: At the discretion of the College Dean, or the Dean’s designee, students who are repeating a course or undergoing remediation may be required to:**
 - i. Complete **examinations, quizzes, or other required work products, and show competency as stated in their academic probation contract**, while auditing the course.

- ii. Adhere to **specific academic requirements** set by the faculty or the College administration.

Failure to meet these requirements may result in **academic probation, delay in program progression, or dismissal** from the program.

Advanced Placement within the PA Curriculum

Advanced placement is not offered or allowed in the PA program.

Grade Appeals

1. Appeal of Course Grade:

- a. Within **three (3) business days** of grade posting on the Learning Management System or [MyPortal](#), the student must:
 - i. **Request a review** with the course director.
 - ii. Submit a **written request for reconsideration to the course director and/or Associate Program Director.**
- b. The course director and/or Associate Program Director will respond within **five (5) business days.**

2. Appeal of a SCPE Grade:

- a. If disputing a **SCPE grade**, the student must:
 - i. Submit a **written request** to the Clinical Education Faculty within **five (5) business days.**
 - ii. The Faculty will review the case and consult with the preceptor.
 - iii. The student will receive a **written correspondence within ten (10) business days.**

3. Final Appeal Process:

- a. If the student believes the appeal with the course director was **unjustly denied**, they may escalate it to the **Program Director/Associate Program Director** within **three (3) business days** of receiving the decision.
- b. Grounds for Final appeal include documented evidence of:
 - i. **Biased or unfair treatment.**
 - ii. **New information that was unavailable at the time of grading.**
 - iii. **Procedural errors** affecting the grading process.
- c. The Program Director's decision is **final** unless they were also the course instructor, in which case the **Dean of the College of Health Sciences** will make the final determination.

Credit Hour Calculation

Courses are rated at one credit hour for each 15.0 hours of lecture or 30.0 hours of laboratory practicum, directed independent study, or small group sessions.

Lines of Communication

To enhance communication among the CHS students, the following will be used as a general communication guideline for students:

Students → Course Directors → Associate Program Director → Program Director → CHS
Dean or Dean's Designee

Curriculum Organization

Year 1

Phase I, First Year, Fall Semester		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PA 5015	Human Anatomy I	2.00
PA 5020	Clinical Skills I	1.50
PA 5025	Physiology and Pathophysiology I	3.00
PA 5030	Physical Assessment I	1.50
PA 5040	Health Promotion/Disease Prevention I	2.50
PA 5050	Adult Medicine I	4.00
PA 5060	Pharmacology and Therapeutics I	3.00
PA 5080	Clinical Reasoning I	2.00
PA 5100	Pediatrics I	1.50
Semester Total:		21.00
Phase I, First Year, Spring Semester		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PA 5016	Human Anatomy II	2.00
PA 5021	Clinical Skills II	1.50
PA 5026	Physiology and Pathophysiology II	3.00
PA 5031	Physical Assessment II	1.50
PA 5041	Health Promotion/Disease Prevention II	1.50
PA 5051	Adult Medicine II	4.00
PA 5061	Pharmacology and Therapeutics II	3.00
PA 5070A	Behavioral Health and Psychiatry	0.00
PA 5081	Clinical Reasoning II	2.00
PA 5101	Pediatrics II	1.50
PA 5110	Women's Health	2.50
Semester Total:		22.50
Phase I, First Year, Summer Semester		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PA 5175	Research Methods	1.00
PA 5070B	Behavioral Health and Psychiatry	3.00
PA 5120	Geriatrics	2.50
PA 5130	Emergency Medicine	2.50
PA 5140	Professional Roles & Responsibilities	1.00
PA 5160	Health Care Delivery System	1.00
PA 5180	Introduction to Clinical Education	1.00
PA 5190	Introduction to POCUS	1.00
Semester Total:		13.00
First Year Total:		56.50

Year 2

Phase II, Second Year, Fall Semester		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PA 6020	Senior Seminar I	2.50
###	Clinical Rotations (4 rotations)	14.00
PA 6970	Master's Capstone I	1.00
Semester Total:		17.50
Phase II, Second Year, Spring Semester		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PA 6030	Senior Seminar II	2.50
###	Clinical Rotations (3 rotations)	10.50
PA 6980	Master's Capstone II	1.00
Semester Total:		14.00
Phase III, Second Year, Summer Semester		
Course	Title	Credit Hours
PA 6040	Senior Seminar III	1.50
###	Clinical Rotations (2 rotations)	7.00
PA 6990	Master's Capstone III	4.00
Semester Total:		12.50
Second Year Total:		44.00
Program Total:		100

