

# Sacred Heart University Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies

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**Student Policy & Procedure Manual**

**Class of 2027**



# Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES

**Class of 2027**

Dear Sacred Heart University Physician Associate (PA) Student,

Welcome to the Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies (MSPAS) program at Sacred Heart University (SHU)!

The Policy and Procedure manual for the PA Program contains pertinent information to ensure your success in the program. Please know that the policies are subject to change. If change is mandated, students will be notified and provided with the new policy and/or changes in writing. This Policy and Procedure Manual is available to students on Blackboard in the PA Studies folder.

In addition to this manual, students must comply with the Sacred Heart University Student [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and Graduate Catalog. The faculty and I are here to support you through this journey.

I wish you great success as a graduate student here in the Sacred Heart University Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Reynold Jaglal".

Reynold Jaglal, DMSc, MBA, PA-C  
Department Chair, Program Director  
Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies  
Sacred Heart University

## This MSPAS Student Policy and Procedure Manual is a supplement to the Sacred Heart University Student and Graduate Catalogs

Please refer to the 2025-26 Sacred Heart University (SHU) Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog for the following University Policies, which can be located at:

[Student Handbook](#)

[Graduate Catalog](#)

- **Sacred Heart University Mission and History**
- **Discrimination and Harassment**
- **Expenses and Student Financial Assistance**
- [Procedures for Accommodation Grievances and Discrimination Complaints](#)
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    - Accommodation and Office of Student Accessibility
    - Academic Center
    - Library
    - Office of Student Advising and Success
    - Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Tutoring services
    - Inclusive Excellence
    - Instructional Technology
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- **Academic Standards, Policies, and Procedures**
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  - Academic Calendars
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  - Application for graduation
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This Policy and Procedure Manual is subject to periodic updates. The current version will be posted on Blackboard.

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## **Faculty**

<p>Reynold Jaglal, DMSc, MBA, PA-C Chair and Program Director Clinical Assistant Professor Physician Associate Studies <a href="mailto:jaglalr@sacredheart.edu">jaglalr@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Renee Delahaye, DMSc, PA-C Director of Clinical Education Clinical Assistant Professor Physician associate Studies <a href="mailto:delahayer@sacredheart.edu">delahayer@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Henry Yoon, MD Medical Director Clinical Associate Professor Physician associate Studies <a href="mailto:yoohn@sacredheart.edu">yoohn@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Christina Curnias, MPAS, PA-C Principal Faculty Clinical Assistant Professor Physician Associate Studies <a href="mailto:curniasc@sacredheart.edu">curniasc@sacredheart.edu</a></p>	<p>Fatbardha Kodzodziku, MBA, PA-C Director of Didactic Education Student Success Coordinator Clinical Assistant Professor Physician Associate Studies <a href="mailto:kodzodzikuf@sacredheart.edu">kodzodzikuf@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Eric Nemece, Pharm D., MEd, BCPS Director of Research and Assessment Associate Professor Physician Associate Studies <a href="mailto:nemece@sacredheart.edu">nemece@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Elizabeth Downes, MHS, PA-C Principal Faculty Clinical Assistant Professor Physician Associate Studies <a href="mailto:downese2@sacredheart.edu">downese2@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Michael Chase, MHS, PA-C Principal Faculty Clinical Assistant Professor Physician Associate Studies <a href="mailto:chasem2@sacredheart.edu">chasem2@sacredheart.edu</a></p>
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## **Staff**

<p>Jane Kelley Program Assistant Physician associate Studies <a href="mailto:Kelleyj@sacredheart.edu">Kelleyj@sacredheart.edu</a></p> <p>Priyangi Jayasuriya, M.S. Clinical Coordinator Physician associate Studies <a href="mailto:Jayasuriyap@sacredheart.edu">Jayasuriyap@sacredheart.edu</a></p>	
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## **The Physician Associate Studies Mission**

*Our mission is to educate and graduate compassionate Physician Associates who demonstrate excellence in clinical practice and serve as collaborative members of the healthcare team. Grounded in service and lifelong learning, the program prepares a skilled PA workforce to meet evolving healthcare needs through a strong emphasis on primary care, respect for human dignity, integration of innovative and evidence-based practices, and the promotion of health and well-being for all people within the communities we serve.*

To achieve our Mission, we are committed to the following Core Values:

### *Excellence*

We are committed to fostering clinical and academic excellence by preparing students to provide the highest standard of patient care. We embrace lifelong learning, cultivating curiosity, adaptability, and continuous professional growth to advance the PA profession.

### *Community*

We dedicate ourselves to serving and strengthening our communities through collaboration, advocacy, and equitable access to care. We encourage civic responsibility and global awareness, inspiring students to contribute to healthier, more just societies.

### *Compassion*

Empathy and respect are essential to the healing relationship between providers and patients. We strive to prepare PAs who deliver care that honors and affirm every individual's dignity, integrity, and humanity.\

## **Vision Statement**

To be a leader in Physician Associate education, cultivating compassionate, community-focused clinicians who advance health equity, champion lifelong learning, and elevating the standard of care for all. We envision a future where our graduates shape a more just and healthier world through clinical excellence, collaborative practice, contributions to the evidence base, and unwavering dedication to the well-being of diverse communities

## Program Goals

To work towards achieving our Mission, our Program Goals are to:

1. Graduate PA students work in Primary Care Medicine, with a benchmark of 20% of each cohort employed in a primary care setting.
2. Emphasize the responsibility of service to the community through completion of service-learning experiences by ensuring 100% of students are compliant with required volunteer hours.
3. Encourage professional involvement, leadership, and service with a target of 15% of students serving in leadership roles in local, state, and national PA organizations.
4. Maintain first-time PANCE pass rate at or above the national average.

## History of the Physician Associate Profession

### Definition

American Academy of Physician Associates; PAs are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. Trusted, rigorously educated and trained healthcare professionals, PAs are dedicated to expanding access to care and transforming health and wellness through patient-centered, team-based medical practices.

### History

In the mid-1960s, physicians and educators recognized a shortage of primary care physicians. Eugene A. Stead Jr., MD, of the Duke University Medical Center, put together the first class of physician associates in 1965 to answer this need. He selected Navy corpsmen who received considerable medical training during their military service to be the first PA students. Stead mirrored the curriculum of the PA program on the fast-track training of doctors during World War II.

The first PA class graduated from the Duke University PA program on Oct. 6, 1967. The PA concept was lauded as a creative solution to physician shortages and gained acceptance and federal backing as early as the 1970s. The medical community supported the new profession and spurred setting accreditation standards, establishing a national certification and standardized examination, and developing continuing medical education requirements. Today, PAs are one of the fastest-growing occupations on the front lines of healthcare. (AAPA, 2012).

## Physician Associate Professional Organizations

### The Accreditation Review Commission on Education of the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA)

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Associate (ARC-PA) is the accrediting agency that protects the interests of the public and PA profession by defining the standards for PA education and evaluating PA educational programs to ensure their compliance with those standards. Accreditation is a process of quality assurance that determines whether the program meets established standards for function, structure, and performance. Accreditation of PA programs was

created in the early 1970s under the auspices of the American Medical Association. The groups that have accredited PA programs have been many but in 2000 the ARC-PA was constituted as an independent organization, and the *Standards* for accreditation were created. Graduation from an ARC-PA accredited program is required for NCCPA PANCE eligibility and for licensure or registration in all states. The ARC-PA's sister organization for medicine is the AMA and AAMC's Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

The ARC-PA encourages excellence in PA education through its accreditation process. A peer review process that includes documentation and periodic site visit evaluation to substantiate compliance with the *Standards* for Physician Associate Education culminates in program accreditation. The accreditation process is designed to encourage educational practices and innovation that are validated through continuous self-study and improvement.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Associate, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Sacred Heart University Physician Associate Program** sponsored by **Sacred Heart University**. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **March 2031**. 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](#).

The student may note throughout Policy and Procedure manuals "tags" such as "A3.02" which are used to document compliance with specific ARC-PA Accreditation Standards (5<sup>th</sup> ed., 3/2023). The MSPAS Student Policy and Procedure Manual is a component of where the program defines, publishes, makes readily available and consistently applies its policies and practices to all students (A3.02).

## **The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA)**

The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) is the national organization that represents Physician Associates in all specialties and all employment settings. Founded in 1968, the Academy has a federated structure of 57 chartered chapters representing PAs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the federal services. Its membership also includes Physician Associate students and supporters of the profession. The AAPA advocates for the PA profession by lobbying for improvements in the utilization of PAs in federal health care delivery systems, support of PA education including the National Health Service Corps scholarships, and state legislation that governs PA practice. The AAPA has also been an active voice for our profession on issues related to education and certification as well. For a frame of reference, the AAPA is analogous to the physician advocacy organization the American Medical Association (AMA).

Student membership entitles one to two monthly journal subscriptions (*The Journal of the American Academy of Physician Associates* and *Clinician Reviews*), monthly newsletters, scholarship applications, and access to an online job list. The Student Academy of the Academy of Physician Associates (SAAAPA) is an excellent resource for students. Through the years, many students and faculty have participated as board members and in other leadership opportunities with this organization. The SAAAPA website is <http://www.aapa.org/saaapa>.

The AAPA holds annual meetings each May during which the Student Academy meets, multiple days of

continuing medical education occur, and the AAPA House of Delegates votes on issues related to the profession. Students are encouraged to submit posters for the annual poster session. This meeting is a wonderful networking opportunity as well.

## **The PA Education Association (PAEA)**

The PAEA was founded in 1972 by Alfred Sadler and Thomas Piemme, two physician educators who understood the need for an educational organization that was responsible for aligning and standardizing the education of the PA. Initially, the PAEA was part of the AAPA and was called the Association of PA Programs (APAP). In 2005, the APAP membership voted to change the name to Physician Associate Education Association and moved the organization to leadership independent of the AAPA. The PAEA is the equivalent to the physician group, Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

The PAEA advocates for the PA profession by lobbying for financial support for PA education, scholarships, and research. It also supports individual PA programs with services such as annual survey data that is used to benchmark programs, a wide range of faculty development initiatives including workshops for educators and an annual meeting, and leadership development.

For students interested in a career in education, a great leadership opportunity exists as the liaison between the Student Academy and PAEA. This position is one of many board level positions of the student Academy of American Academy of Physician Associates <https://www.aapa.org/> For more information on PAEA please visit [www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org)

## **The National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistant (NCCPA)**

The NCCPA was developed by David Glazer, Alfred Sadler, and Thomas Piemme to create the PA National Certification Examination (PANCE). Its Board members include physicians, surgeons, PAs, and members of the public. The early founders of the profession believed that professional legitimacy could be established if rigorous certification standards were maintained. Thus, in the early 1970s, the PA profession started with a 6-year certification cycle. Initially, PAs were expected to pass a generalist multiple-choice examination (PANCE) and a clinical skills encounter, obtain 100 hours of continuing medical education (CME) every two years, and pass a multiple-choice exam at year six (PANRE). The clinical skills encounter was stopped in the late 1990's because of issues with inter-rater reliability and methodology. The certification cycle has been the cornerstone of our profession for over 45 years and validated our profession, showing that PAs are dedicated to life-long learning, patient safety, and professional improvement. The recertification examination is now available in two formats that PAs may choose from based on their individual preference. The first option is the traditional PANRE, a single multiple-choice examination taken in year 9 or 10 from the most recent certification. The second option is the PANRE-LA (longitudinal assessment) which is an 'open book' multiple choice exam taken from home over the course of 2-3 years (blocks of 25 questions released quarterly), starting in year 7 from most recent certification. Both exam options are based on the same content blueprint. The NCCPA is similar to the physician group: The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME).

To be eligible to sit for the PANCE exam, you must complete all requirements for graduation from an ARC-PA accredited PA program. The Program Director will certify your eligibility so that you can schedule your examination. For more information, please review the website [www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net).

## **The Connecticut Academy of Physician Associates (ConnAPA)**

The Connecticut Academy of Physician Associates (ConnAPA) is part of a national network of constituent chapters devoted to representing and promoting the interests of PAs. ConnAPA has a productive relationship with the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), and ConnAPA members regularly serve on AAPA committees and boards. Elected representatives of ConnAPA participate in the AAPA House of Delegates helping to develop national policies and procedures.

ConnAPA is a growing organization that, in addition to the efforts of its dedicated leadership and committee members, employs professional management to handle the day-to-day business of the Academy and assist in the delivery of membership services. ConnAPA members enjoy numerous opportunities for professional development and involvement, as well as opportunities to meet and network with their peers.

ConnAPA members founded the Connecticut Physician Associates Foundation, a charitable organization operated exclusively for educational and research purposes. The Foundation conducts research on topics relevant to PAs and awards scholarships to Connecticut residents enrolled full-time in accredited PA programs anywhere in the United States.

ConnAPA is committed to students and advocates for student involvement in all CONNAPA meetings, conferences, and events. Student members who live or attend PA schools out of state are also welcome to join. ConnAPA provides a free six-month extension after PA school graduation to one's student membership to allow for time for students to take board exams.

## **Pi Alpha – The National Honor Society for Physician Associates**

Pi Alpha is the national Physician Associate Honor Society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. Membership signifies the inductees' significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community/professional service, and other related activities. The society also encourages a high standard of character and conducts among students and graduates. Students who earn a minimum of 3.5 cumulative GPA at the end of the Late Spring trimester of the clinical phase will be invited to apply for induction into Pi Alpha.

## **Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies (MSPAS) Committees**

The MSPAS program at Sacred Heart University is within the College of Health Professions. The program complements other graduate programs in Exercise Science & Nutrition, Healthcare Informatics & Administration, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Public Health, and Communication Disorders. The College also offers undergraduate programs in Athletic Training and Health Science. The College of Health Professions (CHP) also enjoys interprofessional education opportunities with the College of Nursing) which includes Family Nurse Practitioner and Doctor of Nursing programs. In addition to academic excellence, the College has a rich tradition of service learning, study-abroad opportunities, and faculty practice activities.

**The following MSPAS committees support the academic and administrative structure of the program:**

## The Professional Performance Committee (PPC)

This Committee monitors and supports student academic progress, as well as professional conduct and behavior, and determines whether the student is eligible to progress to the next phase of their education. The Committee meets each trimester (or more often as needed). **Membership:** The committee is comprised of faculty from the didactic and clinical phases of the program, as well as CHP faculty, medical director, clinically practicing PA(s), and physician(s) who are clinical preceptors. Students may not participate on this committee due to the sensitive nature of the evaluations and the difficulty of maintaining anonymity.

## The Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC)

This committee oversees the didactic and clinical curricula, and Masters Capstone Project. The committee deliberates and votes on changes to the existing curriculum, including revisions, additions, or deletions. Input for changes or curriculum review may be suggested by the Self-Assessment Committee, a course director or a faculty member, and/or from students. The EPCC may also consider sequencing the curriculum and pedagogy as well as changes in content.

**Membership:** The committee will meet once per trimester or more often as needed. Its members will include the program director, medical director, principal faculty, instructional faculty, a clinical preceptor(s) from medicine and/or surgery, practicing physician associates, and one student selected from each current class of students.

