



**JOHNSON & WALES**  
UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR PHYSICIAN  
ASSISTANT STUDIES

# Physician Assistant Studies Program

## Student Handbook Class of 2025

Physician Assistant Student Handbook  
**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM  
(MSPAS)  
Class of 2025**

This Physician Assistant (PA) student handbook has been developed by the faculty and administration of Johnson & Wales University, College of Health and Wellness, Physician Assistant Studies Program (PA Program), to inform students of applicable policies and procedures and their responsibilities related to the PA Program. This handbook supplements rather than supplants existing university policies and procedures, including those set forth in the university graduate catalog and the student handbook applicable to all students. In the case of an inconsistency, this handbook generally shall apply, but the university reserves the right to determine that another policy or procedure applies and to resolve any inconsistency as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion. The university also reserves the right to modify any of its policies or procedures at any time without notice other than publication on the appropriate website. Every PA student should become familiar with and refer to this handbook and all other university policies and procedures. Students are responsible for knowing and complying with all applicable policies and procedures of Johnson & Wales University and the PA Program.

Students should direct any questions regarding policies and procedures in this handbook to the Director of the PA Program.

Although we have attempted to make this handbook as comprehensive and clear as reasonably possible, unforeseen circumstances or ambiguities may arise. In such circumstances, the Director of the PA Program will address the situation. If students have questions, they should raise them with the Director of the PA Program.

We hope you find this handbook helpful and wish you success in your studies.

-- *The PA Program Faculty*

*Where required or appropriate, the policies and procedures herein have been derived from the "Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education" Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA). As applicable, ARC-PA accreditation required policies are indicated in parentheses next to the policy.*

**Accreditation Status:**

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Johnson & Wales University Physician Assistant program** sponsored by **Johnson & Wales 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 **September 2027**. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

## **Welcome to the College of Health and Wellness**

Dear Physician Assistant Graduate Students:

The faculty and I applaud your decision to pursue a graduate degree in Physician Assistant (PA) Studies at Johnson & Wales University's College of Health and Wellness. The PA Program will be stimulating and challenging as you make your way through new terminology, insights, dilemmas, and skills.

Your time here is a partnership shared with students, faculty, and staff. We build this partnership to help you to be successful in your endeavors and develop into a successful PA. Our expectations are that each member of our community will be honest, respectful, accountable, and committed to excellence. This depends on the sharing of constructive feedback and full participation in the learning process. Students must be reflective in learning and practice, adhere to standards, and understand all of the rights and responsibilities of being a student in the PA Program. Staff will provide support for admissions, data collection, and day-to-day programmatic support. Faculty must endeavor to guide the acquisition of knowledge leading to the ultimate graduation of a competent PA.

As part of these responsibilities, you are required to be familiar with the *Physician Assistant Studies Handbook*. Our goal is to provide you with the tools to be the best you can be – exceptionally competent PAs.

We believe that PAs make a difference and that our pledge as professionals providing compassionate and competent care to our patients is deeply meaningful. Your faculty and staff welcome you to our program. We all wish you the very best in your studies!

Laura Galligan, PhD  
Dean, College of Health and Wellness

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# I. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM – GENERAL INFORMATION

## A. INTRODUCTION

For brevity, certain abbreviations and acronyms appear throughout this Handbook. The terms “JWU” and “university” refer to Johnson & Wales University. The “MSPAS Program,” the “Physician Assistant Program,” and the “PA Program” refer to the Masters of Science Physician Assistant Studies Program.

Students in the MSPAS Program should use this Handbook in conjunction with:

1. JWU Graduate **Catalog**
2. JWU **Student Handbook** (applicable to all students)
3. MSPAS Program **Clinical Education Manual**

Together, these resources provide students with information that will assist them in their academic endeavors at the university: services available to students, policies, lists of needed equipment, an outline of the curriculum, and guidelines to prepare for this challenging academic experience.

By enrolling at Johnson & Wales University, students agree to conform to all codes, policies, procedures, regulations, and rules as outlined in (i) this Handbook, (ii) the Catalog, (iii) the JWU Student Handbook (applicable to all students), (iv) the Clinical Education Manual, and (v) any other documents that may be created and be made applicable to JWU students, as all such aforementioned documents may be amended from time to time (at any time) without notice to you. Students must abide by all the codes, policies, procedures, regulations, and rules that have been and may in the future be established by the university both on and off campus. MSPAS-Program-specific policies are **in addition to** university policies listed in the JWU Student Handbook. The aforementioned catalogs and handbooks are available online at [www.jwu.edu](http://www.jwu.edu) and through Student Academic & Financial Services. The documents indicated in (ii) through (v) contain important codes, policies, procedures, regulations, and rules that are not included in this document. **In the event this Handbook conflicts with and/or is more restrictive or specific than the JWU Student Handbook, the provisions in this Handbook shall generally apply, subject to the university’s discretion to determine that another policy or procedure applies and to resolve any inconsistency as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion.**

If a student has questions that cannot be answered by these sources, the student should discuss them with the Director of the PA Program. Students are required to sign the attestation statement on the last page of this Handbook and of the **Clinical Education Manual** as a condition for participation in the PA Program.

Please read these sources **carefully** and **thoroughly**. Ignorance of the rules does not excuse infractions.

## B. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the JWU Physician Assistant Program is to educate students to become collaborative practitioners with the respect, empathy, and trust inherent to patient-centered humanistic health care.