Didactic Curriculum Course Descriptions

IPE 5000 An Interprofessional Approach I (1.0 credit hour, CR/NCR)

This course is a required university seminar for all first-year health professional students. This course will introduce professions across various fields with content related to roles, responsibilities, team, teamwork, communication, values and ethics. Introductory level content related to cultural humility, social determinants of health, and health systems will be explored. Activities in this course may include exposure level asynchronous lectures, interactive health professions program exposure, and in-person group/team experiences. Experiences will integrate elements common to all professionals such as ethical, behavioral, social, and psychological. This course is a graduation requirement for all health professional programs with attendance required. Absences may be excused but this does not exclude students from the responsibilities associated with the course and required for its completion.

IPE 5100 An Interprofessional Approach II (1.0 credit hour, CR/NCR)

This course is a required university seminar for all first-year health professional students. Working in interprofessional teams, this course builds upon the knowledge and experience gained in the IPE 5000 course. Activities in this course may include asynchronous lectures, clinical scenario role-playing, synchronous discussion sessions, in-person/group team experiences, health events. Experiences will integrate elements common to all professionals such as ethical, behavioral, social, and psychological with increasing levels of complexity. This course is a graduation requirement for all health professional programs with attendance required. Absences may be excused but this does not exclude students from the responsibilities associated with the course and required for its completion.

OM 5001 Summer Preparedness and Readiness Course (SPaRC) (0.0 credit hours, CR/NCR)

In an interprofessional environment, SPaRC prepares incoming students for the rigors of their program with an introduction to various curriculum topics including the skeletal system, gross anatomy, and pharmacology. The anatomy component focuses on the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular, nervous, and other body systems. Additional lecture overviews to program-specific content are also provided. Academic skills presentations focus on enhancing study, test taking, and the development of EQ skills. Acceptance into this program is at the discretion of the coordinating office. The course is elective and does not meet any specific requirements of the program curriculum. A separate tuition is charged. For additional information, contact the Department of Learning Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD).

PA 5015 Human Anatomy I (2.0 units) & PA 5016 Human Anatomy II (2.0 units)

This course focuses on an in-depth exploration of human anatomy with an emphasis on clinical relevance for physician assistants. Students will study the structural organization of the human body, including musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, nervous, and other organ systems. The course emphasizes the anatomical structures and their applications in clinical practice. Instruction is delivered through lectures, case studies, and digital or virtual resources such as 3D anatomical models, medical imaging (e.g., MRI, CT, X-rays), and multimedia presentations. The course is designed to strengthen foundational anatomical knowledge essential for diagnostic reasoning and procedural skills without a hands-on dissection lab component.

PA 5020 Clinical Skills I (1.5 units) & PA 5021 Clinical II (1.5 units)

This course introduces physician assistant students to the foundational skills necessary for effective patient care. Through a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on workshops, students will learn essential clinical techniques and documentation practices. Emphasis is placed on performing

standard diagnostic and procedural skills, including injections, removal of foreign bodies from the eye and ear, fluorescein staining, cerumen removal, dermatologic procedures, venipuncture, peripheral IV placement, basic splinting, pelvic exams, breast exams, prostate exams, testicular exams, suturing, and wound care. Students will also learn to interpret essential diagnostic imaging, such as EKGs, chest X-rays, and musculoskeletal X-rays. Students will also develop proficiency in utilizing medical equipment and interpreting clinical findings in a simulated patient-care environment. The course fosters critical thinking and builds confidence in applying these skills to real-world clinical settings while prioritizing patient safety, empathy, and professionalism.

PA 5025 Physiology and Pathophysiology I (3.0 units) & PA 5026 Physiology and Pathophysiology II (3.0 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a foundational understanding of human physiology, focusing on the normal functioning of the body's organ systems and how they maintain homeostasis. Emphasis is placed on the physiological processes at the genetic, cellular, molecular, and organ levels that support overall health, as well as the interrelatedness of different body systems. This course also offers physician assistant students a deep understanding of the physiological mechanisms underlying disease processes. Emphasis is placed on the alterations in normal physiological functions that lead to clinical manifestations of disease. Students will explore the genetic, cellular, molecular, and systemic mechanisms of common diseases, focusing on how these changes contribute to the onset, progression, and resolution of various pathologies. Topics covered will coincide with the system orientation of the course "Adult Medicine I & II." Through lectures, case studies, and interactive learning, students should gain a comprehensive understanding of physiological principles, which will serve as the basis for clinical decision-making, diagnosis, and treatment planning in future courses and clinical practice. By the end of the course, students should have the critical knowledge required to understand the pathogenesis of diseases, interpret lab results, and apply pathophysiological principles to patient care.