## The Self-Assessment Committee (SAC)

This committee oversees the review of all programmatic outcomes related to administration, admissions, and didactic and clinical curriculum. Outcomes that fall below programmatic benchmarks will be referred to the EPCC, or the College of Health Professions (CHP) Dean and/or CHP Administrative Council, pending the issue. The Committee meets every trimester.

**Membership:** The SAC is comprised of the program director, medical director, principal faculty, and may have instructional and clinical faculty representatives. Students will not participate on this committee due to the sensitive nature of the evaluations and the difficulty of maintaining anonymity.

## The PA Program Admissions Committee

This committee reviews all qualified applications, determines candidates to be interviewed, interviews invited candidates, and selects the members of the incoming class and alternate list.

**Membership:** The Admissions Committee may be comprised of the program director, medical director, principal and adjunct faculty, clinical faculty, faculty from the CHP, and graduates of the program (committee members may vary from year to year). Staff and students play an important role during the interview, meeting and talking with candidates, but do not have access to the applicant's files, nor will they participate in the final admission decisions. The committee meets before the admissions review cycle for orientation and again during the interview days.

## The College of Health Professions (CHP) Dean's Leadership Team

This committee is comprised of the CHP Dean, Associate Deans, and all Department Chairs. The Dean's Leadership Team (DLT) oversees the mission, goals, and administrative components of the CHP and may

need to approve certain policy changes of programs if the proposed policy is a change from current University or CHP policy or standards. The DLT meets monthly and annual retreat to address Mission, Goals, and Outcomes.

## PA Advisory Committee

This committee oversees the various components of the PA Program and provides guidance and suggestions germane to the PA profession, the PA Scope of Practice in the State of Connecticut, and in the community. Members of the committee will include the Program and Medical directors, and members of the community that may include PA educators from the community, licensed MDs and PAs from the community, and other persons who represent the community (i.e., businesspeople, healthcare leadership and/or providers, public health representatives).

## Student Committee Involvement

University and MSPAS committees afford students an opportunity to impact the direction of the University and their own educational experiences at SHU. There are faculty and administrative committees comprised of faculty and student representatives that make recommendations to the Administration regarding program, college, and community-wide matters. Students are encouraged to participate on a committee. Listed above is a brief description of each committee's role and function. If you are interested in participating on EPCC or admissions committees, please contact the PA Program Director. If a student participates in the Admissions or Curriculum committees, they are expected to maintain confidentiality about the process, procedures, and committee decisions at all times. Students will not make decisions regarding any student applicant offers for matriculation.

**For a complete list of SHU Student Committees, please refer to the SHU Student Handbook or SHU website [Student Handbook](#).**

## Sacred Heart University Policies

**Please refer to the MSPAS Student Policy and Procedure Manual, the SHU Student Policy and Procedure Manual, and the SHU Graduate Catalog regarding the following policies, resources, and expectations:**

### [SHU Academic Catalogs](#)

- Academic and Community Resources and Student Services
- Academic Standards, Policies, and Procedures
- Expenses and Student Financial Assistance
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Grade Grievance Policy
- Statement of University Policies
- Discrimination and Harassment
- Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy

## Access to Health Care

**The principal faculty, the program director, and the medical director may *NOT* participate as healthcare providers for students in the PA program (A3.09).**

## SHU Student Health Center and Wellness Program

The following procedures describe how the program provides timely access and/or referral of students to services addressing personal issues which may impact their progress in the PA program (A3.10). The University has a [Wellness Center](#) that includes student health services, a counseling center, peer educators, alcohol and other drug awareness services. The purpose of the Student Health Center is to promote the physical and emotional well-being of students through the provision of accessible and comprehensive on-campus health care and educational outreach. Sacred Heart University has partnered with Yale New Haven Health's Northeast Medical Group (NEMG) to provide student health care. Students have access to a wide range of world-class health care options, with all Bridgeport Hospital and Yale New Haven Health resources available, including telehealth for evening and weekend hours. The SHU Student Health Center is operated by Northeast Medical Group and staffed with clinicians who provide accessible, high-quality and cost-effective healthcare, serving the acute and chronic medical needs of SHU students. Comprehensive, family-focused services are offered in more than 100 specialties within a network of over 6,000 physicians.

All visits to the Student Health Center are by appointment only. It is necessary to call ahead of time at 203-371-7838. The hours of operation are Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. In case of an emergency, contact Public Safety at 203-371-7911 or dial 911. For questions regarding immunization records, call 203-371-7854.

Student Health Services include evaluation and treatment with in-person or virtual visits of acute illnesses and injuries, immunizations against measles, mumps, rubella & meningitis, tuberculosis (TB) screening, and healthcare services to include chronic care, laceration care, flu vaccines, and diagnostic testing (throat cultures, urine cultures, blood glucose). Students requesting more information should contact: [Health Services](#).

The SHU Wellness Center counseling services include group counseling, suicide prevention and intervention, and other mental health support for students. The Center provides individual and group counseling, psychiatric evaluation, and 24-hour emergency on-call services. The Center can provide referrals to local mental health specialists and on-line resources. Substance abuse assessment and counseling services are also provided. Other services include ADHD testing, AA, NA, and Al-Anon meeting sites, and Veteran support.

**In addition to the Wellness Center, graduate students have access to [UWill](#).** It is a technology platform that allows students to receive online-based therapy from licensed mental health professionals. Students receive support from a counselor of their choice in any format they like – video, phone chat, or messaging.

A local wellness center has partnered with SHU called **Revive Center for Wellness**. If students are interested in pursuing therapy, they can contact us by phone at (203) 693-4917, email [info@revivecfw.com](mailto:info@revivecfw.com), or complete this online inquiry form: [Revive Center for Wellness Form](#).

When they reach out, they should specify that they are from SHU so they can prioritize them in getting matched as soon as possible. Once their inquiry is received, the Intake Coordinator will be in touch with them to do a 15-minute phone consultation. Most major insurance plans are accepted, including Medicaid/CT Husky.

### **Crisis Texting Line**

Text CONNECT to 741741 to chat with a Crisis Counselor 24/7

[Crisis Textline Help Website](#)

## CT Statewide Young Adult Warmline

JoinRiseBe Statewide Young Adult Peer Initiative/Warmline (Advocacy Unlimited)

1-855-6-HOPENOW

12pm – 9pm; 7 days per week

In case of illness, the Program encourages students to see a health care provider as soon as possible. This can include the SHU Health Center, your primary care provider, or Urgent Care for medical advice. SHU Health Services are located at Yale New Haven Health's Park Avenue Medical Center, at 5520 Park Avenue, Suite WP1-200, Trumbull. Their phone number is 203-371-7838

## Healthcare Insurance

While actively enrolled in the SHU Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies, all PA students MUST show proof of and maintain personal health care coverage. This must be uploaded to the Exxat portal on a yearly basis and upon any change in status

## Access & Accommodations

Sacred Heart University provides equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability status. The Office of Student Accessibility (OSA) coordinates and provides reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to students who disclose a disability to the university, assisting in the provision of equal access across university programs in compliance the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), its 2008 amendment and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973).

Students requesting accommodations should contact the [Office of Student Accessibility](#).

If you need assistance to access any materials related to this course or anything else related to your learning experience or time on campus, please contact your instructor or the Office of Student Accessibility ([accessibility@sacredheart.edu](mailto:accessibility@sacredheart.edu)).

Students must be registered with the Office of Student Accessibility and submit appropriate documentation to be granted accommodation.

Sacred Heart University students who are considering disclosing a disability to the university to request accommodations, auxiliary aids or services must complete an online request via our online portal. Appropriate [documentation](#) is required. The requesting student should then meet with the OSA Director or the Assistant Director to discuss their request. At this meeting, the OSA staff member will discuss appropriate accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services for the college environment with the student. Please note appropriate accommodations are based on a student's documented functional limitations in an academic setting.

Accommodations are intended to allow for equal access to an individual with a disability, while also ensuring the integrity of the university's programs of study. Accommodations are determined individually for each student through an interactive process. As needed, the OSA collaborates with offices and individuals from across the university to assist in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in an equal manner. It is important to note that accommodation may not necessarily provide the same or similar results. Instead, an accommodation must provide the individual with a disability with equal access to the same service, program, or activity.

Students are responsible for utilizing academic support resources and for requesting and arranging accommodations in advance to implement them in their courses. Students are also expected to discuss their accommodation with their instructors. All information shared with instructors will be kept confidential.

For further information about requesting accommodations, please contact Kathy Radziunas, Director of the Office of Student Accessibility, [radziunask@sacredheart.edu](mailto:radziunask@sacredheart.edu).

Essential skills have been defined by the AAPA and PAEA within the [Competencies for the Physician Associate Profession](#). Conducting Patient Assessment and Clinical Reasoning practicums, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), and Medical Science Anatomy practicums in the standard time allotted is considered to be essential skills. Accommodations in the form of additional time will not be extended to such assessments, as it would create a fundamental alteration in the Program.

## Our Commitment to Human Dignity

The Agape Center for Human Dignity celebrates the dignity and worth of every person by leading a campus culture where encounters and welcome are at the heart of the community.

### **Mission**

The Agape Center for Human Dignity, rooted in Sacred Heart University's [mission and Catholic identity](#), is committed to fostering an environment where every student can grow, belong and thrive. With a name inspired by the Greek word that describes a divine love for all, the center works through partnerships with Unity Clubs, campus offices and community collaborators to affirm the inherent value and inviolable dignity of every individual. We empower Pioneers to live with integrity, honor, human dignity and community grounded in the unconditional love of God. In their development as future leaders, Students are guided to discover their purpose, strengthen their character and prepare to make a meaningful impact beyond Sacred Heart University.

### **Vision**

The Agape Center for Human Dignity envisions a campus culture where the dignity of every person is universally honored; belonging is strengthened, and dialogue leads to deeper understanding. Guided by the spirit of God's unconditional love, or agape, we seek to form a community where all Pioneers flourish, contribute meaningfully and embody Sacred Heart's mission in transforming the world with compassion and justice.

## Teach Out

In the unlikely event of program closure or loss of accreditation, Sacred Heart University is committed to teaching matriculated students. The University has resources in place to ensure the ability of the program to complete the PA education for each student who has formally been matriculated into the program.

## Master Of Science in Physician Associate Studies (MSPAS): Program Policies

Information in this manual represents the plans of the program/university at the time of publication. These policies apply to all students, principal faculty, and the program director, regardless of location (A3.01).

## Student Services

The following is the program's policy for *timely* access and/or referral of students to services addressing personal issues which may impact their progress in the PA program. For students seeking resources for individual or group counseling and other mental health support, the [Counseling Center](#) at Sacred Heart University is a confidential resource providing these services. The center provides counseling sessions virtually using a HIPPA-compliant platform. Services are by appointment. To make an appointment with a counselor, call us at **203-371-7955** or [Request an appointment online](#). To access a counselor after-hours, please contact Public Safety at **203-371-7995** and identify yourself as a SHU student.

### Uwill | *Online Therapy for Full-Time Graduate Students*

Uwill is a technology platform that allows students to receive online-based therapy from licensed mental health professionals. Students receive support from a counselor of their choice in any format they like – video, phone chat, or messaging.

Uwill's secure and private platform makes it easy for students to quickly get the care they need, allowing them to avoid waitlists, lengthy referral processes or insurance complexities. These counselors have an average of 12 years of direct clinical experience and utilize a solutions-oriented approach to address the specific issues students are facing. Students can immediately connect with a counselor to begin receiving support.

Uwill provides technical support 24x7; email [support@uwill.com](mailto:support@uwill.com) or call 833-99-UWILL.

The Student Care Team is comprised of representatives from across campus whose mission is to identify and address student behaviors that are concerning or disruptive to the campus community. The Student Care Team works to assist students who are at risk academically, in addition to those who are struggling to maintain adequate functioning due to behavioral, psychological, or medical concerns. When referring a student to the team, please be sure to include as much information as possible about the student, incident, and yourself. Although you may indicate that you wish to remain anonymous, please understand that the more information the team has about contacting you, the better we can assess how to help.

Filing a report: [Student Conduct & Community Standards-Filing a Report](#)

For students who request in-person counseling sessions, it may not always be feasible for students who reside in Stamford to make it to the SHU Counseling Center in Fairfield. Contact the Wellness Center for a current list of local providers.

For students in crisis, depending on the nature and timing of the emergency, the options for timely access to services are:

- **Call SHU Public Safety - Dial 203-371-7911**  
Public Safety will assess the situation, contact the counselor-on-call, and, if necessary, assist with transportation to a hospital for care and treatment.
- **Dial 911 Off Campus (including while at Tandet, Stamford, CT)**  
Dial 911 to summon local police who will assess the situation and, if necessary, arrange transportation to a hospital for care and treatment.

## Communication

The PA program holds communication with our students, our college, and our university colleagues as fundamental to our success. **Students are expected to check their e-mail each morning.** Daily updates to the class schedule will be communicated via SHU email. All emails sent to the program **MUST** be sent from the student's SHU email address. Email sent via personal email address will not be responded to. If a student fails to communicate with the program within 24 hours of being contacted, the student will be referred to PPC.

Sacred Heart University has implemented an Emergency Notification System comprised of multiple technology layers for all members of the University community. *This system requires that each student, faculty, and staff member(s) provide emergency contact information.* Click the following link to activate the [Emergency Notification System](#).

Students should be aware of the University's policy of Privacy Rights of students, which states: "No one outside the institution shall have access to nor will the institution disclose any information from any students' education records without the written consent of students." Student education records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All PA faculty and staff members maintain strict confidentiality regarding student information and progress. Under no circumstance will a faculty or staff member divulge information about an individual's progress or student status in the program to another student or family member.

In the event that a student participates in the Admissions or Curriculum committees, they are expected to maintain confidentiality about the process, procedures, and committee decisions at all times. Current students will not make Admissions decisions regarding any offers for student applicant matriculation.

## Guidelines for Social Media Use and Networking Sites

The MSPAS Program has developed guidelines to assist students in making professional decisions regarding the use of social network sites. The permanence and written nature of online postings cause postings to be subject to high levels of scrutiny. Therefore, the postings within social networking sites (this includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, GroupMe, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, or

Instagram, as well as program social media accounts) are subject to the same standards of professionalism as any other personal or professional interaction and is treated as if made in a public forum. Please remember that you are not only representing yourself, but you are also representing our University, our Program, and our PA Profession.

Students must adhere to the current Sacred Heart University Code of Student Conduct & Community Standards; the following are SHU Master of Science in PA Studies Program expectations. While not all-inclusive, it is expected that students use the highest integrity and judgment when engaging in social media of any type. **Failure to comply with these policies will result in referral to the Professional Performance Committee (PPC) and may be cause for suspension and dismissal from the program and/or University. Refer to the SHU Student Handbook for University for suspension and dismissal policies.**

1. Monitor other people's statements/photos, etc. that can be viewed under your name. If others are displaying unprofessional behavior, consider changing your restrictions to avoid those statements, etc. from being affiliated with you.
2. PowerPoint lectures, lecture capture, or other handouts may not be posted to the web or distributed in any form without written permission from the author. Distributing this information without written permission is considered an infraction of intellectual property and the Code of Conduct.
3. Inappropriate postings can be considered a form of bullying or sexual harassment.
4. Do not give medical advice, as you do not yet have a license to practice medicine.
5. Never discuss specific patient information online, even if all identifying information is excluded. It is possible that someone could recognize the patient to which you are referring based on the context.
6. Under no circumstances should photos of patients/cadavers or photos depicting the body parts of patients/cadavers be displayed online. Once you post, these postings can lead to legal or professional consequences for you.
7. To maintain healthy patient-clinician relationships and to avoid potential legal consequences, refrain from interactions with patients on social networking sites.
8. The lines between public and private, as well as personal and professional, are often blurred in online social networks. By identifying yourself as a SHU student, you may influence perceptions about SHU by those who have access to your social network profile or web blog. All content associated with you should be consistent with your position at the school, with SHU's values and professional standards.