## **C. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM GOALS**

1. To recruit and matriculate students who meet or exceed our admissions requirements, resulting in successful completion of Physician Assistant medical education.
2. Offer an integrated didactic curriculum that provides the knowledge, skills, and humanistic principles required for the clinical year.
3. Provide Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE) in a variety of clinical environments/settings, ranging from community to tertiary care facilities, increasing student exposure to diverse populations and care levels while supporting our Mission of graduating humanistic and culturally competent PAs.
4. To graduate physician assistants who are prepared to enter clinical practice, employ lifelong learning, utilize and apply evidence-based medicine (EBM) in decision-making and demonstrate clinical skills and humanistic qualities such as rapport and cultural sensitivity.

## **D. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND PROGRAM COMPETENCIES**

The graduates of the JWU Physician Assistant Program shall demonstrate they can achieve the graduate outcomes in the following domains.

### Clinical and Technical Skills

1. Develop rapport and an atmosphere of trust with patients and families while providing patient centered humanistic care.
2. Recommend and perform clinical procedures for common medical disorders.

### Clinical Reasoning and Problem-solving Abilities

3. Utilize and apply evidence-based medicine principles and skills to guide decision making in clinical practice.
4. Engage and employ lifelong learning skills through on-going self-reflection, active engagement, and professional development.

### Interpersonal Skills

5. Utilize effective interpersonal skills in oral and written communication with patients and families and work collaboratively with members of the health care team.

### Medical Knowledge

6. Accurately elicit a medical history, perform a physical examination, formulate a differential diagnosis, and appropriately select and interpret diagnostic studies to diagnose medical conditions.
7. Develop and manage appropriate treatment plans for preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent disorders of patients across the lifespan.

### Professional Behaviors

8. Conduct oneself in a professional and ethical manner consistent with the role and responsibilities of a physician assistant.



## E. HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION

We encourage you to review the history of the PA profession by visiting the PA History Society website: <https://pahx.org/timeline/>. It will provide an exceptional overview of the PA profession, which started its journey in 1965 and continues to advance.

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## **G. TECHNICAL STANDARDS:**

To participate in the PA Program at Johnson & Wales University, each student, with or without reasonable accommodations, must be able to safely and effectively meet certain technical standards. Technical standards, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities that a student must be able to perform in order to be admitted, to progress satisfactorily, and to graduate from the PA Program and subsequently enter clinical practice.

As further detailed below, all students must possess aptitude, ability, and skills in the following six (6) areas:

1. Active participation in the PA Program
2. Observation
3. Communication
4. Sensory and motor coordination and function
5. Intellectual ability, conceptualization, integration, and quantitation
6. Behavioral and social skills; abilities and aptitudes

The functions described below are critically important and must be autonomously performed by the student. It should be understood that these are standards for minimum competence in the PA Program:

### **1. *Active Participation in the PA Program***

Students must be able to actively participate in all components of the PA Program.

This means that students must be able to

- Attend and participate in all required classroom activities.
- Complete all academic requirements of the PA Program, including but not limited to academic papers, exams, presentations, meetings, and labs. Some of these academic requirements, like papers and exams, will test the student's ability to receive, understand, and incorporate the subject matter. Other academic requirements, like presentations and meetings, reflect industry practices that a graduate of this program will be required to demonstrate.
- Communicate effectively and appropriately with faculty, staff, and fellow students in person, orally, and via written and electronic correspondence.
- Lift and transport a minimum weight of 25 lbs.
- Maneuver safely in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings.
- Utilize industry-specific equipment.
- Maintain their own health and safety. This includes not posing a risk to other students, instructors, and others present during all educational experiences and components of the PA Program.
- Understand and implement all safety and security policies and procedures, including but not limited to those related to fires and evacuation proceedings.
- Participate in all required components, including clinical rotations.

## **2. Observation**

The student must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic sciences.

The student must also be able to directly and accurately perceive a patient at a distance and close at hand, with or without standard medical instrumentation. A student must be able to perceive a patient's demeanor, observe a patient's physical condition, obtain a medical history, and perform a physical examination correctly on the patient. The student must be able to integrate the information derived from these perceptions and develop an accurate diagnostic and treatment plan.

Furthermore, a student must be able to

- Acquire information from written documents.
- Perceive and interpret information as presented in images from paper, films, slides, or video
- Interpret X-ray and other graphic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomenon (such as EKGs) with or without the use of assistive devices.
- Competently use diagnostic instruments, including, but not limited to, an otoscope, ophthalmoscope, stethoscope, and microscope.

## **3. Communication**

Students must be able to relate effectively to patients while conveying compassion and empathy. They must be able to clearly communicate with patients in order to elicit information, accurately describe changes in mood, activity, and posture of patients, and understand verbal as well as nonverbal communication.

Communication includes not only speech, but reading and writing. PA education presents exceptional challenges in the volume and breadth of reading required to master subject areas and impart the information to others. Students must be able to communicate quickly, effectively, and efficiently in oral and written English in the classroom and with patients and all members of the healthcare team.

Students must be able to communicate in a way that achieves the following:

- Rapidly and clearly communicate with the complete healthcare team on rounds or elsewhere.
- Elicit an accurate history from patients.
- Communicate complex findings in appropriate terms to patients and to various members of the healthcare team. Students must be able to learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional cues, such as sadness or agitation, and accurately and legibly record observations and plans in official documents, such as the patient record.
- Accurately enter patient data into an electronic medical record or other database.
- Prepare and communicate concise, complete summaries of both limited patient encounters and complex, prolonged encounters, including hospitalizations. Students must be able to complete forms in a timely fashion and according to directions.