PA 5030 Physical Assessment I (1.5 units) & PA 5031 Physical Assessment II (1.5 units)

This course equips physician assistant students with the essential knowledge and practical skills needed to conduct comprehensive and focused physical examinations. Emphasis is placed on developing a systematic approach to assessing each body system while integrating clinical reasoning and patient-centered care. Through a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on practice, students will learn essential clinical techniques, including thorough history-taking, physical examination, documentation, and effective communication strategies. Emphasizing culturally responsive care, the course integrates principles of equity and inclusion to ensure students can effectively address the needs of diverse patient populations. Students will be trained to identify both normal and abnormal findings through hands-on practice, case-based learning, and simulated patient encounters. Key topics covered in the course include the assessment of vital signs, head-to-toe examinations, and specialized techniques for evaluating specific differential diagnoses. By the end of the course, students should be proficient in performing inclusive and culturally sensitive physical assessments, presenting pertinent positive and negative findings, documenting the findings, and using them to inform their clinical decision-making.

PA 5040 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention I (2.5 units)

This course focuses on equipping physician assistant students with the knowledge and skills to promote health and prevent disease across diverse populations. Emphasis is placed on understanding the principles of preventive medicine, health behavior change, patient education, and the social determinants of health. The course will introduce students to the topics of morbidity and mortality in relation to disease processes, incidence, prevalence, screening, dynamics of patient interaction, and multicultural issues impacting healthcare. Students will also learn about preventive clinical medicine and how it applies to the

organ systems being concurrently studied in the Adult Medicine course (PA5050). This course is intended for Physician Assistant students in the first semester of the didactic year. The course highlights the importance of cultural competency, interprofessional collaboration, and ethical considerations in promoting wellness and addressing health disparities. By the end of the course, students should be prepared to develop individualized prevention plans and advocate for population health in clinical practice.

PA 5041 Health Promotion and Disease Prevention II (1.5 units)

This course is a continuation of PA5040 and focuses on equipping physician assistant students with the knowledge and skills to promote health and prevent disease across diverse populations. Emphasis is placed on understanding the principles of preventive medicine, health behavior change, patient education, and the social determinants of health. Topics during this semester will include basic disease information and screening for diabetes, colon cancer, prostate cancer, osteoporosis, common musculoskeletal disorders, sleep disorders, and adult immunizations. HIV and STD's will also be covered, as well as practitioner well-being, dealing with difficult patients, and the link between stress and disease.

PA 5050 Adult Medicine I (4 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a comprehensive understanding of the diagnosis, management, and prevention of acute and chronic medical conditions in adult patients. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based clinical decision-making, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and patient-centered care. Lectures are organized into six focused modules: EENT (Eyes, Ears, Nose, and Throat), Pulmonary, Hematology/Vascular, Cardiology Part A, Cardiology Part B, and Dermatology. Each module is structured around anatomical and physiological organ systems. This intensive curriculum explores key topics, including anatomy, physiology, etiology, risk factors, clinical manifestations, differential diagnosis, diagnostic methods, treatment strategies, and patient education. By the end of the course, students should be proficient in recognizing clinical presentations, formulating differential diagnoses, and creating individualized management plans for adult patients across diverse healthcare settings.

PA 5051 Adult Medicine II (4 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a comprehensive understanding of the diagnosis, management, and prevention of acute and chronic medical conditions in adult patients. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based clinical decision-making, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and patient-centered care. Lectures are organized into six focused modules: Gastroenterology, Musculoskeletal, Neurology, Genitourinary/Renal, Endocrine, and Infectious Disease. Each module is structured around anatomical and physiological organ systems. This intensive curriculum explores key topics, including anatomy, physiology, etiology, risk factors, clinical manifestations, differential diagnosis, diagnostic methods, treatment strategies, and patient education. By the end of the course, students should be proficient in recognizing clinical presentations, formulating differential diagnoses, and creating individualized management plans for adult patients across diverse healthcare settings.