## **Lockers**

Lockers, available free of charge, are and remain on the property of Sacred Heart University and are for university-related use only. There is to be no expectation of privacy regarding the interior of lockers or a student's property or belongings placed into the lockers, and the lockers are subject to inspection by university officials. The University is not responsible for any loss or damage that may occur to personal property in the lockers. Students must use the Physician Associate Program-issued lock and return it at the completion of the Program or when leaving it, whichever occurs first, or the student will be charged a replacement fee.

## **Professional Standards of Dress Code**

Students are expected to dress appropriately for class, including the classroom and clinical settings, and MSPAS-associated events. Dress code standards are designed to instill confidence in our patients and provide students with the degree of respect attributed to competent healthcare professionals. Because of this, the dress code standards may be higher than those in other areas on campus.

### ***Classroom setting***

Standards of dress are the same for the classroom and the clinical setting. Attire should demonstrate good judgment, not be overly casual, and not be distracting or inappropriate for the classroom setting.

Appropriate attire includes business casual attire, pressed and neat. Low top business casual sneakers are permitted. Shorts are permitted for patient assessment only. Jeans are not permitted. When in doubt if something is appropriate, it is best to contact the PA Program faculty with your questions.

Refer to the Clinical Setting below for specific examples of appropriate and inappropriate business casual attire (specifically Items 2 and 3).

### ***Workshop setting***

There are exceptions to the classroom setting attire during Patient Assessment I and II workshops, where gym attire is required for participation. Appropriate attire includes patient gowns, gym shorts, sports bras, and easily removed footwear.

Additionally, scrubs and sneakers will be allowed during Medical Science I and II (cadaver lab and pig heart dissection only) and Clinical Skills and Procedures workshop sessions.

### ***Online Lectures***

The standard of dress and professionalism for online lectures remains the same as in the classroom, and proper judgment should be exercised at all times. If there is a live synchronous course, students are expected to attend just as they would in person. Students should be engaged in the class and participate with video/camera on. Students should not be driving in cars during such lectures, as this is a safety concern. Violation of this policy will result in referral to PPC.

### ***Clinical Setting***

Standards of dress for all students shall be in effect whenever in the clinical setting, such as a clinical integration setting. Students are expected to be in full compliance at all times.

If the student's appearance or grooming is unduly distracting or inappropriate for the didactic or clinical integration experience, the individual may be sent home to change clothing. Non-compliance with the

MSPAS Professional Dress Code is a cause for the removal of students from the classroom, patient care, and referral to the Professional Performance Committee.

Appropriate attire includes business casual attire, pressed and neat. Jeans are NOT permitted. The following are some examples of both appropriate and inappropriate attire. When in doubt if something is appropriate, it is best to contact the PA Program faculty with your questions.

Students must follow the SHU PA Program attire policy, unless superseded by clinical site or hospital requirements. Scrubs are not permitted unless required by the clinical integration site.

Students must maintain proper identification using name tags and white coats with SHU logos. Students should enter in appropriate business attire and change into the required scrubs, as necessary, not in street clothing.

1. Clean, short white lab coats must be worn by the student at all times unless otherwise directed. To ensure the PA students are clearly identified in the clinical setting to distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners, the University logo and badge identifying "PA Student" status **MUST** be worn and visible at all times in the clinical setting (A3.06).
2. Blouses, shirts, skirts, pants, and dresses should not be revealing in any way. Some examples of inappropriate attire include plunging necklines, low cutbacks, halter top blouses or dresses, large openings on sleeveless tops, and sheer, see-through, or clinging material.
3. Slacks or trousers must be clean, pressed, and appropriate for a health care office. The following are inappropriate: jeans and shorts. Clothing, accessories, and overall grooming should be conservative.
4. Footwear should complement your professional attire. Closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times. Inappropriate shoes include sneakers (unless worn with scrubs), sandals, or flip-flops.
5. Jeans or denim clothing of any kind is not permitted.
6. Long hair must be tied back or worn up during patient care to prevent it from falling in your face and the face (or wounds) of your patients.
7. Fingernails should be clean and short to allow for proper hand hygiene, use of instruments and prevention of glove puncture and injury to patients. Fragrances, perfume, cologne, or after-shave should be used very sparingly, if at all. What is pleasant to you may be offensive or unhealthy to others and may even exacerbate patient symptoms (i.e., asthma, nausea, or allergies).
8. Mask fit testing for the utilization of a respirator is required to ensure both comfort and provide the wearer with expected protection during clinical experiences. Protocols regarding facial hair must be adhered to. Students who do not adhere to these requirements will be referred to the program director and the PPC.

Violations of the dress code are to be reported to the PA Program faculty and clinical preceptors. Disciplinary actions, including referral to Professional Performance Committee (PPC), removal from the classroom, patient care during clinical integration, or program dismissal may occur.

## Academic Advising

Faculty Academic Advisors are assigned to each PA student to assist students in both the didactic and clinical phases of the PA program. **Students are expected to schedule a meeting with their faculty advisor on a trimester basis, after failing an exam or practicum within three business days**, or more often as needed. The student must also reach out to the Student Success Coordinator within three business days after failing an exam or practicum. In the event a student needs help navigating personal issues that may impact their performance in the program, they are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor, Director of Didactic Education, and/or Program Director. Please refer to the section on Student Services available at SHU. Students may also make an appointment with any faculty member, program director, or medical director for guidance.

The College of Health Professions also provides additional support through a Graduate Student Academic Advisor. Brittany is available to all graduate students to provide support for both academic and personal challenges, goal setting, study skill development and more. Her contact information is below:

*Brittany Schweig*, M.A.

She/Her/Hers

Manager of Graduate and Dual Degree Student Success

[Make An Advising Appointment](#)

Center for Healthcare Education - N106

Personal Zoom Room: <https://sacredheart-edu.zoom.us/my/schweig>

Phone: 203-396-8003

## Student Records

Student records are maintained in the MSPAS program office and include documentation that that the student has met published admission criteria (A3.17a), that the student has met institution and program health screening and immunization requirements (A3.17b), student performance while enrolled (A3.17c), remediation efforts and outcomes (A3.17d), and summaries of any formal academic/behavioral disciplinary action taken against a student (A3.17e).

All records are maintained in a confidential manner either in locked cabinets and/or in password-protected electronic files, and students do not have access to these or other confidential records. These student academic record keeping requirements ensure that they are readily accessible to authorized program personnel (A3.17) and that PA students and other unauthorized persons do not have access to the academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty (A3.18). Official transcripts which document that the student has met requirements for program completion (A3.17f) are kept in the SHU Registrar's Office.

Student medical records are evaluated and maintained in the SHU Student Health Portal [SHU Student Health Portal](#) and the Exxat Approve Clinical Tracking System prior to matriculation. Students will be required to have an updated physical examination before entering the clinical phase as required by clinical rotation sites. Student health records are confidential and are NOT accessible, nor reviewed by program, principal or instructional faculty or staff except for immunization and screening results, which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student (A3.19). The Health Clearance Statement Technical Standards signed by student's clinician is also kept in the students' e-file.

No confidential information contained in student records is released to non-university or unauthorized personnel on campus except as provided in the University Policy for Release of Student Records in

compliance with the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**.

## Curriculum Overview

### Didactic Phase

The didactic phase, which is twelve months in duration, utilizes lectures, seminars, problem-based learning, case studies, skills workshops, practicums, and laboratory sessions to provide the knowledge and skill base necessary for the practice of medicine and advancement to the clinical phase of the Program. During the didactic year, most of the instructions will take place in the classroom; however, some courses will be taught online or in hybrid formats. Although most classes are taught at the Tandet Center in Stamford, classes are occasionally held on the main campus in Fairfield, and students are also expected to attend various local professional events that occur throughout the year. **Therefore, adequate means of transportation are necessary during the didactic year.** Physical Assessment I/II and Clinical Integration are courses that provide the first-year students with the opportunity to practice history-taking and physical examination skills under the direct supervision of a physician, PA-C, or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN).

The curriculum includes scientific foundations through the Medical Sciences (which includes human anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, and clinical genetics). Clinical Microbiology/Infectious Disease and Pharmacology courses. The remainder of the didactic phase courses relate to the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in the principles of medicine and professional practice.

The student's knowledge and skills during the didactic phase are assessed using multiple-choice examinations, quizzes, written projects, student presentations, practicums, and by direct observation by faculty. Many of the assessments will be via computerized software (e.g. *ExamSoft*®), which facilitates the use of questions that include photographs, EKGs, and radiographs while providing itemized exam data analysis. The practice of medicine requires a finely-honed skill set relating to eliciting a thorough history and performing patient examination; these unique skills are assessed during patient assessment practicums and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCEs). In addition, during Clinical Integration, students are assessed via preceptor evaluations. Finally, students are assessed on their professional development and professional conduct by direct observation by the PA program director, medical director, faculty, practicum preceptors, and clinical preceptors.

### Clinical Phase

The Clinical Phase of the program is divided into ten 5-week clinical rotations. One additional clinical block is designated for the Master's Capstone Project. During the clinical phase, students must complete rotations in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Mental/Behavioral Health, Women's Health, Family Medicine, Primary Care, General Surgery, Pediatrics, Orthopedics/Elective, and one elective clinical rotation. Students must have reliable means of transportation to and from clinical rotation sites. Please note that some of the sites may be outside of the state of Connecticut. Students are NOT required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors (A3.03).

During the clinical phase, students are expected to complete their Master's Capstone Project by the end of their Master's Capstone Project block. If a student is unable to complete the Master's Capstone Project in the proper time frame, they may not be permitted to proceed to the next clinical rotation. This delay will generally result in a delay in graduation and additional tuition charges. **Please refer to the Clinical Rotation Policy and Procedure Manual and Master's Capstone Handbook** for additional information regarding the clinical rotations.

## **MSPAS Immunization, Background Check and Tuberculosis Testing Policy**

- The following immunization and health screening policy is based on then-current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for health professionals and state-specific mandates (A3.07a)
- All healthcare documentation, including immunizations (including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters/additional doses), tuberculosis screening, and influenza vaccinations, must be current and renewed on an annual basis. Students are responsible for monitoring the expiration of annual requirements using the *Exxat Approve Clinical Tracking System*.
- Annual renewal is considered 1 year from the date signed by your provider or by MAY 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year, **whichever comes first**.
- All costs associated with annual renewal or testing are the responsibility of the student.
- Failure to update annual requirements by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year may affect students' progression in the program and participation in clinical activities.
- All students must satisfactorily complete a background check upon acceptance of admission (prior to the start of class) and prior to commencement of the Clinical Integration course and clinical phase. Background checks must be kept up to date for the entire duration of the clinical phase. Some rotation sites require an additional background screening as a condition for access to the site. Students are responsible for the cost associated with the background check. Refer to the policy for further information. Students should refer to the policy and state medical boards regarding the effects of criminal convictions on obtaining licensure. Students must notify the Program Director if arrested or convicted of a criminal offense while enrolled in the program.
- Students must adhere to each clinical site's immunization/vaccination policies and requirements, including background checks, which may include additional state and federal reporting. Submission of Drug Screens per clinical site policy and any additional requirements.
- International clinical rotations must document compliance with current CDC immunization requirements (A3.07b).
- If immunizations, annual influenza vaccination, and current COVID 19 Vaccination requirements (including initial series and boosters/additional doses) are not kept current, the student may not be permitted to begin or complete the rotation.

## **Vaccination Requirements: COVID-19 and other program requirements:**

Refer to our MSPAS Admissions Health Clearance forms and to the MSPAS Student Clinical Policy and Procedure Manual for immunization policy (including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters/additional doses) and requirements for clinical rotations (A3.07). COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

**At this time, SHU PA students are not required by the SHU PA program to be vaccinated against COVID-19. However, COVID-19 vaccination, including currently recommended booster doses, when**

**applicable, is highly recommended.**

Students must also provide proof of vaccination for the annual influenza vaccine, hepatitis B, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap, TB screening and varicella.

Failure to meet these external requirements may result in an inability to progress in the program.

Declining the COVID-19 vaccine may preclude the ability to complete required clinical rotations. Sacred Heart University will bear no responsibility for failure to complete certain program requirements or ultimately graduate due to a student's failure to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination status.

Many of our partner sites are currently accepting only vaccinated students. Opportunities for placement of unvaccinated students are extremely rare and limited. Failure to secure a clinical placement will impact your ability to graduate on time because students must complete the clinical phase within 24 months to graduate.

## **HIPAA**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 was enacted to provide safeguards for patient privacy in an electronically based health care system. Every clinical entity has policies and procedures for protected patient health information. Sacred Heart University Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies Program faculty, students, staff, and business associates' function with the understanding that protections of patients' personal health information are of utmost importance, especially when it could personally identify the individual. PA students will have training in the Program and be certified as HIPAA compliant and are individually responsible for familiarizing themselves with the privacy and security policies, procedures, and officers at each of their preceptorship sites. Preceptors are encouraged to provide students with site specific training at the start of each rotation that includes the contact information for the site's security and privacy officer(s). However, if the information is not provided during the on-site orientation, it is the student's responsibility to specifically ask about the site's policies regarding protected patient health information.

## **Potential Biomedical Exposures**

### ***Blood or Body Fluid Exposure Plan***

The Program has developed this policy to safeguard student health and ensure timely medical care is delivered when injury or accident occurs, which involves blood or body fluid exposure and needle sticks.

*The student must follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Guidelines for Universal Precautions at the clinical rotation site, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), care of sharp objects, and other precautionary measures (A3.08a).*

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Body fluid exposure** is defined as exposure to blood, blood products, or body fluids. This may occur by coming in contact with wound secretions, splashes to mucous membranes, and/or contaminated inanimate objects.

**Needlestick** is defined as a puncture wound through the integument. Needlestick injuries can occur by inappropriately recapping needles, administration of parenteral injections, suturing, inappropriate disposal of needles, and by direct contact by another individual.

***Exposed Student (A3.08b):***

- a. Immediately and thoroughly clean/flush exposure site.
- b. Report the injury/exposure to your Supervising Clinical Preceptor at the time of occurrence.
- c. Report to Emergency Department (ED) within two (2) hours if in a hospital, or the nearest ED if in an outpatient site for appropriate medical care, lab work, and treatment. Students may also seek care at the hospital's occupational health department as directed by your supervisor.
- d. Notify the PA Program Clinical team as soon as possible after occurrence (within 12 hours if possible, or sooner if emergent).
- e. Follow that clinical site protocol for risk management and post-exposure protocols specific to the facility.
- f. Additional advice can be obtained by calling the Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) hotline at 1-888-448-4911.
- g. Complete the MSPAS Unusual Occurrence form within 24 hours of occurrence.
- h. All fees associated with post-exposure of care are the responsibility of the student. All MSPAS students are required to have individual health insurance coverage to cover injuries and illnesses while in the program.