## **4. Sensory and Motor Coordination and Function**

Students must possess sufficient sensory and motor function to perform physical examinations using palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. This requires sufficient exteroceptive sense (visual, auditory, touch, olfactory, and temperature), coordination to manipulate patients, and

adequate motor skills to operate diagnostic instruments.

Students must be able to

- Evaluate various components of the voice, such as pitch, intensity, and timbre.
- Accurately differentiate percussive notes and auscultatory findings, including but not limited to heart, lung, and abdominal sounds.
- Accurately discern normal and abnormal findings using instruments, including but not limited to tuning forks, stethoscopes, and sphygmomanometers.
- Execute physical movements needed to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Students, therefore, must be able to respond promptly to emergencies within the hospital or practice setting and not hinder the ability of their co-workers to provide prompt care.
- Learn to perform basic laboratory tests such as wet mount and urinalysis, as well as diagnostic/therapeutic procedures such as venipuncture or placement of catheters and tubes. The administration of intravenous medications requires a certain level of dexterity, sensation, and visual acuity. Additionally, students must possess the manual dexterity to safely handle needles, tongue blades, gynecologic speculum, and scalpel.
- Measure angles and diameters of various body structures using a tape measure or other devices to measure blood pressure, respiration, and pulse, and interpret graphs describing biologic relationships.
- Assure transportation to a variety of clinical rotation settings in a timely manner.

## **5. *Intellectual Ability, Conceptualization, Integration, and Quantitation***

Problem-solving is a critical skill demanded of PAs that often requires rapid intellectual function, especially in emergency situations. These intellectual functions include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning, analysis, judgment, synthesis, visual-spatial conceptualization, and application. Students must be able to identify significant findings in the patient's history, physical examination, and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, and choose appropriate medications and therapy.

Students must be able to order diagnostic laboratory and imaging modalities based on sound clinical necessity coupled with fiduciary consideration.

It is essential that the student is able to incorporate new information from many sources toward the formulation of a diagnosis, and plan and recall information in an efficient and timely manner. Professionally sound and evidence-based judgment in patient assessment and diagnostic/therapeutic planning is also essential. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the extent of their knowledge to others.

## **6. *Behavioral and Social Skills; Abilities and Aptitudes***

Students must possess the emotional and mental capacity required for full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of professional judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities associated with the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships in the diagnosis and care of patients. Students must demonstrate the integrity, excellence, compassion, altruism, respect, empathy, and service inherent to learning the practice of humanistic medicine. Students must be able to monitor and react appropriately to their own emotional needs. For example, students need to maintain a balanced demeanor and good organization in the face of long hours, fatigued colleagues, and

dissatisfied patients.

Students must be able to develop appropriate professional relationships with their colleagues and patients, provide comfort and reassurance to patients, and protect patients' dignity and confidentiality. Students must be able to monitor changes in class and rotation schedules and be on time for all scheduled classes, clinical rotations, and other scheduled expectations and responsibilities. Students must possess the endurance to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. All students may be required to work for extended periods of time, occasionally with rotating schedules. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the practice of medicine. Students must be able to accept suggestions and criticisms, and if necessary, to respond by modifying their behavior.

The above technical standards are essential to the PA Program and also reflect industry requirements and standards.

Completion of this program requires that each student independently demonstrates these capabilities continuously throughout enrollment. Surrogates cannot be used to accomplish the essential requirements. Students may not have undue dependence on technology or trained intermediaries.

## H. PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The PA Program reserves the right to modify this curriculum at any time and to require on-ground learning, remote learning, or a combination of the two; among other things, the university may change course format and structure at any time. The university, like other schools, is subject to factors outside of its control, including, but in no way limited to, applicable federal, state, and local guidance and law related to the COVID-19 pandemic and any other epidemics, pandemics, or matters of health and safety. Changes are always possible and within the university's discretion; learning environments are always subject to change, as are modes of delivering the university's educational and other programs.

### YEAR 1

<u>Summer Semester</u>	Credits
PAS 5110 Applied Anatomy	4
PAS 5200 Foundations of Medicine	4
PAS 5325 Patient Care I	4
PAS 5345 Professional and Health Policy Issues I	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14.0</b>
<u>Fall Semester</u>	
PAS 5425 Patient Care II	3
PAS 5456 Professional and Health Policy Issues II	1.5
PAS 5470 Intro to Evidence-Based Practice	1
PAS 5480 Food is Medicine I	1
PAS 5510 Clinical Hematology and Infectious Disease	2
PAS 5525 Clinical HEENT	2
PAS 5540 Clinical Pulmonology	3
PAS 5560 Clinical Dermatology	1
PAS 5580 Clinical Cardiology	4
PAS 5825 Clinical Orthopedics and Rheumatology	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21.5</b>
<u>Spring Semester</u>	
PAS 5736 Patient Care III	3
PAS 5767 Professional and Health Policy Issues III	1.5
PAS 5782 Food is Medicine II	1
PAS 5810 Clinical Nephrology and Urology	3
PAS 5590 Clinical Gastroenterology	3
PAS 5880 Clinical Gynecology and Obstetrics	3
PAS 5840 Clinical Neurology and Behavioral Medicine	3
PAS 5860 Clinical Endocrinology	2
PAS 589X Clinical Pediatrics	2
PAS 59X1 Clinical Geriatrics	1
PAS 5910 Emergency Medicine	2
PAS 5930 Problem-Based Learning	2.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27.0</b>
<b>Year 1 Total Credits</b>	<b>62.5</b>