PA 5060 Pharmacology and Therapeutics I (3.0 units) & PA5061 Pharmacology and Therapeutics II (3.0 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a comprehensive understanding of pharmacological principles and their application to patient care. Emphasis is placed on the mechanisms of action, therapeutic uses, side effects, contraindications, and interactions of commonly used medications. This course stresses the principles of drug action and is correlated with the system orientation of the course "Adult Medicine I & II." Students will learn to integrate pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and evidence-based guidelines into the selection and management of pharmacological therapies for diverse

patient populations. Topics include medications used in the treatment of acute and chronic conditions across various specialties, such as cardiology, infectious diseases, psychiatry, and endocrinology. The course also explores patient education, adherence strategies, and the role of pharmacogenomics in personalized medicine. By the end of the course, students should be prepared to prescribe and manage medications safely and effectively in clinical practice.

PA 5070 Behavioral Health and Psychiatry (3 units)

This course offers physician assistant students the foundational knowledge and skills to assess, diagnose, and manage psychiatric and behavioral health conditions across the lifespan. Emphasis is placed on understanding psychiatric disorders and the impact of mental health on overall well-being. Students will explore topics such as mood disorders, depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, substance use disorders, and neurodevelopmental conditions. The course integrates evidence-based approaches to pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatments, including psychopharmacology, counseling techniques, and behavioral interventions. Special attention is given to patient-centered care, cultural sensitivity, ethical considerations, and interprofessional collaboration in the management of behavioral health conditions. By the end of the course, students should be prepared to provide compassionate, culturally sensitive, and effective care for individuals with psychiatric and behavioral health conditions, contributing to equitable and inclusive mental health outcomes in clinical practice.

PA 5080 Clinical Reasoning I (2 units) & PA 5081 Clinical Reasoning II (2 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a foundational understanding and opportunity to apply structured, evidence-based clinical reasoning to patient care across the lifespan. The course emphasizes the cognitive processes underlying diagnostic decision-making, including hypothesis generation, data interpretation, problem representation, differential diagnosis development, and clinical prioritization. Students will integrate foundational medical knowledge from anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and evidence-based medicine to evaluate undifferentiated patient presentations commonly encountered in primary care. Through case-based learning, small-group discussions, simulated patient encounters, and guided reflection, students will practice transitioning from data collection to clinical judgment while recognizing and mitigating cognitive biases that influence medical decision-making. Emphasis is placed on developing concise oral and written case presentations, selecting appropriate diagnostic tests, and formulating safe, patient-centered management plans aligned with current clinical guidelines. This course also introduces professional reasoning skills essential to PA practice, including clinical uncertainty management, interprofessional communication, health equity considerations, and ethical decision-making. Clinical Reasoning I prepares students for progressive clinical reasoning complexity in subsequent didactic courses and provides a critical foundation for success in supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs).

PA 5100 Pediatrics I (1.5 units) & PA 5100 Pediatrics II (1.5 units)

This course focuses on the diagnosis, treatment, and management of medical conditions in pediatric patients from infancy through adolescence. Physician assistant students will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to provide comprehensive, evidence-based care to children in a variety of healthcare settings. Students will also develop skills in performing well-child checks from infancy to adolescence. Topics include growth and development, immunizations, nutrition, common pediatric illnesses, congenital and genetic disorders, and preventive care. Emphasis is placed on age-specific physical examination techniques, effective communication with both children and caregivers, and recognizing the unique physiological and psychosocial needs of pediatric patients. Through case-based learning and clinical scenarios, students should learn to formulate differential diagnoses, develop management plans, and deliver compassionate, family-centered care.

PA 5110 Women’s Health (2.5 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a comprehensive understanding of obstetrics and gynecology, focusing on the care of women throughout their reproductive lifespan and beyond. Emphasis is placed on the diagnosis, management, and prevention of conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the female reproductive system. The course prepares students to address the unique needs and challenges of diverse populations in women’s health. Topics include prenatal care, labor and delivery, postpartum management, gynecologic disorders, contraception, infertility, menopause, and reproductive endocrinology. Students will also explore high-risk pregnancies, obstetric emergencies, and gynecologic oncology. Through lectures, case-based learning, and clinical scenarios, students should develop the skills necessary to perform gynecologic exams, manage routine and high-risk obstetric patients, and provide evidence-based, patient-centered care. Special attention is given to cultural competence and ethical considerations when applicable, in women’s health.