If urgent, do not delay treatment while attempting to reach the MSPAS Clinical Team.

The MSPAS Clinical Team will need the following information:

- Your name and contact phone number and best time to call
- Department where injury/exposure occurred
- Date and time of injury/exposure
- Body part injured/exposed

**Working with potential respiratory infectious patients:**

- a. Students should follow local clinical setting protocols to minimize their exposure.
- b. Always use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and practice Standard Precautions.
- c. For potential Tuberculosis exposure refer to the CDC guidelines for testing

[Tuberculosis Exposure CDC](#) Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic: CDC guidelines: [Infection Control in Healthcare Personnel](#)

- d. Required Action of Supervising Clinical Preceptor
- Responsible for instructing exposed person to report to the Emergency Department or Occupational Health Services.
  - If non-urgent, instruct the student to contact MSPAS Clinical Team within 12-hours of exposure/injury to provide the legally required information.
  - Contact the source patient's provider and notify of the blood or body fluid exposure.
  - Provide the treating provider with the source of patient's HIV draw consent form.
  - Student blood tests: Hepatitis B Surface Antibody titer, Hepatitis C titer and HIV Antibodies. Source: same as above.
  - Once the completed and signed HIV consent form has been obtained from the patient, ensure that the HIV consent form is placed in the source of the patient's medical record.
  - Confirm that labs have been ordered, drawn, and sent to the clinical lab.
  - Remind exposed students to notify their institution/program for the direction on follow up care and/or student accident insurance coverage.

### ***Follow-Up Evaluation to Exposure***

**The student is responsible** for scheduling any follow up as directed by the clinician seen at time of exposure and following current CDC recommendations.

Fees and cost accrued during the care of an exposure are the responsibility of the student and/or their health insurance. The student's health insurance should be billed, not workers' compensation or employee health. Follow-up testing/treatment can be done by the student's provider office and is the sole responsibility of the student and/or their health insurance.

### ***Reporting Unusual Occurrences***

#### ***Definition***

An *Unusual Occurrence* is any unplanned or unexpected incident or occurrence which may cause minor to severe injuries as a result of negligence, accident, or inadequate safety precautions to a student, patient, or visitor.

#### ***Guidelines For Reporting Unusual Occurrences***

- a. Reporting unusual occurrences is important for several reasons:
1. Monitoring "incidents" helps prevent the reoccurrence of the same incident.
  2. Prompt reports help us expedite arrangements for needed patient care or treatment, if necessary.

3. Prompt reporting allows MSPAS Clinical Team to assess situations from a liability standpoint promptly.
  - b. The student should notify the supervising clinical preceptor and the MSPAS Program Clinical Team **immediately** at the time of occurrence.
  - c. The student should follow hospital/clinic procedures regarding reporting Unusual Occurrences.

### ***Unusual Occurrence Reporting Protocols***

All patient-related incidences, including patient neglect, potential malpractice issues, falls, unfavorable encounters with the patient, patient family members, staff or physicians, medication errors, or injury or death to the patient must be reported to the MSPAS Program Clinical Team immediately. The student **must** adhere to the following protocol:

- Notify the supervising clinical preceptor **and** the PA Program Clinical Team, Director of Clinical Education (DOCE) immediately at the time of occurrence before discussing the situation with others.
- Details of an incident are confidential; therefore, do not discuss details of the incident with anyone except your clinical preceptor, the MSPAS Clinical Team, or Dean of the College of Health Professions. Do not speak with hospital or clinic administrators or attorneys until advised doing so by the College of Health Professions Administration Dean or SHU administrators.
- **Complete the Unusual Occurrence Report and send it to the Director of Clinical Education within 24 hours of the occurrence. (Refer to Appendix for this form)**
- Report unusual occurrences whether you are directly or indirectly involved.

***The student is encouraged to report anything that makes the student feel uncomfortable with any aspect of a patient's care.***

## **Scholastic Requirements and Academic Standards**

### **Technical Standards**

A Physician Associate (PA) must have the knowledge and skill to practice in a variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of care based on the patient's needs. In addition to academic achievements, exam results, and recommendations, Physician Associate students must possess the physical, emotional, and behavioral capabilities requisite for the practice of medicine as a PA. In order to successfully complete the PA clinical training program, students must demonstrate proficiency in academic and clinical activities with regard to the competencies described below.

### ***Observation***

Candidates and PA students must have sufficient sensory capacity to observe in the classroom, the laboratory, the outpatient setting, and at the patient's bedside. Sensory skills adequate to perform a physical examination are required including functional vision, hearing, smell, and tactile sensation. All these senses must be adequate to observe a patient's condition and to accurately elicit information through procedures regularly required in a physical examination, such as inspection, auscultation, percussion, and palpation.

## ***Communication***

Candidates and PA students must be able to:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and others in both academic and healthcare settings.
- Speak clearly.
- Communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written English with faculty and staff, patients, and all members of the health care team. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing skills.
- Demonstrate reading skills at a level sufficient to accomplish curricular requirements, provide clinical care for patients, and complete appropriate medical records, documents, and plans according to protocol in a thorough and timely manner.
- Perceive and describe changes in mood, posture, activity, and interpret non-verbal communication signs.

## ***Motor Coordination and Function***

Candidates and PA students are required to possess motor skills sufficient to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other basic diagnostic procedures; and execute motor movements reasonably required to provide basic medical care and emergency care to patients, including but not limited to:

- cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- administration of intravenous medication
- application of pressure to stop hemorrhage
- opening of obstructed airways
- suturing of simple wounds
- performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers
- negotiate patient care environments and must be able to move between settings, such as clinic, classroom, laboratory, and hospital
- maintain sufficient physical stamina to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study. Long periods of sitting, standing, or moving are required in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings.

## ***Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities***

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded by physician associates, requires these intellectual abilities. Candidates and PA students must be able to:

- measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize. Problem solving, one of the critical skills demanded by physician associates, requires all these intellectual abilities.
- interpret dimensional relationships, and understand the spatial relationships of anatomical structures
- search, read, and interpret medical literature

The ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and medical literature in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. To complete the Physician Associate Program, candidates and PA students must be able to demonstrate proficiency of these skills and the ability to use them together in a timely fashion in medical problem-solving and patient care.

## ***Behavioral and Social Attributes***

Compassion, integrity, ethical standards, concern for others, interpersonal skills, and motivation are all personal qualities important to providing compassionate and quality patient care.

Candidates and PA students must:

- possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the completion of all academic and patient care responsibilities
- develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients, faculty and other members of the health care team
- function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice and adapt to changing environments
- possess flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills, and concern for others.

These technical standards are intended to ensure that each candidate has the academic and physical ability to acquire competencies, as defined by the National Commission on Accreditation of Physician Associates (NCCPA), the Accreditation Review Commission for Education of the Physician Associate (ARC-PA), the PA Education Association (PAEA), and the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA). The technical standards are consistent with the technical standards set forth by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

## ***Reasonable Accommodations***

Candidates and Students must demonstrate the above-referenced competencies with or without reasonable accommodation. Individuals with disabilities (as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act) may be qualified for the Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies (MSPAS) program with the use of reasonable accommodations. The University does not have an obligation to waive courses or other academic requirements that can be demonstrated by the faculty to be essential to its program, instruction, or to particular degrees.

Conducting patient assessment practicums, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), and medical science anatomy practicums during the standard time allotted is considered by the program faculty to be an essential skill. Accommodations in the form of additional time will not be offered to such assessments.

Please see the Accommodation section for more information.

## ***The Use of Auxiliary Aids and Intermediaries***

Qualified students with documented disabilities who are provided with reasonable accommodations may use an intermediary or an auxiliary aid. Such reasonable accommodations should be designed to help the student meet learning outcomes without eliminating essential program elements or fundamentally altering the MSPAS curriculum. No disability can be reasonably accommodated with an intermediary that provides cognitive support or substitutes for essential clinical skills or supplements for clinical and ethical judgment. Thus, accommodations cannot eliminate essential program elements or fundamentally alter the MSPAS curriculum.

# Student Evaluation

## Assessments

Assessments include practicums and examinations and other methods of evaluation and are outlined in each course of syllabus. Please refer to the course syllabus for specific information. Examinations will be completed in a proctored environment. Many of the examinations will be via computerized software (e.g. *ExamSoft*® and Blackboard). The MSPAS will also record student-patient practicums and OSCEs (e.g. ZOOM or CAE® Learning Space for computerized software).

## Testing Procedure for Online Assessments:

### Exam Download Instructions

1. **Download the exam as soon as possible.**
2. If you encounter issues:
  - **Log out** of Exemplify and **sign back in**.
  - If that doesn't work, **restart your computer**.
  - Still not working? Go to **Settings > Clear Registry**, then log out and sign back in.
  - If the issue persists, **uninstall and reinstall Exemplify**.
3. If none of the above resolves the issue, contact:
  - **Kiera Cutrik**: cutrik@sacredheart.edu
  - **Academic Technology**: academictechnology@sacredheart.edu

### Exam Day Procedures

#### Arrival

- Arrive **at least 10 minutes before** the scheduled start time.
- Be ready with your computer to open the exam login screen.

#### Permitted Items

Bring only the following:

- Computer
- Whiteboard, dry erase markers, and eraser **or** pen/pencil
- Water bottle
- Earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones (must be disconnected from Bluetooth and phone must be in airplane mode)

**Note:** Scrap paper will be provided and collected by the proctor.

#### Prohibited Items

- **No phones or smartwatches** (must be turned off and stored away)
- **No personal items** (empty all pockets)
- Store all bags and materials in your locker or along the wall of the assigned room.

#### During the Exam

- Begin the exam **immediately** after receiving the password.
- **Do not write** on your whiteboard or scrap paper until the exam has started.
- **No talking or communication** is allowed during the exam.
- If there is suspicion of unauthorized items, you may be asked to empty your pockets and leave the exam room. Academic integrity violations will be reported.

#### Finishing the Exam

- Erase your whiteboard completely and show it to the proctor.

- Write your name on the scrap paper and return it with the **green submission confirmation screen**.
- Exit the room **quietly** and **do not re-enter**.
- Remain quiet in the hallways near testing rooms (Classroom 219, 221, Anatomy Lab) out of respect for others still testing.
- ***Do not re-enter the classroom once you leave the exam.***

## Academic Standards

To successfully complete and graduate from the MSPAS Program, students must complete and pass each course, clinical rotation, Master's Capstone Project, and Summative Evaluations. Students register for coursework and must complete and pass all coursework *in sequence* during the didactic year to maintain satisfactory progress. To progress in the program, students must meet the minimum requirements to pass each course, as stated in each course's syllabus.

To progress to the clinical phase, students must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the didactic year. If their cumulative GPA is below 3.0, they will be dismissed from the program. See Academic Progress and Advancement for details and additional criteria for progression.

The PA program monitors student performance and progress on an ongoing basis during both the didactic and clinical phases of the PA program. Although students will be evaluated using various methods, multiple-choice exams are a common evaluation tool used in the didactic year. See also Graduate Tasks of the MSPAS program referenced in **Appendix B** of this MSPAS Student Policy and Procedure Manual.

During the clinical phase, the preceptors evaluate the students on their knowledge and clinical reasoning, clinical skills and patient care, and professionalism and interpersonal skills. The end-of-rotation examinations evaluate the student's knowledge base as well. Additionally, the faculty site visitor evaluates the student's clinical knowledge, patient care skills, professional behavior, and interpersonal skills by direct observation. An evaluation of the student's ability to read, comprehend and utilize medical literature will be assessed during several of the clerkships as well as with the successful completion of the Master's Capstone Project. Standardized patients at the end of the second year are employed as part of the summative student evaluations of clinical knowledge, patient care skills, professional behavior, and interpersonal skills. Finally, each student must successfully pass the final clinical site to visit student assessment completed by the program director or program faculty.

**Grading and Evaluation** for academic standards of students is listed in each course syllabus. ***Refer to each course syllabus for the grading of that course.***

## Physician Associate Program Grading and Evaluation System

The following is the grading system for most courses in the didactic year of the MSPAS program, as is minimally required by SHU graduate students:

### Grading and Evaluation\*

The final letter grade is assigned as follows in accordance with the SHU MSPAS graduate grading policy. The following is the grading system for all courses in the MSPAS program, as is minimally required by SHU graduate students:

Grade	GPA/ Quality Points	Grade Range
A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	83-86
B-	2.67	80-82
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	75-76 (75% minimum for successful completion of course*)
F	0	74 or less (74% or less is a failing score for graduate credit*)

**\*Student must earn 75% or greater as the final course grade to pass all courses with the exception of PA 510 and PA 511 Patient Assessment and Clinical Reasoning I and II which requires 80% or greater.**

## Grade Grievance Policy

### *MSPAS Policy:*

Students may request a review of any perceived final course grade discrepancy to the Course Director, Director of Didactic Education, and Program Director in writing *via email* within 5 business days of grade posting to the Registrar and Student Planning and Advising (SPA).

**SHU Graduate Grievance Policy** [Student Grade Grievance-Policy and Procedure](#)

## Academic Progress and Advancement

The criteria for progression from one trimester to the next are listed below. Student progress is monitored by faculty advisors and the Professional Performance Committee. Please also refer to the [Academic Statuses](#) section. Students who do not meet these criteria will be referred to PPC and may be subject to dismissal.

### Satisfactory progression during the didactic year

- Successful completion with passing grades in all courses **as sequenced**.
- A final grade of 75% or greater in each course except for 80% or greater in the PA 510 and 511 Patient Assessment and Clinical Reasoning I and II courses
- Successful remediation of any failed assessment (see Academic Standards, Policies, and Procedures)
- Earning the minimum required trimester GPA for progression based on academic standing:

- Students in good academic standing must earn a minimum trimester GPA of 2.75
- Students who earn a trimester GPA of  $\geq 2.75$  but  $< 3.0$  will be placed on Academic Probation in the subsequent trimester
- Students on Academic Probation must earn a minimum trimester GPA of 3.0
- Students must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 by the end of the Didactic Year
- Completion of clinical integration clinical hours
- Adherence to the *AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession* (see Appendix A), the SHU graduate student policies, and MSPAS Professional Code of Conduct
- Completion of training in HIPAA and Blood borne pathogens (Standard Precautions)
- Compliance with MSPAS immunization policy (including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters/additional doses), Tuberculous Screening, Technical Standards, background checks, and health insurance requirements
- Mandatory attendance in all classes and class activities
- Satisfactory performance of clinical skills (refer to Clinical Skills & Procedures Syllabus)
- Completion of assigned community service hours (minimum 25 hours). Students will not start clinical rotations if they have not completed 25 hours by the end of the didactic year.