**YEAR 2: Sequencing of Courses is at Programmatic Discretion.**

Summer Semester

PAS 6200 Family Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6250 Internal Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6800 Master's Course*	NC
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9.0</b>

Fall Semester

PAS 6300 Pediatric Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6350 Women's Health Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6400 Emergency Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6450 Behavioral and Mental Health Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6800 Master's Course*	NC
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18.0</b>

Spring Semester

PAS 6500 Surgery Clinical Course	4.5
PAS 6600 Clinical Elective Course I	4.5
PAS 6700 Clinical Elective Course II	4.5
PAS 6800 Master's Course*	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13.5</b>

**Year 2 Total Credits** **41.5**

**Total Curriculum Credits** **104**

\* This course spans the clinical year, but credit is awarded only in the spring semester.

\*\* Rotation order is different for each student. Clinical course order listed above are for demonstration purposes.

## I. PROGRAM SCHEDULE (CLASS OF 2025)\*

**Please Note:** The PA Program Academic Calendar does not necessarily align with the published JWU Academic Calendars. Semester start-, stop-, and other dates differ. Students should consult with the Directors of Didactic or Clinical Education (as appropriate) prior to scheduling non-program activities. View the PA Academic Calendar here: <https://www.jwu.edu/academics/academic-calendars.html>

**Orientation**                      *Thursday – Friday, June 1-2, 2023*

### **Year One (Didactic Year)**

#### **Summer Semester (11 weeks)**

Classes begin:                      Monday, June 5, 2023  
No Class:                              Monday, June 19, 2023 (Juneteenth Holiday)  
No Class:                              Monday, July 3 – Tuesday, July 4, 2023  
Classes end:                         Friday, August 18, 2023

*Intersession Break*                *Saturday, August 19 – Sunday, August 27, 2023*

#### **Fall Semester (16 weeks)**

Classes begin:                      Monday, August 28, 2023  
No Classes:                         Monday, September 4, 2023 (Labor Day)  
No Classes:                         Friday, November 10, 2023 (Veterans' Day Observed)  
Thanksgiving Break:                Wednesday, November 22 – Sunday, November 26, 2023  
Classes End:                        Friday, December 15, 2023

*Intersession Break*                *Saturday, December 16, 2023 – Tuesday, January 2, 2024*

#### **Spring Semester (20 weeks)**

Classes begin:                      Wednesday, January 3, 2024  
No Class:                              Monday, January 15, 2024 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)  
Spring Break:                        Monday, March 4 – Friday, March 8, 2024  
Classes Resume:                    Monday, March 11, 2024  
No Class:                              Friday, March 29, 2024 (Spring Holiday)  
Classes end:                         Friday, May 17, 2024

*Intersession Break*                *Saturday, May 18 – Thursday, May 30, 2024*

### **Year Two (Clinical Year)**

#### **Summer Semester**

*Orientation (Required)*          Friday, May 31 – Thursday, June 6, 2024  
White Coat Ceremony          Friday, June 7, 2024



### *Clinical Rotation Schedule*

Rotation 1 Monday, June 10 – Friday, July 12, 2024

*Back to Campus 1 Thursday, July 11 – Friday, July 12, 2024*

Rotation 2 Monday, July 15 – Friday, August 16, 2024

*Back to Campus 2 Friday, August 16, 2024*

### **Fall Semester**

Rotation 3 Monday, August 19 – Friday, September 20, 2024

*Back to Campus 3 Friday, September 20, 2024*

Rotation 4 Monday, September 23 – Friday, October 25, 2024

*Back to Campus 4 Friday, October 25, 2024*

Rotation 5 Monday, October 28 – Friday, November 29, 2024

*Thanksgiving Holiday According to each individual clinical site schedule*

*Back to Campus 5 Friday, November 29, 2024*

Rotation 6 Monday, December 2, 2024 – Friday, January 10, 2025

*Holiday Break Wednesday, December 25, 2024 – Wednesday, January 1, 2025*

*Back to Campus 6 Friday, January 10, 2025*

Rotation 7 Monday, January 13– Friday, February 14, 2025

*Back to Campus 7 Friday, February 14, 2025*

*Summative Testing Week (on campus) Monday, February 17 – Friday, February 21, 2025*

Rotation 8 Monday, February 24 – Friday, March 28, 2025

*Back to Campus 8 Friday, March 28, 2025*

Rotation 9 Monday, March 31 – Friday, May 2, 2025

*Back to Campus 9 Thursday – Friday, May 1-2, 2025*

Graduation Saturday, May 3, 2025 (Subject to change)

*Final Callback Days Monday, May 5 – Wednesday, May 7, 2025*

Degree Conferred Friday, May 9, 2025

**\*Schedule is subject to change**

## **J. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Students are not required to perform any clerical or administrative work or teaching on behalf of the PA Program. On occasion, the faculty or staff of the PA Program may make students aware of volunteer opportunities in the university or community. Students are not obligated to volunteer and shall not be financially compensated for this activity. Student employment through the university work-study program will be governed by university policies.