PA 5120 Geriatrics (2.0 units)

This course offers physician assistant students an in-depth understanding of the medical, psychological, and social aspects of caring for older adults. Emphasis is placed on the unique physiological changes associated with aging, as well as the management of common geriatric conditions and multimorbidity. Topics include cognitive decline, dementia, falls, osteoporosis, polypharmacy, palliative care, geriatric syndromes, and end-of-life issues. The course also covers preventive care, chronic disease management, and promoting healthy aging through lifestyle modifications and interventions. Students should gain the skills necessary to conduct comprehensive geriatric assessments, create individualized care plans, and address the complex healthcare needs of aging patients. Cultural sensitivity, patient-centered care, and communication strategies are emphasized to ensure effective care across diverse populations.

PA 5130 Emergency Medicine (2.5 units)

This course offers physician assistant students the foundational knowledge and clinical skills required to assess, diagnose, and manage emergent and life-threatening conditions across a wide range of patients and lifespans. Emphasis is placed on rapid clinical decision-making, critical thinking, and effective teamwork in high-pressure, time-sensitive environments. Students will explore the pathophysiology, diagnosis, and management of common and complex emergency conditions, including trauma, cardiac emergencies, respiratory distress, infections, neurological disorders, and poisoning. Through case-based learning, simulations, and clinical scenarios, students will develop the ability to prioritize care, perform emergency interventions, and communicate effectively in emergency settings. By the end of the course, students should be prepared to provide safe and efficient care in emergency departments, urgent care settings, and pre-hospital environments.

PA 5140 Professional Roles and Responsibilities (1.0 units)

This course offers physician assistant students a comprehensive understanding of the professional roles, ethical responsibilities, and collaborative nature of healthcare practice. Emphasis is placed on the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to navigate the complexities of the healthcare system and deliver patient-centered care in diverse clinical settings. Students will explore the scope of practice, legal and ethical issues, professional conduct, and the importance of maintaining patient confidentiality and trust. Topics include interprofessional collaboration, leadership, communication skills, cultural competency, and advocacy. The course also covers the PA’s role in patient education, team dynamics, and healthcare policy. Through case studies, discussions, and reflective exercises, students should develop the skills needed to work effectively within a multidisciplinary healthcare team, advocate for their patients, and uphold the high ethical standards expected of the physician assistant profession.

PA 5160 Health Care Delivery Systems (1.0 units)

This course offers physician assistant students an in-depth understanding of the structure, function, and challenges of healthcare delivery in the United States and globally. Emphasis is placed on understanding how healthcare services are organized, financed, and delivered across various settings, with a focus on patient access, quality of care, and healthcare disparities. Students will explore topics such as healthcare policy, insurance systems, the impact of healthcare reform, and the role of different healthcare professionals in the delivery of care. The course also covers population health management, the integration of technology in healthcare, including telemedicine, and the economic factors influencing healthcare delivery. By the end of the course, students should have a comprehensive understanding of the healthcare system and be equipped to navigate its complexities in clinical practice, advocate for improved patient care, and contribute to effective healthcare policy development.

PA 5175 Research Methods (1.0 unit) (Credit/No Credit)

This course offers an in-depth introduction to a variety of research methodologies essential for physician assistant students. Students will focus on understanding and applying diverse approaches, including historical studies, case studies, observational studies, surveys, quasi-experimental designs, and experimental designs. Students will explore key concepts such as generalizability, validity, and reliability, gaining a comprehensive understanding of their importance in evaluating and conducting research. Emphasis will be placed on understanding how to evaluate and apply research findings to enhance patient care and inform clinical decision-making. Through this course, students will develop the skills necessary to critically analyze research findings, assess the quality of studies, and apply evidence-based knowledge to clinical practice. By the end of the course, students should be able to confidently engage with medical literature and contribute to advancements in healthcare through rigorous inquiry and informed decision-making.

PA 5180 Introduction to Clinical Education (1.0 unit) (Credit/No Credit)

This course offers physician assistant students the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for successful Supervised Clinical Practice Experience. Emphasis is placed on the development of essential clinical competencies, including patient interaction, clinical reasoning, and the integration of medical knowledge into practice. Students will begin to understand the roles and responsibilities of a physician assistant in various healthcare settings and develop communication skills for interacting with patients, families, and healthcare teams. Topics include the basics of clinical documentation, medical ethics, patient safety, clinical procedures, and an introduction to evidence-based medicine. Students will also be introduced to the structure of clinical rotations, preparing them to engage in hands-on learning in future clinical settings. Through simulated patient encounters, role-playing exercises, and guided clinical experiences, students will gain the confidence and practical experience necessary to transition to more advanced clinical education. By the end of the course, students should be prepared for their initial clinical rotations, equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide patient-centered care in real-world settings.