## Satisfactory progression during the clinical phase

- A final grade of 75% or greater on each clinical rotation course.
- A grade of 75% or greater on each mandatory ExamSoft end-of-rotation examination (EOR) and/or PASS score on PAEA EOR examinations.
- Earning the minimum required trimester GPA for progression based on academic standing
  - Students in good academic standing must earn a minimum trimester GPA of 2.75
  - Students who earn a trimester GPA of  $\geq 2.75$  but  $< 3.0$  will be placed on Academic Probation in the subsequent trimester
  - Students on Academic Probation must earn a minimum trimester GPA of 3.0
  - Students must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 by the end of Clinical Year
- Adherence to the *AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession* (**see Appendix A**) and the MSPAS Professional Behavior document (**see Appendix C**)
- Attendance at all clinical rotations and clinical phase course activities
- Complete all required clinical site requirements in every rotation (many vary by rotation to include assignments), to include all absence of make-up time.
- Compliance with HIPAA and MSPAS immunization policy (including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters/additional doses), Tuberculous Screening, Technical Standards, background checks, and health insurance requirements

Please also refer to the **MSPAS Student Clinical Policy and Procedure Manual (which will be reviewed with the cohort during Transition Week before clinical rotations start)**

*Satisfactory completion of the SHU Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies program requires the successful completion of the clinical phase of the program, Master's Capstone Project, and summative evaluations, as outlined below.*

## Graduation Requirements

In addition to the Academic Requirements, Progress, and Advancement as listed above, students are eligible for graduation when they have completed the following:

1. Successful completion and passing grades of all sequential didactic year in its entirety.
2. Successful completion and passing grades for all clinical rotations, both required and elective rotations, and successful completion of all clinical phase educational requirements.
3. Successful completion and passing grade of Master's Capstone Project
4. Passing scores in each of the three Summative Evaluations:
  - Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)
  - Final Clinical Site visit (Student Assessment by PA faculty)
  - Final Comprehensive Written Exam

# Academic Standards, Policies, and Procedures

## Didactic Year

Each course in the **didactic year** must be successfully completed as scheduled in sequence to continue in the program. **There is no course remediation or deceleration in the didactic year.** Refer to the Re-Matriculation section.

**Faculty Tutoring: Faculty are not expected to provide any additional out-of-classroom instruction. Tutoring is available via the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).**

## Egregious Failure Policy

Any assessment failure that is  $\geq 3$  standard deviations below the mean class score is considered an egregious failure and will result in immediate referral to the Professional Performance Committee (PPC). Assessments include examinations, practicum, and OSCEs.

## Missed Assessment Policy

Students who miss an assessment (Quiz, Practicum, or Exam) and have an excused absence from the Program Director or designee, will be required to make up the assessment, **without a grade penalty**, upon the first day of return to in-person instruction (Monday through Friday). If an additional assessment is already planned for the day of return, students will take the exam as scheduled (refer to Calendar Wiz) and the student will have the missed assessment scheduled for the same day. Makeup assessments may be scheduled prior to the start of classes, at the end of the day, or during the day as class schedule permits. If an assessment is missed and the absence is unexcused, the student will receive a zero. Assignments are not subject to this policy; refer to course syllabi for deductions for late submissions.

## Attendance Policy- Illness

The MSPAS program, faculty, and staff cannot provide students with medical advice. The MSPAS Program expects all students to exercise good judgment and collegiality and maintain integrity and professionalism with fellow students, staff, and faculty. If you are ill, please notify the program director or the designee via email. If you test positive for COVID-19, please follow the current CDC guidelines. Please refer to the CDC website for up-to-date recommendations.

If you are going to miss an assessment, an assignment, or a required activity contact Dr. Jaglal, Chair and Program Director via email, the faculty member who is the Course Coordinator for the course (listed in the course syllabi), and the Director of Didactic Education, who monitors Attendance for the Program.

## Course Survey Policy

The PA program faculty are committed to course, curricular, and Program assessment and

improvement. Students are expected to promptly submit all course surveys as student feedback is very important to these processes and a required component of our ongoing accreditation. Students are to complete Principles of Medicine modular surveys in addition to SHU course surveys (via the CoursEval link on the [My SHU](#) homepage under Academics > Course Evaluations). POM module surveys within Exxat are to be completed in advance of the module exam; SHU surveys are to be completed in advance of the final exam (when applicable). If the survey is not completed by the entire cohort, the exam start time will be delayed and individuals who do not complete the survey before exam start (identified on POM surveys in Exxat) will also have a deduction of Professionalism points in the course and will be referred to PPC. If the course evaluation is not completed the week before finals for the PA program, final exam scores and course grades will be withheld until completion by the entire cohort.

## Remediation during the Didactic Year

Remediation is defined by the ARC-PA (Standards for Accreditation, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. as the program-defined and applied process for addressing deficiencies in a student's knowledge and skills, such that the correction of these deficiencies is measurable and can be documented. At Sacred Heart University Physician Associate Program, remediation of knowledge and clinical skills is performed during the didactic year for students who fail an assessment (defined as an examination or practicum). The Student Success Coordinator oversees this process in collaboration with the Professionalism & Performance Committee (PPC). **Please refer to the MSPAS Student Clinical Policy and Procedure Manual for the remediation policy in the clinical phase of the Program.**

## Assessment Remediation

### Examination Remediation

In order to comply with the ARC-PA requirements of addressing deficiencies in a student's knowledge and skills such that the correction of these deficiencies is measurable and can be documented.

Remediation is mandatory. Remediation processes vary by course and are at the discretion of the course coordinator. See individual course syllabi for each course's remediation process. Successful remediation is required to progress in the program. Failure to complete remediation within the specified timeline will result in referral to the PPC and may result in dismissal due to deficiencies in required student knowledge.

All multiple-choice exam-based courses have a standardized remediation process. These courses include Principles of Medicine I/II/III, Pharmacology I/II/III, Infectious Disease, Medical Science I/II, and Diagnostic Medicine I/II Exams.

Following each exam, course faculty complete a question item analysis. Adjustments are made as deemed necessary (e.g., omission of a question or re-keying of a question, etc.). Once the faculty review is complete, the student's grades are released, and an individualized Strengths and Opportunity Report (SOR) is provided via Exemplify outlining topic areas in which the student needs to review.

To maintain exam integrity, students are not permitted to review specific examination questions. Students are not permitted to challenge examination content or scores.

If a student scores below 79.5% on a multiple-choice exam, the student must complete remediation as

outlined below in order to progress in the program. All multiple-choice exam-based courses have a standardized remediation process. These courses include Principles of Medicine I/II/III, Pharmacology I/II/III, Infectious Disease, Medical Science I/II and Diagnostic Medicine I/II Exams.

1. Once exam grades have been posted, the student must reach out to their advisor and the course coordinator (course coordinator can be found in each course syllabus) within 2 business days to set up a meeting; failure to do so will result in referral to the Program Director.
2. Once the Strengths and Opportunity Report (SOR) is released the student will have one week to complete a Mastery of Learning (MOL) assignment.
3. The MOL is a self-directed study guide based on the areas of opportunity identified by the SOR.
4. Students are expected to cross-reference the areas of opportunity on the SOR with the course instructional objectives and learning outcomes from the course syllabus to ensure they've reviewed and documented an understanding of the material.
  - a. There is no required length or format to the MOL; however, it must be sufficient in breadth and depth to document an understanding of the identified deficiencies.
  - b. The MOL must be submitted to Blackboard.
  - c. The course coordinator or designated faculty member will review the MOL to ensure that the student has addressed areas for improvement specific to their SOR and to the learning outcomes.
  - d. Course faculty will hold an in-person Post Exam Review covering high yield exam learning objectives that will be held after MOLs are submitted. The Post Exam Review is open to all students but is required for all students who score <79.5% on the exam.
5. Students who failed the exam (<74.5%) are additionally required to complete a re-test at the end of the in-person session. The Course Coordinator or designated faculty will develop the retest to assess knowledge deficits related to the examination's required learning outcomes. Remediation In person remediation sessions and the re-test will be posted on Calendar Wiz. The Course Coordinator will schedule the in-person review and retest within one week of the accepted MOL submission.
  - a. Students must pass the retest with a score of  $\geq 75\%$ . The original failed assessment score remains. Remediation re-test scores do not count towards the course grade nor the student's GPA.
  - b. Due to the robust course schedule, the Post Exam Review and re-test may occur during a portion of the typical lunch hour, or at the end of the day following classes. Please plan accordingly (e.g., packed lunch).
  - c. In the instance where the remediation timeline dictates that the retest would occur during a scheduled program break, or the schedule does not allow it, the date may be changed at the discretion of the Course Coordinator.

## **Practicum Remediation**

After a Patient Assessment Practicum, OSCE, or Medical Science practicum is completed, the course of faculty reviews the outcomes and makes adjustments if deemed necessary. Once the faculty review is complete, student grades are released.

Students are not permitted to review their assessments, examinations, or scoring rubrics to include Medical Science and Patient Assessment practicums/OSCEs.

Questions, point deductions, and rubric grading are not up for discussion, additional interpretation, or change of answers after faculty release practicum scores and/or videos.

In the event of a Medical Science course of practicum failure, faculty feedback and remediation requirements will be provided during a remediation meeting with course faculty. In the event of a Patient Assessment and Critical Reasoning practicum failure, students are provided feedback via video recording of their practicum as well as a remediation meeting with course faculty.

If a student fails to earn a passing score on a practicum (e.g., a score <80% in a Patient Assessment I/II Practicum or <75% in Medical Science I/II practicum or Patient Assessment OSCE), they must contact the course coordinator to complete the following remediation process:

1. A review of the deficient skills and deficits related to the required learning outcomes. This may result in repeating the practicum at the discretion of the course of faculty.
2. A retest or a remediation assignment (course dependent) will be communicated via email by the course coordinator.
  - a. Due to the robust course schedule, this re-test may occur during a portion of the typical lunch hour. Please plan accordingly (e.g., packed lunch).
  - b. If the retest occurs during a scheduled program break or the schedule does not allow it, the date may be changed at the discretion of the Course Coordinator or Program Director. The Remediation must be completed within 2 weeks from the posting of the assessment grade.
  - c. The original failed assessment score remains.

## ***Failure of Re-Test Assessment***

If a student fails a re-test, they will receive a Success Through Advanced Remediation (STAR) Letter. Refer to MSPAS Success Through Advanced Remediation (STAR) section in the Academic Status section of this Manual.

Failure of the re-test assessment will result in an in-person remediation session. This session will cover high-yield teaching points, and an additional assessment coordinated by the Student Success Coordinator will be administered at the end of the remediation session. Successful remediation is a passing score of 75% on this assessment. Failure of the second re-test remediation assessment will result in referral to PPC and the student may be subject to dismissal.

## ***Mandatory Remediation Completion***

All students who fail a didactic year examination, practicum, or OSCE must complete the mandatory

remediation process as outlined above to progress in the program, in addition to meeting with their advisor and Student Success Coordinator. Refer to the Communication section and Advising sections. Documentation of examination remediation includes the student MOL assignment and the corresponding retest or practicum scores which will be retained in the student file. Students who do not satisfactorily complete remediation (e.g., non-compliance with timeline, incomplete MOL, or failure of remediation assessment) will be referred to PPC and may be subject to dismissal.

## **Academic Statuses**

**The following Academic Statuses will be applied by the PPC pursuant to any assessment failures:**

### ***MSPAS Early Advisory Notice (EAN)***

This is a status assigned to a student after their *second* examination and/or practicum (including OSCEs) failure and serves as an early warning to the student. The course instructor will notify the student's advisor of the failed exam. A written letter is provided to the student by the faculty advisor. In addition to the EAN, the student may be referred to the SHU Student Success Center for further support by their advisor, course director or coordinator, Student Success Coordinator, Director of Didactic Education, or Program Director and Chair.

## ***Additional Failures After EAN***

If, pursuant to the Early Advisory Notice, a student continues to fail additional assessments (quizzes are not counted toward assessment failures), the advisor may refer the student to the PPC so they may appraise the student's progression in the program. Refer to the **Criteria for Academic Dismissal from the Didactic Phase**.

## ***MSPAS Success Through Advanced Remediation (STAR)***

This is a status assigned to a student after their *second attempt on an* examination and/or practicum (including OSCEs) failure (failed re-test). This serves as an early warning to the students. The Course Coordinator will notify the student's advisor of the failed re-test. A written letter is provided to the student by the faculty advisor. In addition to the (STAR), the student may be referred to the SHU Student Success Center for further support by their advisor, course director or coordinator, Student Success Coordinator, Director of Didactic Education, or Program Director and Chair and/or referred to PPC.

## ***Academic Probation and Progression***

Students are in good academic standing unless they are placed on academic probation due to an end-of-trimester GPA  $\geq 2.75$  and  $< 3.0$ . If a student is on academic probation, the student must earn a minimum trimester GPA of 3.0, or they will be dismissed from the program.

A student on academic probation must also earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of the didactic year; if the student does not earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of the didactic year, the student will be dismissed.

A letter with a change in status is written by the PPC after the PPC meets with the student to review their academic progress. A student on Academic Probation will meet with their advisor and the student success coordinator throughout the trimester of probation.

Students who are placed on Academic Probation will have a status change letter sent from the PPC to the Dean of the College of Health Professions. Students placed on Academic Probation are considered to be on probation through the subsequent trimester. At the end of the subsequent trimester, the student's academic record will be reviewed by the PPC. The student will return to good academic standing if they earn a cumulative GPA of  $\geq 3.0$ . If the student does not earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0, the student will be placed on a second Academic Probation as long as they have earned a minimum trimester GPA of 3.0 while on Academic Probation. If they do not earn a minimum trimester GPA of 3.0 while on Academic Probation, they will be dismissed from the program. If the student's cumulative GPA is  $< 3.0$  at the end of the third trimester of the didactic year, they will be dismissed from the program.

A student on probation may not serve as class representative (including president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, outreach chair, or GSAC), be a member of the Medical Challenge Bowl team, or apply to participate in an international clinical rotation during the probationary trimester.

If the student fails a didactic course, then they will be dismissed from the Program and the University.

## ***Criteria for Academic Dismissal from the Didactic Phase***

A student will be recommended for dismissal from the PA program and the University if any of the following occur (this list is not all-inclusive):

- Earning < 75% in any course.
- Earning < 80% in the Patient Assessment and Clinical Reasoning I and II courses
- Earning a trimester GPA of < 2.75 for students in good academic standing
- Earning a trimester GPA of < 3.0 for students on academic probation
- Earning a cumulative GPA of < 3.0 at the end of the didactic year (late spring trimester)
- Failure to successfully fulfill the remediation requirements for an assessment of failure.

If any of the above criteria for academic dismissal from the didactic phase are met, the MSPAS Professional Performance Committee will recommend dismissal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions.

Refer to the Student Clinical Education Policy and Procedure Manual Dismissal from the Clinical Phase.

## ***Sacred Heart University Dismissal/Academic Appeals***

A student is subject to dismissal from the PA program and/or the University should any of the following occur:

When the student's action and/or conduct reflects discredit on the institution or the profession.

1. If, while on academic or professional probation, the student violates the SHU Student Code of Conduct, the "AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession", and/or MSPAS Professionalism document or manifests behavior that does not meet the MSPAS Program or University's Standards of Conduct.
2. Failure to correct the matter(s) that initially caused the student to be placed on professionalism and/or conduct probation/suspension.