## **K. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT IN THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE**

Consistent with its accreditation review process, the PA Program is committed to the pursuit of excellence and will, therefore, collect, review, and analyze program and student quantitative and qualitative data as part of its ongoing self-assessment for continuous quality improvement and accreditation purposes. The following are examples of some of the data collected:

- Performance evaluations, written examination, OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations), practical examinations, projects, and presentations
- Instructor/lecturer/preceptor surveys and evaluations
- Course evaluations
- Professionalism assessment
- Clinical rotation logs
- Clinical site evaluations
- PA Education Association (PAEA) End-of-Rotation Examinations (EOR)
- Town Hall meeting notes
- Exit survey results
- PA Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) scores
- PA National Certifying Examination (PANCE) scores
- Graduate survey results
- Research projects

## **II. Physician Assistant Program – Rules and Regulations**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This section contains rules and regulations for students seeking admission to or enrolled in the PA Program. These rules and regulations are designed to promote standards for academic competence, professional behavior, integrity, conduct, and personal responsibility. Section III represents the parameters of achievement and behavior the PA Program faculty expect of students as future health practitioners who will be serving the public. It is the responsibility of all students to be knowledgeable about Program rules and regulations. The rules and regulations are applied to all aspects of the student's academic progress and conduct for as long as the student is enrolled in the PA Program.

## **B. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Background Checks / Drug and Alcohol Testing**

#### *Background Checks and Drug Screens*

Continued enrollment in the PA Program is based upon satisfactory results on background checks and drug screenings. Upon admission but prior to enrollment, all Physician Assistant students are subject to a university-mandated background check that must be completed by March 1<sup>st</sup> of the matriculation year; failure to satisfy this deadline may result in forfeiture of the student's seat in the class.

In the event a student has an unsatisfactory finding on a background check or a positive drug screen for a non-prescribed controlled substance, such information will be forwarded to the university's background check review committee. A student may be denied enrollment depending on the circumstances regarding the offense or, if already enrolled, suspended or removed from the PA Program or the university and suspended or removed from clinical experiences; students may also be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Failure to submit to a background check will result in denial of admission to or dismissal from the PA Program.

#### *Other Screenings*

A clinical site may request repeat or further testing, such as additional background checks (including fingerprint screens) and drug screening, in which the student agrees to participate and for which the student will be held financially responsible.

### **2. Policy on Immunizations and Physical Examination (ARC-PA Std 3.07a)**

All PA Program students are **absolutely required** to meet both university and current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) health and immunization requirements before engaging in any clinical activities. This includes the following, subject to change:

- A current physical examination.
- Before the didactic year: a negative tuberculosis skin test. Before the clinical year: a negative two-step tuberculosis test within 12 months. (Those known to have had tuberculosis infection or disease in the past will NOT be tested but instead will need to provide documentation from their health care provider and a negative chest x-ray performed after the date of the positive PPD documentation.)
- Three doses of hepatitis B vaccine and proof of a protective titer showing immune status.
- Two doses of MMR vaccine and proof of a protective titer showing immune status.
- Completion of the varicella (chicken pox) vaccine series and proof of a protective titer showing immune status.
- Up-to-date annual influenza vaccination.
- Up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination, including annual boosters as available.
- Tdap vaccination within past 10 years.
- A color blindness test (Ishihara).
- Respiratory fit testing.

Failure to meet any of these requirements will result in a Health Services hold being placed on the student's account, which prohibits the student from registering/reinstating at the university. All requisite documents must be submitted to Health Services before a hold will be removed.

Students are also required to meet the physical examination and immunization requirements of their clinical education sites which may include requirements not listed above. The cost of all testing is the responsibility of the student.

**3. Malpractice Insurance**

The university shall enroll students in malpractice insurance while they are matriculated in the PA Program. For information on this policy and to understand its coverage and limits, please contact the university’s risk manager.

**4. Textbooks**

All course syllabi include a list of required texts and other resources and/or supplies which must be purchased by the student. Students can plan on spending approximately \$2,000 for these **required** items over the two years of the PA Program, although prices are subject to change. The PA Program will make a list of required texts available as soon as possible prior to the start of classes. In addition, each course syllabus includes a list of recommended texts and resources which students are not required to purchase but may wish to have as important reference materials. The JWU library provides access to many online textbooks, some of which are the required texts for courses. If an online required course text is available, purchase of a hard text is optional. All students are required to have a laptop capable of accessing these electronic materials (see item 7 below). For those texts not available online, students are expected to have the required text by the beginning of class for each semester.

**5. Supplies**

The following supplies must be procured by the student:

**Scrubs:** Students must wear surgical scrubs during the summer Anatomy course and may find them useful to wear during other labs throughout the year. Given the rapid pace of the course, the Program strongly suggests having two sets of scrubs. Students may choose the color of scrubs. Cost of scrubs is estimated at \$60 for the required two sets.

**Short White Clinical Coat:** Students are required to have a short, long-sleeved, white clinical coat. A clinical coat ends at the upper thigh/top of inseam. A clinical coat that ends lower than this (at mid- thigh) is too long. White jackets are the required dress code for all clinical experiences because they signify “student” status. The PA Program provides one coat with a JWU patch at the beginning of the didactic year, but students should purchase a second prior to the clinical year. The cost of a clinical coat is estimated to be \$27.

**Nametags and Patches:** For each white jacket/coat, students are required to have a JWU PA Program patch, which are available through the University Bookstore at an estimated cost of \$10, and a JWU PA Program nametag, which will be provided during PA Program orientation.