PA 5190 Introduction to POCUS (1.0 unit) (Credit/No Credit)

This hybrid course provides Physician Assistant (PA) students with an introduction to Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) through a self-paced online Butterfly academy and a hands-on POCUS workshop. The online component consists of interactive modules, video demonstrations, and case-based learning to cover the fundamental principles of ultrasound physics, image acquisition, probe selection, and interpretation of normal vs. abnormal findings. Key clinical applications include: Abdominal ultrasound (FAST exam, aorta, gallbladder), Cardiac ultrasound (basic echocardiography views, IVC assessment), Pulmonary ultrasound (lung sliding, pneumothorax assessment, pleural effusions), Vascular ultrasound (IV access, DVT screening), & Soft tissue and musculoskeletal applications. Following the self-paced online

learning, students will participate in a one-day, hands-on POCUS workshop where they will practice live scanning techniques under the guidance of an experienced provider. This session will reinforce theoretical knowledge and provide real-time feedback to enhance skill acquisition. By the end of the course, students should Understand the clinical applications and limitations of POCUS, develop basic image acquisition and interpretation skills, integrate ultrasound findings into clinical decision-making, and gain hands-on experience to build confidence in using ultrasound for bedside assessments. This course serves as an introduction for advanced ultrasound training and prepares students to effectively incorporate POCUS into their clinical practice.

PA 6020 Senior Seminar I (2.5 units) & PA 6030 Senior Seminar II (2.5 units)

This comprehensive course is designed to prepare physician assistant students for the transition from academic learning to professional practice. The course emphasizes the refinement of clinical reasoning, diagnostic skills, and decision-making in complex patient care scenarios. Students will engage in high-level case discussions, advanced clinical simulations, and interprofessional team exercises to enhance their ability to provide evidence-based care in diverse healthcare settings. In addition to clinical skills, the course focuses on professional development, including effective communication with patients, families, and healthcare teams, leadership, ethical decision-making, and advocacy for the PA profession. Students will explore advanced topics in healthcare policy, patient safety, quality improvement, and managing chronic conditions in an interdisciplinary team approach. A major component of the course is preparing students for the workforce, covering topics such as career exploration, strategies for job placement, resume development, interview techniques, and negotiating contracts. Emphasis is placed on navigating the licensure process, understanding scope of practice, and the importance of continuing medical education and certification maintenance. Students will also explore the broader implications of being a healthcare provider, including understanding the psychological, social, and financial aspects of practice, while addressing issues like burnout prevention, professional boundaries, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The course fosters lifelong learning, critical self-reflection, and the development of a personal professional identity. By the end of the course, students should be equipped with the skills, confidence, and mindset necessary to transition into the PA profession successfully, while demonstrating an ongoing commitment to learning, collaboration, and patient-centered care.

PA 6040 Senior Seminar III (1.5 units) (Credit / No Credit)

This course is designed to assess the readiness of physician assistant students for clinical practice through a series of evaluative milestones, including an End of Curriculum Comprehensive Exam, a Summative Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), and a Summative Technical Skills Assessment. The course integrates medical knowledge, clinical skills and technical skills, clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills, communication skills, and professionalism to ensure students are prepared for their role as Physician Assistants.

PA 6970, PA 6980 & PA 6990 Master's Capstone I (1.0 unit), II (1.0 unit), & III (4.0 unit) (Credit / No Credit)

This course offers physician assistant students the opportunity to conduct retrospective research focused on emerging diseases, treatments, or clinical trends in healthcare. This project serves as a culmination of the PA program, allowing students to engage in an in-depth exploration of a relevant and current issue in medicine, contributing to the growing body of medical knowledge. In this course, students will select a clinical topic related to an emerging disease, treatment modality, or novel clinical approach. Using retrospective data analysis, students will review medical records, clinical trials, case studies, and other relevant literature to investigate the effectiveness, challenges, and outcomes of these emerging health issues or interventions. Students will work closely with peers and faculty mentors to develop a research

methodology, analyze data, and interpret findings. They will synthesize their results into a comprehensive report, detailing their research process, conclusions, and recommendations. This report will reflect the student's ability to critically evaluate clinical evidence and contribute to advancing the understanding of emerging diseases or treatments. The course culminates in a formal presentation of the research project, where students will showcase their findings to faculty and peers. This provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their analytical skills, research capabilities, and ability to translate research into practical clinical applications. By the end of the course, students will have gained valuable experience in conducting clinical research, refining their critical thinking, and applying evidence-based practices to real-world healthcare challenges. The Applied Clinical Project prepares students for lifelong learning and positions them to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing advancement of medical knowledge and patient care.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience Descriptions