A student whose matriculation has been terminated has the right to petition the Dean of the College. Such a petition should carefully delineate any information or extenuating circumstances that are currently unknown to the Professional Performance Committee which may influence a decision. The petition must include a plan for remediating deficiencies and for avoiding further academic or behavioral problems in the future. If the Dean of the College does not receive a petition **by the deadline specified in the letter of termination**, it will be assumed that the student has waived their right to such reconsideration. If a petition is received as per protocol and in a timely manner, the Dean of the College will then forward a student's appeal to the CHP Academic Review Board for review and a recommendation.

Dismissed students have the option to appeal if they believe their academic deficiencies are due to extenuating circumstances or computational errors in calculating their GPA or academic progress. The appeal should include some reflection on the cause of poor performance, documentation of any extenuating circumstances, and a plan of action for improving performance if the student is admitted back into the University.

*The appeal and all supporting documentation of the appeal must be presented **within seven (7) business days after receipt of the formal dismissal letter via email, or by the deadline specified in the formal dismissal letter, whichever comes first.** The student will also receive a delivery confirmed via tracking or certified mail of the dismissal letter. **Appeals letters are to be sent via email to***

***the PA Program Director, and the Dean of the College of Health Professions (CHP@sacredheart.edu).***

The College of Health Professions Academic Review Board will make a recommendation to the Dean. The Dean will then make a final decision on the appeal.

**Please also refer to the SHU Graduate Catalog for the protocol on appealing grades and the grievance and appeals policies. Note, however, that the program Dismissal and Appeals processes supersede the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) language and process.**

## Upholding of an Appeal

If an appeal is upheld (appeal granted, dismissal overturned) by the Dean of the College of Health Professions and the student is permitted to rematriculate as per MSPAS Program Policy, such matriculation must occur within the next 2 matriculating cohorts (annually in August in the Fall trimester), as determined by the program and cannot exceed 24 months from the date of dismissal. **Any completed courses must be retaken to ensure the student is proficient and current in course content, which will incur additional tuition and costs to complete the program (no auditing of courses is allowed).**

## Professionalism

SHU, the College of Health Professions, and the Master of Science in PA Studies Program take the professional conduct of all its members seriously, including administrators, faculty, preceptors, staff, and students. Students in the MSPAS program must demonstrate they are capable of becoming safe and effective Physician Associates. They must display good judgment, a sense of responsibility and morality, sensitivity and compassion for individual needs, and the ability to synthesize and apply knowledge.

Professional behavior is expected at all times during the PA program and is a major component of becoming an excellent Physician Associate. Professionalism in Physician Associate Education encompasses; attendance, preparation and effort, participation, attitude, accountability and respect. Student conduct and discipline policy is outlined in the Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies Student Policy and Procedure Manual. ***It is each student's responsibility to be in compliance with these policies.***

Professionalism implies that a student serves the interests of patients above self-interest. Professionalism includes honesty, respect for colleagues, faculty, staff, and peers, and behavior in public that is not disgracing to the ideal of the Physician Associate. Continual self-reflection about one's attitudes and behaviors must occur as one strives to become a better Physician Associate. Professionalism is an important part of the PA profession and in caring for patients and thus will be an important part of all courses. Please also refer to the course syllabi for more information, to the Code of Conduct in this Handbook, the Communication section of this Manual, and to the Professionalism document (*Appendix C*).

## Professional Conduct and Ethics

Physician Associate students are expected to behave with professionalism in all phases of the PA education. The Program has adopted the American Academy of Physician Associates' ***Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of the Physician Associate Profession*** as its standard for ethical behavior during tenure as a student. Students in the program must also meet the standards of clinical rotation sites and the program's professional requirements. A copy of the American Academy of Physician Associates' *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of the Physician Associate Profession* is provided in Appendix 1 of this Manual. Each student is responsible for reading the document in full and practicing the standards established in the document. Students must also be in compliance with the **MSPAS Code of Conduct**, as outlined in the Student Manual provided at the start of the Didactic year, and in the SHU Graduate Student Catalog.

Refer to Appendix C for further examples of unprofessionalism.

**Lack of professional conduct will result in referral to the Professional Performance Committee (PPC).**

## Student Code of Conduct

### Class Conduct

Expectations of behavior in a group setting. Eating in class is a source of distraction to both instructors and classmates and is not permitted in the classroom. Drinking beverages in a covered container is permitted. Arriving late to class can be distracting to the class. Please be courteous and arrive on time. If late, please enter quietly. Professional courtesy to lecturers is always expected.

Students may not record any classroom activities without written permission from the instructor. Cell phone use, including text messaging during educational activities, is not permitted. Please turn cell phones off. Messaging via computer messaging apps during class time is not permitted.

Student misconduct includes (but is not limited to) the following: text messaging, instant messaging and/or emailing during class, talking during class, playing computer games or utilizing the internet for non-class-related activities, or use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok or GroupMe during the lecture. Please avoid these activities during the lecture or during any course activities. Students will receive a verbal or written warning and may be referred to the Professional Performance Committee (PPC) for unprofessional behavior and conduct infractions (see detailed professionalism rubric).

Smoking is prohibited indoors in all Sacred Heart University-owned or leased facilities and outdoors. The use of cigarettes, tobacco products, electronic nicotine delivery systems, and vapor products are prohibited indoors in all Sacred Heart University-owned or leased facilities and outdoors on the grounds of any University-owned or leased property. Stamford Hospital is a smoke-free campus.

**Students are to arrive at least 5 minutes before class starts.**

**Students are to arrive 10 minutes before any assessment, including exams and quizzes. Students are to arrive at the posted scheduled time for practicums and OSCEs.**

## **Student Conduct**

Academic and professional misconduct includes misconduct by which a student misrepresents his or her academic or professional accomplishments or impedes other students' chances of being judged fairly for their academic or professional work. A student who knowingly allows others to represent his or her work as their own commits as serious an offense as one who submits another's work as his or her own.

Academic and professional misconduct also includes misconduct by which a student behaves wrongfully towards patients or interferes with the clinical or professional work of others. Students shall be subject to disciplinary action under this Code for academic and professional misconduct, whether occurring in connection with the College, MSPAS program, or with any of its affiliated institutions, facilities, or practice offices. Please also refer to the SHU Graduate Catalog, and the MSPAS Student Clinical Policy and Procedure Manual, for policies regarding Student Conduct.

**Academic or academic-related student misconduct is cause for referral to PPC and may result in dismissal from the Program and/or University.** Student misconduct includes (but is not limited to) the following, when committed knowingly, intentionally or with reckless disregard for others and proved by a preponderance of the evidence:

1. Cheating on assessments, clinical, or laboratory work: Obtaining, receiving, or using or attempting to obtain, receive, or use assistance during an examination or other formal assessment from any source not authorized by the faculty.
2. Inappropriately obtaining, distributing, receiving, or utilizing previously used academic materials (e.g. tests/assessments, cases, laboratory results).
3. Obtaining, possessing, or gaining access to items that provides an unfair advantage in a graded experience and/or requirement
4. Plagiarism: Any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own. This includes copying the answers of another student on an examination or copying or substantially restating the work of another person or person in any oral or written work without properly citing the source. Plagiarism also includes the presentation for grading any technical or written assignment (clinical or otherwise) that is not the work of the student or students being graded. See additional information in this Handbook regarding plagiarism.
5. Use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, does not technically plagiarize content from the internet (it generates unique responses), using ChatGPT in your coursework might still be considered plagiarism, according to Sacred Heart University's newly revised Academic Integrity Policy. The University standards require independent work by a student, except for those contexts where professors have specified forms of permitted collaboration with other students or with external sources, such as artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots. If no form of collaboration has been specified, students must assume that none is permitted."
6. Providing unauthorized assistance: Giving or attempting to give unauthorized assistance during an examination or exercise, including, but not limited to, permitting another student to copy from an examination or exercise. Allowing another student to represent your work as their own.
7. Misrepresentation, falsification, or fabrication of data.
8. Not adhering to university and program policies related to COVID-19.

9. Unauthorized obtaining an examination/assessment: Stealing or otherwise obtaining or attempting to obtain or use any unauthorized knowledge of examination questions or other exercises.
10. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of official University records or documents, such as transcripts, letters of recommendation, or degree certificates.
11. Theft or destruction of examinations/assessments or papers after submission, including purposefully altering possible poor performance.
12. Altering or destroying another person's work or records, including altering records of any kind (whether hard copy or electronic), removing materials from libraries or offices without consent, or in any way interfering with the work of others to impede their academic performance.
13. Unauthorized and/or unsupervised treatment of patients, including, but not limited to, treating patients in unauthorized clinical settings, accepting personal monetary payment from patients for services, waiving patient payment responsibilities without authorization, or otherwise acting in disregard of patient-related contracting and financial policies of the University.
14. Unauthorized use of prescriptions.
15. Misrepresentation of your PA student credentials and/or status as a PA student.
16. Failure to comply with HIPAA requirements to maintain patient privacy.
17. Failure to comply with up-to-date background checks and/or physical/immunization (including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters/additional doses)
18. Failure to comply with Community Service requirements.
19. Falsifying patient records in any manner, by changing previous entries, making false entries, or by forging signatures, with intent to defraud, injure or deceive another.
20. Unauthorized entry or use of Program, University facilities, or other University affiliates.
21. Violation of Public Law, when such violation occurs within the Program or affects the professional interests or standards of the Program, whether or not it occurs on campus. This includes violations of copyright.
22. Failure to comply with the sanctions imposed under the authority of this Code.

*Additionally, violations of conduct outside the Program, to include violations of the law (Driving under the influence or while intoxicated, domestic violence, inappropriate use of personal or program social media) while a student in the SHU PA Program will be cause for referral to the PPC. The Dean of the College of Health Professions will be notified to ensure SHU and MSPAS Policy and Procedure Manuals are followed.*

**Students who violate the student code of conduct will be referred to the SHU Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and may face disciplinary action.**

The Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards and Office of Residential Life at Sacred Heart University operates under the direction of the Dean of Students to administer the Code of Student Conduct, which identifies behavioral expectations for all students on and off campus. If you have knowledge of a SHU student violating the Code, you are encouraged to report the incident. [Incident Report Form Link](#)

Please see below (list is not all inclusive). For full information please refer to [SHU Community Standards](#)

## Respect

Sacred Heart University students show positive regard for each other and for the community. Behavior that violates this value includes, but is not limited to:

### Harm to Persons

Intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm or endangering the health or safety of any person, any attempt or threat to physically strike another, or any other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person or group, any act which unreasonably interferes with impedes or harasses other students in the pursuit of their education or way of life or that of actions that inflict physical harm or physical abuse, assault of any University community member or visitor;

### **Threatening Behaviors**

Written or verbal conduct that causes a reasonable expectation of injury to the health or safety of any person or damage to any property.

Intimidation is defined as implied threats or acts that cause a reasonable fear of harm in another.

### **Bullying & Cyberbullying**

Bullying and cyberbullying are repeated and/or severe aggressive behaviors that intimidate or intentionally harm or control another person physically or emotionally, and are not protected by freedom of expression, slanderous, false or malicious statement(s) about a person or defamation of character;

Note: While anonymous reports will be reviewed, they may not serve as enough information to initiate the student's conduct process. A formal complaint to the Dean of Students will result in a formal process including investigation and potential ramifications.

Students, staff, and faculty can submit a complaint of general violations of the University's Code of Student Conduct (examples include; alcohol, controlled substances, theft, harassment, etc.). Questions regarding the submission of reports involving student misconduct both on and off-campus can be directed to the Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards Beth Anne Voight-Jause at (203) 416-3420 or [voight-jauseb@sacredheart.edu](mailto:voight-jauseb@sacredheart.edu).

### **Media**

Students should not speak to the media (newspaper or TV reporters) on the University's behalf without contacting the SHU Marketing Department. All media inquiries should be directed to SHU Marketing. If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the Program Director.

## ***Scholarly Conduct***

### **Academic Integrity**

The faculty and students of the SHU Physician Associate Program pledge to foster an environment of honesty, respect, and trust as we support one another in our pursuit of knowledge. In doing so, we agree to champion the highest academic standards. By enrolling in this program, you agree to promote and maintain the standards as stated in the Student Policy and Procedure Manual. This statement is to serve as a reminder that any work turned in, or any examination taken, will be your original work. Any information that was not conceived by the student must be appropriately referenced. Any breach of academic integrity will not be tolerated. Students who engage in academic or academic-related misconduct are subject to disciplinary procedures, sanctions, and actions by the MSPAS program to include suspension and/or dismissal from the Program.

### **Breach of Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

All academic work submitted to fulfill course requirements is expected to be the result of each student's own thought, research, and self-expression. A student will have committed plagiarism if someone else's

work is reproduced without acknowledging its source. Examples of sources that must be acknowledged include any verbiage, ideas, or other direct quotes from published articles, chapters of books, computer programs, graphic representations, research papers, and other kinds of work from a source not generated as a part of the public domain. The Internet is not a public domain. Violations of academic integrity will result in referral to the Professional Performance Committee. **It is each student's responsibility to be in compliance with this policy.**

The following are some specific examples of plagiarism:

- Word-for-word plagiarism is the exact or nearly exact copying of someone else's work.
- Minor changes in wording or word order while using the same words and sentence structure still constitute plagiarism.
- Lifting is copying what one thinks is the perfect phrase or expression from someone else's work and pasting it into one's own paper. Most lifting involves descriptive phrases, which are often very recognizable to people familiar with the original author's work. The way particular ideas are expressed is as much as the property of the original author as the idea itself. Lifting could also be applied to copying of any images, pictures, graphs, charts, etc. for use within one's work without acknowledgment.
- Patchwork, sometimes called Quilting, is like lifting. Perfect words or phrases are lifted from the works of several authors and pasted together to construct a sentence, paragraph, or whole paper.
- Common Knowledge, also called common wording, is information that is either repeated in many sources or would be known by an ordinary educated person who had not researched the subject. For example, the date (December 7, 1941) of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is common knowledge; no source would be given for this information. However, a specific historian's opinion that the U.S. military should have been better prepared for the attack would not be considered common knowledge, and a source should be given for this view.

***Refer also to the SHU Graduate Catalog for a description and policy on "The Meaning of Academic Integrity."***

## **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is considered a professional courtesy and is mandatory for all courses and required program activities during the didactic phase and the clinical rotations. An annual schedule of vacations and holidays is distributed to each student upon matriculation. Vacations and holidays begin at 5 pm on the last day of the schedule prior to a vacation unless otherwise noted. Students are not permitted to miss or leave a lecture, seminar, workshop, practicum session, or clinical rotation prior to completion of the class or clinic day without express permission from the PA Program Director. Failure to attend classes is considered unprofessional conduct and may impact a student's professionalism evaluation. Attendance records will be kept for each course and mandatory activity. Students may NOT sign the attendance record for another student, and all signatures for required classroom attendance must be original. Please refer to each course syllabus for attendance requirements that may be specific to that course.