**6. Medical Equipment (Subject to change)**

The following is a list of the required and recommended equipment (in addition to what is indicated above):

Required Equipment	Estimated Cost (subject to change)
Oto-Ophthalmoscope set (Welch Allyn full size/3.5 volt diagnostic set with traditional <b>coaxial</b> ophthalmoscope). Panoptic ophthalmoscopes are not acceptable unless the Panoptic device	\$570

also includes a coaxial option. Also an insufflation bulb.	
Stethoscope (Littman Cardiology IV or better)	\$189
Reflex hammer	\$2
Tuning forks-128 Hz and 512 Hz	\$10 each
Sphygmomanometer (blood pressure cuff)	\$200
Penlight	\$7
Snellen eye chart	\$0
Metric tape measure	\$3
EKG calipers	\$5
Examination gown (“johnnie”) that ties in the back	\$7
Examination drape (flat twin sheet, white)	\$7
<b>Recommended Equipment</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Medical Bag	\$34
<b>Total Approximate Costs</b>	<b>\$1050</b>

Before the didactic year begins, the PA Program will connect students with one or more sales representatives who are aware of the specifications of the supplies required; however, students are free to purchase from other parties at their discretion. The Academic Coordinator must approve any substitutions for the required equipment.

## 7. Information Technology Requirements

It is the student’s responsibility to have a fully functional computing environment in order to achieve Program success. Students must have a notebook or laptop computer with reliable wireless Internet access. Note that an iPad or similar tablet device will not work on all platforms and does not have all of the necessary capabilities. Both the PA Program and the university use e-mail as the primary method of communication. Additionally, coursework may be fully on-line or hybrid, necessitating reliable Wi-Fi of sufficient speed to support large file streaming and other forms of electronic transfer. Students must be able to access Ulearn, the university's online course management system, for class materials and grades; ExamSoft Exemplify,\* a computer-based secure testing platform; and CORE, a web-based system for evaluations and patient logging that will be used during the clinical year. JWU Information Services recommends Chrome software for some online applications. Students must also have software that allows them to prepare PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, videos, and other communication modalities, along with up-to-date virus/malware protection.

To accomplish the above, the following are specific laptop/notebook requirements (adapted from the requirements for ExamSoft; no tablet computers or virtual operation systems will meet these requirements):

### PC Users:

- Operating System: 64-bit Versions of Windows 10 and Windows 11
  - Alternate versions of Windows 10 and Windows 11, such as Windows RT and Windows 10 and 11 S, are NOT supported at this time.
  - Only genuine versions of Windows Operating Systems are supported.
- CPU Processor: Non-ARM based processor supported by your operating system
- RAM: 4GB or higher

- Hard Drive: 4 GB or higher of available space
- Internet connection
- Screen resolution: 1024x768 or higher
- Administrator level computer permissions

#### Mac Users:

- OS System: Catalina, Big Sur, and Monterey
  - Only genuine versions of Mac operating systems are supported.
- CPU: Intel or M1 processor.
- RAM: 4GB or higher
- Hard Drive: 4 GB or higher available space
- Internet connection
- Administrator level computer permissions

#### Software

The following software programs are available to students and should work on computers that are only two to three years old. However, especially with Adobe products, the more up-to-date and the faster the computer, the better the programs will work.

Microsoft Office Products available: <https://it.jwu.edu/discounts-for-students>

Microsoft OneDrive is available to all JWU students: <https://it.jwu.edu/onedrive/>

Adobe Products available: <https://it.jwu.edu/discounts-for-students>

\*ExamSoft Examplify requirements can be found: <http://www.examssoft.com/jwupa>

Symantec Antivirus Software is available: <https://it.jwu.edu/discounts-for-students>: Windows PC and Mac users are able to obtain Symantec Antivirus for free while a student at JWU

Please note: All students are required to comply with the university's Computer and Technology Use Policy (available at <https://it.jwu.edu/pagec> )

## 8. Required Training and Certifications

**Basic Life Support (BLS) Training:** Prior to enrollment, all students must complete a *Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers* course (BLS) from the American Heart Association or Red Cross that remains in effect for the two years of the PA Program. Students are responsible for the cost of this training. Students will receive ACLS training, for which BLS is required prior to the clinical year as part of the Clinical Skills course.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):** Once matriculated, all students must complete HIPAA training, which may require updating or re-certification prior to starting clinical rotations. The PA Program provides this training.

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Precautions (ARC-PA Std A3.08a):** Working in a clinical setting can expose the student to a wide variety of health risks, including infectious disorders, including but in no way limited to COVID-19 (please see the disclaimer in the Student Handbook applicable

to all university students across all colleges and programs for additional discussion about COVID-19 and related issues). Health care professionals and students can also act as vectors for infectious illnesses to patients who are already ill and sometimes immuno-compromised. Safety of the student, patients, and other health care providers is critical to the health and well-being of all. Health care practitioners can reasonably anticipate that they will come in contact with blood and/or other potentially infectious materials. Therefore, all students will complete OSHA training and must be compliant with OSHA and universal precaution requirements including the use of gloves, care of sharp objects, use of eyewear, protective clothing, and other precautionary measures while on clinical rotations. The PA Program will provide this training.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of the *Health and Safety* Section of the Physician Assistant Program Standards of Professional Conduct and is subject to disciplinary review. (See Appendix A.)

## **C. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES (ARC-PA Std 3.15a-d)**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Students are ultimately responsible for their own academic performance. Students are in the best position to truly understand their level of comprehension and are encouraged to reach out to faculty members with questions or to seek instruction, advice, and resources. The university has a number of resources to assist students experiencing academic challenges, including academic advisors and the Learning Centers.