PA 7010 Family Practice (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students hands-on experience in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of patients across the lifespan in a primary care setting. Emphasis is placed on developing proficiency in preventive care, chronic disease management, acute care, and patient education. Students will enhance their clinical skills, including history-taking, physical examination, diagnostic interpretation, and generating treatment plans, while addressing the unique needs of individuals and families in diverse communities. Under the supervision of a licensed preceptor, students will gain practical exposure to a variety of medical conditions and patient populations, focusing on holistic, patient-centered care. By the end of the rotation, students should be prepared to provide comprehensive, evidence-based care and serve as integral members of the primary care team.

PA 7015 Behavioral Health (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students hands-on experience in the evaluation, diagnosis, and management of patients with mental health and behavioral disorders. Students will have the opportunity to develop competencies in conducting psychiatric interviews, performing mental status examinations, and formulating treatment plans that may include pharmacologic, psychotherapeutic, and social interventions. Emphasis is placed on understanding the biopsychosocial model of care and addressing conditions such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, substance use disorders, and other behavioral health issues. By the end of this rotation, students should have gained valuable insight into the role of the physician assistant in behavioral health and psychiatry, equipping them to effectively support the mental health needs of diverse populations.

PA 7030 Internal Medicine (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students with hands-on experience in the evaluation, diagnosis, and management of adult patients with a wide range of acute and chronic medical conditions. Emphasis is placed on developing critical thinking, diagnostic reasoning, and evidence-based clinical decision-making in a hospital or outpatient setting. Students will refine their skills in history-taking, physical examination, laboratory and diagnostic interpretation, and therapeutic management while working alongside physicians and other healthcare professionals. The rotation provides opportunities to manage co-morbidities in diverse patient populations. By the end of this rotation, students should be equipped to provide patient-centered, comprehensive care in internal medicine and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of managing adult health conditions.

PA 7040 Emergency Medicine (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students hands-on experience to the fast-paced and dynamic environment of emergency medicine. Students will have an opportunity to develop skills in the evaluation, diagnosis, and management of patients presenting with a wide variety of acute and life-threatening conditions across all age groups. Under the supervision of experienced emergency medicine providers, students will gain hands-on experience in performing focused history and physical examinations, interpreting diagnostic tests, initiating critical interventions, and managing trauma and medical emergencies. Emphasis is placed on developing clinical decision-making skills, prioritizing care, and working effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team. By the end of the rotation, students should be equipped to handle the challenges of emergency care, demonstrating confidence and competence in providing patient-centered, evidence-based treatment in high-pressure situations.

PA 7060 Pediatrics (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students hands-on experience in the care of pediatric patients, from newborns to adolescents, in clinical settings. Emphasis is placed on the evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of common acute and chronic pediatric conditions, as well as routine wellness care, growth and development assessments, and immunizations. Students will get an opportunity to develop skills in pediatric history-taking, physical examination techniques, and family-centered communication while gaining an understanding of children and their families. Exposure should enhance the student's ability to provide age-appropriate, compassionate, and evidence-based care. By the end of this rotation, students should be equipped to effectively manage pediatric patients and understand the role of the physician assistant in promoting the health and well-being of children.

PA 7070 Women's Health (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students focused experience in the care of women across the lifespan, with an emphasis on reproductive, obstetric, and gynecologic health. Students will gain hands-on experience in the evaluation, diagnosis, and management of conditions related to women's health, including routine well-woman care, prenatal and postpartum care, family planning, infertility, and common gynecologic concerns. Students will get the opportunity to develop skills in performing pelvic exams, breast exams, contraceptive counseling, and prenatal assessments, as well as interpreting diagnostic studies related to women's health. By the end of this rotation, students should be prepared to provide comprehensive, evidence-based care tailored to the unique needs of women in clinical settings.

PA 7080 Surgery (3.5 units)

This clinical rotation offers physician assistant students with hands-on experience in the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative care of surgical patients. Emphasis is placed on developing the skills necessary to assist in surgical procedures, manage surgical patients, and provide comprehensive perioperative care. Students will get the opportunity to gain proficiency in performing focused history-taking and physical examinations, assisting in the operating room, suturing, wound care, and managing surgical complications. They will also learn to interpret diagnostic studies, participate in surgical rounds, and collaborate with the healthcare team to ensure optimal patient outcomes. Exposure to a variety of surgical cases across specialties should enhance the student's ability to approach complex clinical scenarios. By the end of this rotation, students should be equipped to support surgeons in diverse surgical settings and provide patient-centered care to surgical patients.