There may be special circumstances such as personal illness, which arise leading to unavoidable absence(s). The student is expected to request an absence in advance of that date from the Program Director, or the designee of the Program Director. In unforeseen circumstances (car accident, injury, or acute illness), the student or their representative is expected to notify the program office as soon as possible.

**Please refer to the MSPAS Student Clinical Policy and Procedure Manual for the clinical phase**

attendance policy.

## Online Lectures/Courses

Mandatory attendance is expected for all synchronous live online lectures. Please observe the expected virtual platform etiquette. All videos must be on with full visualization of your face unless there is an extenuating circumstance, and the instructor is informed in advance. Audio must be muted when not speaking. Students are encouraged to participate by unmuting and asking or answering questions. Students are expected to be in an environment conducive to learning, and distractions should be avoided. Any student distractions to the instructor may result in student removal from the online classroom and deduction in Professionalism points, which may include but is not limited to driving, instant messaging, sleeping, or side conversations with other persons. Any violations of these policies will result in referral to the PPC.

## Bereavement

Three days of absence will be allowed for bereavement of the death of a family member. Up to five days of absence will be allowed for bereavement of the death of an immediate family member and will not require make-up time. No attendance points will be deducted. Additional time off for bereavement will be taken into consideration, but this additional loss of time must be made up. Bereavement greater than five (5) days total may result in a required Leave of Absence (LOA) from the program. Please review the LOA policy. Bereavement absences for other than family members will be reviewed on an individual basis, but they will typically be one day without requiring make-up time. Please also refer to the Missed Assessment Policy.

## Class Cancellation Policy

Students are responsible for checking each class's Blackboard announcements and emails for cancellations, delays, or format changes if the weather conditions are questionable or due to any unforeseen issues. If the class is on as scheduled, nothing will be posted. Call (203) 365-SNOW for up-to-date campus info regarding closings/delays.

## Voluntary and Complete Withdrawal from the Program

### Withdrawal Policy

In keeping with the SHU Graduate Catalog Withdrawal Policy, graduate students wishing to voluntarily withdraw from all their courses and thereby discontinue their enrollment should confer with their advisor and program director and complete the University Withdrawal Form. University withdrawals are not official until all signatures are obtained. If applicable, any refunds will be determined by the official date of the withdrawal. All fees are nonrefundable. A "W" grade will be recorded and appear on the transcript for university withdrawals. Students will not be re-matriculated.

- Failure to withdraw properly will result in the issuance of a Failure grade and responsibility for payment in full.
- If a student withdraws prior to the start of the semester, all fees will be refunded, except for the registration fee.
- Dates for the PA program are located in the Special Trimester calendar [Special Trimester Calendar](#)
- Once a semester begins, there are no refunds of fees; this includes registration fees and all

- course-related fees (i.e. lab fees).
- Withdrawing from courses or failing to attend courses will impact your financial aid eligibility. For details, [Financial Assistance Withdrawal Policy](#)
- Adjustments/Refunds to tuition are based on the schedule below and are determined by the last date of attendance. Students are required to request release of any credit balance. Visit [Withdrawal and Refund Policy](#), to submit your request.
- Students who withdraw from the SHU MSPAS program are not eligible for a Leave of Absence

## Leave Of Absence Policy During Didactic Year

**Leave of Absence (LOA):** Time away from program-related commitments without ongoing academic progress.

The student must request in writing a leave of absence (LOA) from the SHU Physician Associate Program Director and contact the appropriate designee. Contact the Dean of Students or designee for physical/medical-related leaves or contact the Executive Director of Counseling or designee for mental health-related leaves. The Program Director will also present the request to the appropriate designee.

### *Upon Exit and during medical leave:*

1. Students on a medical leave of absence will receive a “W” for each course they are actively enrolled in.
2. Related to finances, students will be subject to the withdrawal and return policy of the university.
3. As it pertains to tuition insurance, students who signed up for the Allianz Tuition Insurance can refer to the policy for details related to reimbursement for leave.
4. The student is required to engage and participate in the treatment associated with the issue that was identified at the time of the leave.
5. If it does not impede treatment, the student will engage in productive activity during the leave as this will aid in managing the academic and social demands upon their return.

If approved, the Counseling Center or the Office of the Dean of Students will communicate their approval to the appropriate office so that paperwork can be filed. The student will be provided, in writing, with the information regarding what is required during this leave, to reference if needed.

Program activities (including lectures, community service, and workshops) cannot be scheduled for the student during the leave, nor can the student present themselves as an SHU Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies Program student during the leave of absence.

### *Return from Medical Leave of Absence*

Students who wish to return from a medical leave of absence must follow these steps:

1. Initiate Contact
  - Reach out the MSPAS Program Director and the proper designee/designees below
    - Counseling Center (for mental health-related leaves)
    - Office of the Dean of Students (for physical health-related leaves)
2. Timeline
  - Submit your request to return at least 6 months before the start of the intended semester.
3. Documentation
  - Provide documentation from each licensed treatment provider involved in your care. This should

include:

- Provider's name and specialty
  - Contact information (phone, fax, email)
  - Name and location of the treatment center
4. Depending on the nature of the medical leave, and individual circumstances surrounding the initial leave, the provider will be sent the necessary documentation to be completed. The review process will begin once documentation from **all providers has been received**. If applicable, the personal statement outlined in section 5 below will also need to be received. For mental health related leaves, this review process is conducted by the Executive Director of Counseling or designee, and if for physical/medical related leaves, reviewed by the Dean of Students or Designee. Please note the following:
    - The return will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, including whether a return to academics is appropriate.
    - The university reserves the right, in their discretion, to request a mental health evaluation from an independent provider, at the cost of the student, and at the choosing of the university.
    - The office associated with the leave may request that more information be provided at a later date, if it is determined that the information provided in the documentation is not sufficient.
    - Depending on individual circumstances, and during the review process, the office in receipt of the request to return may involve additional offices as necessary for the review.
    - If the student needs accommodation(s) upon return, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the Office of Student Accessibility for assistance surrounding these needs.
  5. If the reason related to the leave pertains to mental health , students will be asked to submit a personal statement describing (1) the experience away from the University, including activities undertaken (i.e. classes taken, employment, hobbies); (2) their current understanding of the factors that led to the need to take a leave; (3) insights gained from treatment, and (4) how the student will use that insight to make for a successful return
  6. If approved, the appropriate university office will be contacted to process the paperwork; allowing the student to access their account(s) and register for courses.
  7. If not approved, the student may appeal the decision to the Dean of Students, or designee, whose decision shall be final.
  8. Possible Delays
    - If documentation or review is delayed, your return may be postponed.
  9. During Leave
    - Students are expected to engage in treatment and, if possible, participate in productive activities to prepare for academic and social reintegration.

## Matriculation

Students who are granted an LOA and approval to return from the Dean of Students (or designee), or from the Director of Counseling (or designee), who desire to matriculate in the MSPAS Program must also submit a request letter to the Program Director within six months of the desired return. Students must submit an action plan outlining a success plan including availing themselves of available resources. Approval for re- matriculation is at the discretion of the Program Director and is dependent on availability. Returning students must rematriculate before they are eligible to enroll in classes. Students will need to complete all matriculation requirements.

Students must return to the program no later than 24 months from the start of the leave.

**Any completed courses must be retaken to ensure the student is proficient and current in course content, which will incur additional tuition and costs to complete the program with no exceptions (no auditing of courses is allowed).**

## **Unexpected Absences and Illness Policy**

Students with unexpected absences that are less than one consecutive calendar week do not qualify for a LOA. Students are expected to communicate absences to the Program Director.

Refer to the Health and Wellness Section for more information.

Students are responsible for material that was missed during this period, including missed workshops or small group activities.

Please also refer to the Missed Assessment Policy.

## **COVID-19 Policy**

Given the fluidity of COVID-19, students must review the University guidelines for the most current recommendations. In addition to the University policies, given that the PA program is located on the Stamford Hospital campus, students must also abide by their policies. Students not in compliance with all protocols, policies, and guidelines will be referred to the PPC.

## **Professionalism Remediation**

**Lack of professional conduct will result in referral to the Professional Performance Committee (PPC), and may result in the remediation, probation, and/or dismissal from the Program.**

Depending on the professionalism, conduct, or behavior of infraction, attempts to remediate professionalism will be implemented. This may include writing self-reflection papers, participating in workshops on behavior and professionalism, or action plans and/or contracts with written behavior improvements that are expected. Additionally, professionalism point deductions from courses will be made. Please also refer to the AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession (see Appendix A), and the MSPAS Professionalism document (see Appendix C).

## Professionalism Policy: Probation

A student may be given a warning (verbal or written to include in Blackboard or email) if there is an infraction of professionalism, conduct, or behavior (see Professionalism and Professionalism rubric).

Students may be placed on professionalism probation if any of the following occur:

1. Failure to comply with the published "Student Code of Conduct" (in this MSPAS Student Policy and Procedure Manual).
2. Failure to comply with the published "Professional Standards of Dress Code".
3. Failure to comply with published Sacred Heart University policies as outlined in this Handbook and the SHU Graduate Catalog.
4. Unexcused absences from lecture, lab sessions, or any required program activity
5. Failure to meet the behavioral standards expected of a health care professional. Refer to (Appendix A - AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession), and the MSPAS Professionalism document (see Appendix C).
6. An infraction that results in being placed on Professionalism Probation by the MSPAS PPC will become part of the students' record.

## Professionalism Policy: Suspension

**There is no suspension during the didactic year.**

A clinical year student may be suspended from participating in the University's academic/clinical programs for a period of up to one year for failure to comply with the published "Student Code of Conduct" (refer also to the MSPAS Student Clinical Education Policy and Procedure Manual).

## Professionalism Policy: Dismissal

A student is subject to dismissal from the PA program and/or the University should any of the following occur:

1. When the student's action and/or conduct reflects discredit on the institution or the profession.
2. If, while on academic or professional probation the student violates the SHU Student Code of Conduct, the "AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession", and/or Professionalism document, or manifests behavior which does not meet the Program or University's Standards of Conduct.
3. Failure to correct the matter(s) that initially caused the student to be placed on professionalism and/or conduct probation/suspension.

**Note: Program Dismissal and Appeals processes supersede the Graduate Catalog language and process.**

## Other Policies

### Student Work Policy

PA students are not permitted to be employed by (A3.04) or perform clerical or administrative tasks for the Program (A3.05b). Students are not permitted to substitute for or function as instructional (didactic or clinical) faculty (A3.05a). Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences, or skills may assist

faculty in didactic and lab sessions to share their knowledge and skills.

Students are discouraged from working while in PA school due to the rigorous nature of the educational program. In the event a student chooses to work, they are not permitted to miss or reschedule lectures, lab sessions, workshops, practicums, seminar sessions or any part of their didactic or clinical educational requirements. If the student's academic or clinical performance falls below the minimum program standard, the PPC may recommend the student termination of employment. The PPC and/or Program Director have the right to recommend termination of employment based on academics that fall below the minimum University or Program requirements. This recommendation will be made in writing and placed in the student's file.

## Part-time Status

The SHU Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies program does not permit students to matriculate on a part-time basis. The curriculum is designed to be delivered and completed on a full-time basis. The program is not offered on a part-time basis.

## Deceleration

The MSPAS program does **not** have a deceleration option. Deceleration is defined by the ARC-PA as "the loss of a student from the cohort, who remains matriculated in the physician associate program."

**Deceleration is not an option in lieu of disciplinary action including, but not limited to, academic integrity issues, professionalism concerns, probation, suspension, or any other situation that would be considered grounds for dismissal from the program.**

**The PA program does not decelerate students who cannot meet the program's academic and/or professional conduct requirements.**

## Transfer Policy

The SHU MSPAS program does not accept transfer of students from other PA programs or medical schools.

## Advanced Standing Policy

Advanced Standing admission to the Program will not be considered. Didactic-year students who return after a leave of absence or re-matriculate following an overturned dismissal will not have advanced academic standing.

## Advanced Placement

The SHU Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies Program does not allow advanced placement at the time of admission/matriculation, regardless of prior academic or clinical experiences, professional certificates, or degrees.

Each student who matriculates into the SHU Master of Science in PA Studies Program must successfully complete all components of the didactic and clinical phases of education, the Master's Capstone Project,

and all Summative Evaluations.

## Travel to Course-related Experiences

Course and course-related experiences (i.e., lectures, workshops, seminars, volunteer work, professional meetings, clinical rotation/experiences) may be conducted on campus, other campuses, in a clinical site, or community setting. Students are responsible for their own transportation and understand that they do so at their own risk.

## Complaints Against the Program that Fall Outside Due Process

The faculty and staff of the Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies strive to demonstrate a high level of ethical values and professionalism in all its activities. In some cases, a situation may generate complaints for which no formal grievance process exists. The complaint should be written, signed, include details about the complaint and documented evidence and mailed to:

### **Program Director, Master of Science in Physician associate Studies**

Sacred Heart University  
5151 Park Avenue  
Fairfield, CT 06825

Please include contact information so that the Program Director can reach you to address the complaint.

### **The following outlines the process for handling a complaint against the Program:**

1. When possible, the Program Director will discuss the complaint directly with the party involved within 14 business days. The expectation is that the complaint can be resolved by this discussion. The Program Director will provide a written description of the resolution to the person complaining.
2. If dissatisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the Program Director, or if the complaint is against the Program Director, the complainant may submit a written complaint to the Dean of the College of Health Professions. The Program Director will provide the Dean with a written summary of previous discussions where applicable. The Dean will discuss the matter with the Program Director and complainant separately and may schedule a joint appointment or conference call with the Program Director and complainant in an attempt to reach a solution. The Dean will provide the complainant and the Program Director with a written letter outlining the solution reached through this step.
3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after step two, the last line of complaint is to the provost, who serves as the Chief Academic Officer of Sacred Heart University.
4. Any letters or documentation associated with the complaint from the complainant, the Program Director, Dean, or Provost will be kept in a folder marked "Complaints against the Physician Associate Program" kept in program files for a period of five years.

### **Complaints against the Program regarding Compliance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standards**

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician associate (ARC-PA) is the commission accrediting all PA Programs. To contact the ARC-PA regarding a complaint associated with Accreditation *Standards*, go directly to [their website](#).

### **Public Comments or Complaints against the Program Regarding Regional NECHE Accreditation**

The New England Commission of Higher Education ([NECHE](#)) is the regional accrediting body for colleges and universities in New England. NECHE receives both public comments and complaints. Public Comments consist of observations about the quality of the University and its programs based on an individual's experience. Comments must be substantive but need not include evidence and may be written or emailed. Complaints must be written, signed, and meet NECHE's criteria for complaints. NECHE's complaint criteria, procedures for filing complaints, and links may be found online.

### **Public Comments or Complaints against the Program to the Connecticut Office of Higher Education Accreditation**

The Connecticut Office of Higher Education is responsible for quality review of independent colleges located in Connecticut. If you believe that the University or the Master of Science in Physician Associate Program has not fulfilled its promises, you may file a complaint with the Office of Higher Education:

#### **Connecticut Office of Higher Education**

450 Columbus Blvd, Ste 510  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841  
860-947-1800

For more information, refer to the [SHU MSPAS website](#).