Students must demonstrate satisfactory academic performance in order to remain enrolled in the PA Program. The PA Program has developed the following procedures regarding satisfactory academic performance. Students who fail to maintain the appropriate grade point average will be placed on academic probation. With failure to improve, such students may be dismissed.

### **2. Graduation Requirements**

To successfully graduate from the PA Program, students must:

1. Complete the entire program within three (3) academic years; and
2. Successfully complete and pass all required courses, rotations, and program requirements with a grade of C or better **and** have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00.

### **3. Grading**

The Physician Assistant Program requires a minimum 3.0 term and cumulative GPA. While a passing score may be lower, scores below 80% are considered less than expected performance in the PA Program. The grading system for the PA program is defined below.

Students must complete and pass all semester courses before they can progress to the next semester of the PA Program. Successful academic performance in the PA Program is demonstrated by passing all required courses, rotations, and other program requirements with a grade of C or better and having a minimum term and cumulative GPA of 3.00.

In general, students may not appeal final grades. However, in the case of clerical or mathematical errors in the calculation or recording of a grade, PA Program students may appeal the grade, in writing, to the

pertinent faculty member within five (working) days of that grade being posted; appeals not in writing or outside of this time period will not be considered. This policy supersedes the JWU grade appeal process. For more information, please go to: <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/academicpolicies/gradeappeals/>.

	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Quality Points</b>
<b>Grade Range</b>		
95–100	A+	4.00
90–94.99	A	4.00
87–89.99	A-	3.70
83–86.99	B+	3.30
80–82.99	B	3.00
77–79.99	B-	2.70
73–76.99	C+	2.30
70–72.99	C	2.00
Below 70	F	0.00
Withdrawal	W	0.00
Withdrawal/Fail	WF	0.00
Withdrawal/Pass	WP	
Incomplete	I	
No Credit	NC (non-punitive withdrawal)	
Grade Pending	GP	
Audit	AU	
Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory	S/U	
No Grade	NG	

#### **4. Methodology for Determining Student’s Academic Standing**

Each student within the PA Program must maintain a minimum 3.0 (4.0 scale) term and cumulative GPA to maintain good standing in the PA Program. Student progress in the PA Program will be discussed continually by the PA Program faculty at regularly scheduled faculty meetings and at the conclusion of each semester.

#### **Academic Standing Standards**

<b>Status at Start of Semester</b>	<b>Cumulative or Term GPA</b>	<b>Status at Semester Completion</b>
Good Standing	3.0-4.0	Good Standing
Good Standing	2.0-2.99	Academic Probation
Good Standing	0.0-1.99	Academic Dismissal
Academic Probation	3.0-4.0	Good Standing
Academic Probation	0.0-2.99	Academic Dismissal
Academic Warning	3.0-4.0	Good Standing
Academic Warning	0.0-2.99	Academic Dismissal

- A grade of “C” or higher is required for all required courses within the PA Program. If a student receives an “F” in a course required by the Program, the student will be placed on Academic Probation and must repeat the course. The student will be removed from Academic Probation when they have successfully repeated the course with a “C” or higher and obtained a cumulative GPA



above 3.0. PA Program students will be allowed a maximum of two (2) opportunities to successfully pass each course or rotation. They will be permitted to repeat a failed course or rotation only as part of a detailed remediation plan. Failure to pass a course or rotation on the second opportunity will result in academic dismissal from the Program.

- All courses within the PA Program are sequential and are prerequisites for subsequent semester courses. Didactic courses are only offered once a year, so any course that must be repeated will result in deceleration of the student from the current cohort (see below). During the clinical year, repeated courses may result in a delay in graduation. The PA Program faculty and staff make every effort to provide support and access to appropriate assistance to help all students restore good academic standing.
- If a student is placed on Academic Probation a second time, either for low cumulative GPA or failure of a course, the student will be automatically dismissed from the PA Program and the university.

## **5. Academic Review Process: (ARC-PA Std A3.15c, d)**

### **a. At-Risk**

A holistic assessment of a student who demonstrates a negative trend in grades or demonstrates a high degree of variability in academic performance over a given time period may, at the discretion of the PA Program, be deemed “At-Risk.” The student’s GPA may still be in the 3.0-4.0 range when deemed “At-Risk.” As such, they will be counseled by their faculty adviser and referred for tutoring or alternate options in an effort to support the student’s academics. Mitigating circumstances should be brought to the attention of the student’s faculty advisor and elevated to the Director of the PA Program as deemed necessary. Documentation of a plan for academic improvement should be developed and filed on a Program Encounter Form. It is ultimately the student’s responsibility to actively participate in their own academic success which includes self-awareness of worsening academic performance and a capacity for self-reflection about potential mitigating circumstances leading to a degradation of their typical academic performance. At-Risk status places the student at higher risk of being placed on Academic Probation but is not a required step for being placed on Academic Probation.

### **b. Academic Probation**

Students may be placed on probation if they fail to maintain a cumulative or term GPA of 3.0 or to attain a C or better in all Program requirements. Students on probation risk permanent dismissal from the university if they are unable to attain Good Standing by the end of the following semester. <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/academicpolicies/academicstanding/>

### **c. Academic Dismissal & Appeal Process**

Academically dismissed undergraduate and graduate students may no longer matriculate at the university for at least one semester, and are expected to work on academic deficiencies. To return to the university, students may petition the Academic Appeals Committee, providing a letter of intent and documentation of academic improvement. All students should be discussing this process with their assigned academic counselor/advisor. The Academic Appeals Committee will also consider appeals that document mitigating circumstances. Students may only appeal their dismissal once and the decision of the Academic Appeals Committee is final. <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/academicpolicies/academicstanding/>

## **6. Remediation**

Remediation is a program-defined process for addressing and correcting deficiencies for students in the Program who either have not met an academic standard and are still active in the Program, taken a leave of absence, or have decelerated. Remediation is an opportunity to correct unsatisfactory academic performance, academic progress, and/or professional conduct issues in the Program. An opportunity for remediation is not automatic and may not be offered.