PA 7500 Selective SCPE (3.5 units each)

The selective clinical rotation offers physician assistant students to explore a specialty area of interest, offering the opportunity to gain advanced knowledge and hands-on experience in a chosen field of

medicine. Students will work under the supervision of a preceptor, engaging in the evaluation, diagnosis, and management of patients while refining their clinical and procedural skills. The selective rotation provides flexibility for students to tailor their education to align with their career goals, whether in subspecialties such as cardiology, dermatology, orthopedics, endocrinology, or another discipline. Emphasis is placed on integrating evidence-based practice, developing specialty-specific competencies, and delivering patient-centered care. By the end of this rotation, students should have enhanced their clinical expertise in their selected area and gained valuable insight to support their transition into professional practice.

Course	Title	Repeatable?
PA 7500A	Selective 1	Yes, 7 credit hour maximum
PA 7500B	Selective 2	Yes, 7 credit hour maximum

Honors and Awards

The following are presented at the Graduation Awards Ceremony:

- Alpha Eta Honor Society
- Andrea J. Reina Memorial Award
- Blake Award of Academic Excellence
- Class Award
- Class Morale Award
- Dean's Award
- Linda Fox Memorial Endowment Fund Award
- St. Martin Award
- The Clymer Award for Academic and Professional Excellence
- The National Dean's List Nominations
- The President's Society Award
- Western University of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Service Award
- The LaCombe Award

Academic Calendar

Fall 2026	
August 3-7, 2026	Orientation/Welcome Week
August 7, 2026	White Coat Ceremony
August 10, 2026	Fall Classes Begin (Year 1)
August 31, 2026	Fall Semester Rotations Begin (Year 2)
September 7, 2026	Labor Day – No Classes*
October 12, 2026	Indigenous People’s Day – No Classes*
November 11, 2026	Veterans Day – No Classes*
November 25, 2026	Thanksgiving Recess Begins @ 5:00 p.m.*
November 30, 2026	Classes Resume
December 11, 2026	Last day of Lectures for Fall Semester (Year 1)
December 14-18, 2026	Finals Week
December 18, 2026	End of Fall Semester Classes (Year 1)
December 21, 2026	Winter Recess Begins (Year 1)
January 17, 2027	End of Fall Semester Rotations (Year 2)
Spring 2027	
January 4, 2027	Spring Classes Begin (Year 1)
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King Day – No Classes*
January 18, 2027	Spring Semester Rotations Begin (Year 2)
February 15, 2027	President’s Day – No Classes*
March 15, 2027	Spring Break Begins (Year 1)
March 22, 2027	Spring Classes Resume (Year 1)
April 30, 2027	Last Day of Lectures for Spring Semester (Year 1)
May 2, 2027	Spring Semester Rotations End (Year 2)
May 2-7, 2027	Finals Week
May 14, 2027	End of Spring Semester Classes (Year 1)
Summer 2027	
May 2, 2027	Summer Semester Rotations Begin (Year 2)
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day – No Classes*
June 1, 2027	Summer Classes Begin (Year 1)
June 18, 2027	Juneteenth Observed – No Classes*
July 5, 2027	Independence Day Observed – No Classes*
July 26-30, 2027	Finals Week
July 30, 2027	End of Summer Semester Classes (Year 1) & Rotations (Year 2)

**Students in clinical rotations observe their preceptors’ hours, which may include working on federal holidays.*

The Physician Assistant Oath

I pledge to perform the following duties with honesty, integrity, and dedication, remembering always that my primary responsibility is to the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings:

I recognize and promote the value of diversity and I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.

I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and the principle of informed consent.

I will hold in confidence the information shared with me in the course of practicing medicine, except where I am authorized to impart such knowledge.

I will be diligent in understanding both my personal capabilities and my limitations, striving always to improve my practice of medicine.

I will actively seek to expand my intellectual knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medical art and science.

I will work with members of the health care team to assure compassionate and effective care of patients.

I will uphold and enhance community values and use the knowledge and experience acquired as a PA to contribute to an improved community.

I will respect my professional relationship with the physician and always act collaboratively, except where to do so would cause harm.

I recognize my duty to perpetuate knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and on my honor.