## **Graduate Competencies for the Physician Associate**

The PA profession defines the specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and educational experiences requisite for Physician Associates to acquire and demonstrate these competencies. Professional competencies for physician associates include the effective and appropriate application of medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, patient care, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice. SHU has adopted these nationally recognized PA professional competencies with modifications that articulate what the student will develop and advance during PA school, demonstrating competency at the time of program completion (A3.12g)

### **Competency 1: Medical Knowledge**

Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician Associate students must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care.

Physician Associate students are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations by being able to:

- 1.1 Utilize scientific principles related to patient care to differentiate between normal and abnormal anatomic, physiological, laboratory findings, and other diagnostic data.
- 1.2 Analyze etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic processes, and epidemiology for medical/surgical conditions.
- 1.3 Interpret the clinical features, differential diagnosis, and management of common acute and chronic medical and/or surgical conditions seen in outpatient and inpatient settings.
- 1.4 Select and interpret appropriate diagnostic studies.
- 1.5 Manage common medical and surgical conditions by integrating knowledge about the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacological agents and other relevant treatment modalities.
- 1.6 Determine interventions for preventive care and health promotion/maintenance screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual.
- 1.7 Analyze and synthesize history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses.
- 1.8 Recognize signs and symptoms of serious and emergent medical/surgical conditions.
- 1.9 Utilize evidence-based practice.

## **Competency 2: Interpersonal & Communications Skills**

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician Associate students must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients' families, physicians, and members of the healthcare team.

Physician Associate students are expected to:

- 1.1 Present cases in a patient-centered manner, integrating further testing recommendations, differential diagnosis, most likely diagnosis, and evidence-based treatment recommendations as indicated.
- 1.2 Establish and sustain therapeutic and ethically sound interactions with patients.
- 1.3 Use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information.
- 1.4 Communicate and collaborate effectively with physicians and other healthcare team members.
- 1.5 Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety.
- 1.6 Demonstrate competent documentation of information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

## **Competency 3: Patient Care: Clinical and Technical Skills, Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving**

Patient care includes patient and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician Associate students must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable. Physician Associate students must obtain a relevant medical history, adequately perform physical examinations, and implement treatment plans for patients across the lifespan, appropriate to the patient's condition. In

addition, Physician Associate students must demonstrate proficiency in clinical/technical skills and healthcare that is effective, patient-centered, safe, compassionate, and culturally appropriate for the treatment of medical problems and the promotion of health.

Physician Associate students are expected to:

- 2.1. Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care.
- 3.2 Demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families.
- 3.3. Gather essential and accurate information about their patients.
- 3.4. Formulate informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment.
- 3.5. Utilize clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills to develop and implement patient management plans.
- 3.6 Counsel and educate patients and their families.
- 3.7 Safely and competently perform medical and surgical clinical/technical skills considered essential to the area of practice.
- 3.8 Provide healthcare services and education aimed at preventive care and health promotion/maintenance.
- 3.9. Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education.

## **Competency 4: Professional Behaviors**

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

Physician Associate students are expected to demonstrate:

- 4.1 Describe legal and regulatory requirements of the role of the Physician Associate.
- 4.2 Professional relationships with physician supervisors and all health care team members.
- 4.3 Respect, compassion, and integrity, and accountability to the health needs of patients and always act in the best interest of patients.
- 4.4 Commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development.
- 4.5 Commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, and informed consent.
- 4.6 Sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and abilities and the relationship to health and health beliefs.
- 4.7 Self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative.
- 4.8 Act within the AAPA's Physician Associate professional code as described in the "*Code of Ethics of the PA Profession*".

## Competency 5: Practice-based Learning & Improvement

Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which Physician Associates engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self- and practice-improvement. Physician Associate students must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices.

Physician Associate students are expected to:

- 5.1 Locate, appraise, and evaluate evidence from medical/clinical literature related to their patients' healthcare.
- 5.2 Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness.
- 5.3 Utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support the practice of life-long learning through self-assessed knowledge and behaviors.

## Competency 6: Systems-based Practice

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician Associate students must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of healthcare to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient.

Physician Associate students are expected to:

- 6.1 Effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems.
- 6.2 Demonstrate knowledge about the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care (private, state, and federal levels, and the uninsured).
- 6.3 Promote cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care.
- 6.4 Collaborate with supervising physicians and other healthcare team members to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of health care and patient outcomes.
- 6.5 Contribute to promoting a safe environment for patient care.
- 6.6 Apply information technology to provide effective, efficient, safe, and up-to-date patient care.
- 6.7 Recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities.
- 6.8 Apply the concepts of population health to patient care.
- 6.9 Identify the importance of continuity of care and coordinate appropriate follow-up care when needed.

**Adapted from AAPA, ARC-PA, PAEA, NCCPA (2012). *Competencies for the Physician Associate Profession*.**

## **Program Completion**

Each student who matriculates into the SHU Master Science in PA Studies Program must successfully complete all components of the didactic and clinical phases of education, the Master's Capstone Project, and all Summative Evaluations.

To graduate from the SHU Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies program, the student must successfully complete all academic and clinical requirements as outlined in this Policy and Procedure Manual. Students must fill out the SHU graduation student application to receive a degree from the University.

## **Summative Evaluations**

In addition to successfully completing all academic and clinical requirements of the MSPAS program, the student must pass all four components of the Summative Evaluation to be eligible for graduation from the Program. Summative Evaluations will be conducted within four months of student completion of the Program. The Summative Evaluations are as follows:

### **Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs)**

OSCEs are simulated patient encounters designed to evaluate patient assessment skills, medical decision making and professionalism in an applied setting. The OSCE evaluates the student's ability to take a history with mastery of a patient-centered interview, perform a safe, accurate, and appropriate physical examination, interpret diagnostic studies, formulate a differential diagnosis, formulate the most likely diagnosis, and determine an initial treatment plan. Additionally, the OSCE can assess the professionalism of the student in a clinical scenario. The passing score is 75% or greater.

The student must pass the OSCE to be eligible for graduation.

Students who fail this part of their summative evaluation will be remediated by reviewing their video-recorded patient encounters and performance with a faculty member. Students will be required to repeat the OSCE. The passing is 75% or greater. The student must pass this evaluation on their second attempt, or they will be referred to PPC and further remediation. Graduation will be delayed until successful completion of remediation.

### **Comprehensive Written Exam**

The PAEA End of Curriculum (EoC) exam is an objective, standardized evaluation of a student's medical knowledge as one component of their readiness for graduation. To be eligible to sit for the EoC, students must have successfully completed (e.g. passed with a grade of C or better) all clinical rotations (both required and elective), final clinical site visit and summative OSCE. Students must pass this comprehensive written exam with a score of 75% or greater to graduate from the Program. The PACKRAT exam is NOT used as the summative written exam. The EoC will be administered during the last 16 weeks of the program.

Students who do not pass this written exam will meet with their advisor and must participate in remediation for the exam. If the student fails the exam on a second attempt, the student will be referred to the PPC, must complete remediation, and will have a delayed graduation from the Program.

After remediation is completed, the student will be re-tested and must pass this requirement to be eligible for graduation.

### **Clinical Site Student Assessment Visit by Program Faculty**

To evaluate medical knowledge and clinical decision-making, professionalism and interprofessional skill, and patient care and clinical skills, a final clinical site visit will be performed by a principal faculty member for each student. This final clinical site visit evaluates the student's ability to synthesize the clinical information (medical knowledge), interpret diagnostic data, interact with the patient in a compassionate manner, maintain a professional demeanor, interact within interprofessional teams and formulate a plan of care that is based on the current standards of care. The reviewer will determine whether or not the student passes the final site visit on a pass-fail basis using the clinical site visit and clinical assessment form. This is the same assessment form used in prior clinical site student assessments done in earlier rotations of the clinical phase.

If a student does not pass the final site visit, remediation will be implemented by the program director and clinical team depending on the identified student deficit. For example, a student who does not meet the minimum proficiency for an oral presentation will be guided on how to improve the presentation and will present another case a week or so later. However, if a student has a global deficit in their clinical interaction, they may be required to complete an additional clinical rotation(s) resulting in a delayed completion of the program which may result in additional tuition/costs. After remediation is completed, the student will be re-evaluated and must pass this requirement to be eligible to complete the program.

### **PANCE Exam**

To become a certified PA (PA-C), you must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE), a computer-based, multiple-choice test comprising questions that assess basic medical and surgical knowledge.

**Eligibility Requirements:** To be eligible for the PANCE, you must graduate from a program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Associate Program (ARC-PA) as a Physician Associate Program or a Surgeon Assistant Program. PA program graduates will be deemed to have graduated from an accredited program if their PA educational program was accredited at the time of their matriculation.

*\*\*If you have earned a medical degree from another country, you must still graduate from an accredited PA program to take PANCE.*

**Registration:** You must submit an application and payment in advance to take PANCE. The five-hour PANCE exam includes 300 multiple-choice questions administered in five blocks of 60 questions with 60 minutes to complete each block. There is a total of 45 minutes allotted for breaks between blocks, and you will be responsible for managing your break time. You will have 15 minutes to complete the PANCE tutorial. More information about the PANCE and preparation for the PANCE will be provided to the

students in the Graduate Seminar Course. **Note:** *this information is current at the time of this print but may change before a student has graduated and is eligible for the PANCE exam.*

The program determines eligibility for sitting for the PANCE examination. All program requirements for graduation must be met.

Once you have passed the PANCE exam you may apply for state licensure and practice in any state in the U.S. For more information about the PANCE, please go to <https://www.nccpa.net/pance-registration>.

# **APPENDIX A**

[AAPA Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession](#)

## APPENDIX B

### Graduate Functions and Tasks

At the completion of the Program, graduates of the Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to accomplish, competently, safely and proficiently, the following functions and tasks:

1. Provide safe and current healthcare for patients across the life span; elicit a focused or comprehensive medical history and perform a focused or comprehensive physical examination.
2. Accurately interpret responses from the patient and family, considering the influence of culture, ethnicity, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity, compassion, and respect at all times to provide quality health care to diverse patient populations, with varied clinical conditions, in diverse practice settings.
4. Provide well-organized, clear clinical documentation, and prepare clear and concise oral presentations.
5. Select and accurately interpret appropriate clinical laboratory and diagnostic studies.
6. Formulate an appropriate differential diagnosis and formulate a most likely diagnosis using clinical decision-making based on patient history, physical exam findings, and diagnostic studies results.
7. Refer to and/or consult with appropriate healthcare professionals or social agencies when indicated.
8. Construct a thorough patient-centered management plan to include pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical therapies; and state indications, contraindications, side effects, and interactions for commonly used medications.
9. Provide effective patient education and patient counseling regarding diagnoses and management options and apply concepts of population health to patient care.
10. Search, interpret, and evaluate the medical literature to answer clinical questions using evidence-based practice, and its application to individualized patient care.
11. Provide patient-centered care while working collaboratively and effectively with physicians, staff, and other healthcare professionals as a member of an interprofessional healthcare team.
12. Demonstrate respectful and professional communication with patients, patient families, supervising physicians, and interprofessional healthcare team members.
13. Demonstrate personal integrity and honesty, and behave in a responsible, ethical, and professional manner.
14. Perform technical skills and procedures based on current medical practice safely and accurately, as well as explain the indications, contraindications, procedure details, and potential complications for clinical procedures to include: airway management, aseptic technique, Standard Precautions, bladder catheter insertion, nasogastric tube placement, venipuncture, IV placement, injections, wound care and dressing techniques, splinting and casting, and suturing and wound closure.
15. Demonstrate the development of leadership skills, promoting the PA profession, and advocating for the communities we serve.

## APPENDIX C: Professionalism Document

### Attendance, Participation, & Professionalism

Attendance is mandatory. Students must arrive 5 minutes prior to the start of the lecture. Students who arrive later than 10 minutes after the start of lecture or have an unexcused absence may be referred to PPC. Students are required to reach out to the Program Director in the event they will be absent. An excused absence may only be granted by the Program Director or Designee.

Unexcused Absences or >10 minutes late to class:

- 1st Occurrence: Written warning
- 2nd Occurrence: Referral to Program Director and Professional Performance Committee (PPC), and the student may be placed on professionalism probation, which will be part of the students' academic record.

Unexcused absence from an exam, assessment or practicum:

- Any unexcused absence from an exam, assessment, or practicum will result in a zero.
- Students will receive a written warning and may be referred to PPC for unacceptable behavior. Students will be referred to PPC for any Egregious behavior.

*Please see Professionalism Expectations Below*

#### Professionalism:

	Egregious	Unacceptable	Expected
Preparation & Effort	Often arrives without necessary materials. More than 2 occurrences of being unprepared for lecture, workshop, quizzes and tests (downloading exam in advance), completing course evaluations/survey. Assignments are often messy, disorganized, incomplete, late, or not done at all.	Sometimes arrives without necessary materials. More than 1 time occurrence of being unprepared for lecture, workshop, quizzes or tests (downloading exams in advance). Assignments are sometimes late, not well presented, incomplete, or lacking in detail.	Always have necessary materials and is ready for lecture, workshop, tests and quizzes. Assignments are always on time, orderly, complete, and neatly presented with attention to detail. Work reflects the best effort.

<b>Participation</b>	Does not contribute to discussion or participate in lab activities. More than 2 occurrences of not wearing appropriate attire to Patient Assessment workshops. Must be prodded to participate in group assignments, discussions or labs. Usually disengages early.	Rarely contributes to discussion or participate in lab activities. More than 1 occurrence of not wearing appropriate attire to Patient Assessment workshops. Reluctancy to engage with others. Occasionally stops work before class is over.	Contributes often and appropriately to class discussion and lab activities. Often asks relevant questions. Always makes the best use of hands-on time and engages well with others.
<b>Attitude</b>	More than 2 occurrences of students using foul or inappropriate language, interrupts others, is rude, sarcastic, or dishonest. Students do not recognize that topics or actions make others feel uncomfortable or interfere with the learning needs of others.	More than 1 occurrence of a student using inappropriate language or discusses inappropriate subjects during class times with peers. Behavior interferes with the learning needs of others	Demonstrates caring, compassion and commitment to learning. It makes a strong effort to learn and improve. Shows awareness of the impact of behavior on learning needs of others.
<b>Accountability &amp; Respect</b>	More than 2 occurrences of disruptive, disrespectful, or uncooperative behavior (including arguing points on assessments). Often does not pay attention during lectures and labs. Appears unaware of the negative impact on others. Verbal and written communication with faculty is often disrespectful, untimely (greater than 24 hours since communication sent by faculty or reaching out after 3 days after a failed assessment) or inappropriate	More than 1 occurrence of disruptive, disrespectful, or uncooperative behavior (including arguing points on assessments). Sometimes check phone. Sometimes talk or have conversations during lectures. Sometimes appears unaware of the negative impact on others. Verbal and written communication with faculty is sometimes disrespectful ,untimely (greater than 24 hours since communication is sent by faculty or not reaching out within 3 days of a failed assessment) and inappropriate	Always cooperative and respectful of others. Keeps cell phones put away during class lectures. Always pay attention during lectures. Demonstrates an overall sense of awareness of what is appropriate. Verbal and written communication with faculty is always respectful, timely, and appropriate.

\*Professionalism behaviors are not limited to the above examples -