Remediation may occur at the program-level for a failed course, for a student returning from a non-academic leave of absence, or for violations of professionalism and/or behavioral policies.

Remediation inside a course is triggered for a non-passing grade on a critical assessment as identified in the course syllabus and required for progression in the Program. The critical assessments in the Program include didactic course final exams, end-of-didactic year OSCE, clinical year end-of-rotation exams, and all of the components of the Program summative evaluation. Failure of any of these key assessments would require remediation before progressing in the Program. The number of times a student may remediate critical assessments is limited to two times per didactic semester and two times during the clinical year. Further remediation would require approval by the PA Program Director upon recommendation of the faculty.

After considering all pertinent circumstances in each case, including but not limited to the student's demonstrated dedication to learning, active participation in the educational Program, overall academic/clinical performance, regular attendance, individual initiative, professionalism, and utilization of available resources, individual faculty members, in consultation with the student's advisor, the course coordinator, and/or the PA Program Director, may recommend a remediation plan including a timeline for completion and criteria for successful remediation. Copies of the remediation plan and outcomes of remediation are maintained in the student's individual program file. Students who fail to meet these requirements will be subject to dismissal from the PA Program.

## **7. Repeat of Failed Courses**

If granted the opportunity to remediate as described above, PA Program students may be allowed to repeat a failed course or rotation only as part of a detailed remediation plan. This may necessitate additional course work and/or delay graduation. A delayed graduation could involve additional time enrolled as a student and additional tuition and fees. Failure to pass a course or rotation on the second opportunity results in academic dismissal from the Program.

## **8. Satisfactory Academic Progress – Financial Aid**

Separate from the University's policies, federal law requires that students receiving federal financial aid must demonstrate that they are meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements, as defined by federal law. SAP measures a student's completion of coursework toward a degree. JWU evaluates SAP at the end of each semester for each student. Students who do not meet all SAP criteria may lose their eligibility to receive all types of financial aid (e.g., federal, state, private, and institutional aid). Students are notified of SAP decisions by Student Academic & Financial Services both orally and in writing. Failure to achieve SAP may result in a remediation or other plan that may necessitate additional course work and/or delayed graduation. A delayed graduation could involve additional time enrolled as a student and additional tuition and fees. This additional cost may not qualify for financial aid.

## **9. Deceleration**

Deceleration is the loss of students from their entering cohort. Under extraordinary circumstances, students may be permitted to decelerate. Deceleration occurs when students are granted permission to disengage from their entering cohort and join the following year's cohort. A student requesting deceleration must communicate the request in writing with the Director of the PA Program. The Director of the PA Program will present the request to the faculty for discussion and recommendations and make a final decision. Any student who is granted deceleration and joins the following year's cohort will be held responsible for meeting the policies, procedures, and curricular requirements as defined by the *PA Student Handbook* for that class. This may necessitate additional course work and/or delay graduation. A delayed graduation could involve additional time enrolled as a student and additional tuition and fees.

*Deceleration may occur only once.* The student must meet the following criteria to be considered for deceleration:

Current minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in PA Program *\*Note: if a request occurs during the first semester of the PA Program, student must have sufficiently demonstrated the commitment, dedication, and academic aptitude needed to be successful in the PA Program.*

Demonstration of behavior, attitude, and ethics consistent with professional demeanor expected of a PA student, as determined by Director of the PA Program in their sole discretion.

## **10. Advanced Placement (ARC-PA Std A3.13c)**

There is no advanced placement in the PA program.

## **11. Prior Work Experience**

The PA Program does not provide academic credit for any prior work experience.

## **12. Transfer Credit (ARC-PA Std A3.13c)**

The PA Program does not accept any transfer credits.

## **13. Refund Policy (ARC-PA Std A1.02i)**

Information on the university's refund policy is available at: <http://catalog.jwu.edu/financingyourdegree/refundpolicies/>

## **D. CLASSROOM AND CLINICAL SITE POLICIES**

### **1. Attendance Policy**

*Attendance is essential to student success.* Attendance at all assigned classes, seminars, testing sessions, interprofessional activities, cooking for health & wellness classes and labs, and other program activities is considered an aspect of professional responsibility and individual dependability. During the didactic year, students are required to be available Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm and should schedule appointments during semester breaks if at all possible. During the clinical year, students are required to work the schedule assigned to them by the clinical site and must meet clinical hour minimums listed in the course syllabus. The student is expected to be in attendance and on-site daily and, when asked or requested, to be available for

evenings and/or weekend hours. In addition, students are not permitted to arrive late to a PA Program activity or leave early without the permission as discussed below.

Promptness is another professionalism behavior the healthcare practitioner must display. Students are expected to arrive 5-10 minutes early to be ready for class on time. Repeated tardiness is considered unprofessional conduct and at the discretion of the faculty member and/or Director of Didactic Education, a tardy student may be referred to their assigned Faculty Advisor and/or the Director of the PA Program.

Students are not permitted to take “vacations” during the academic or clinical year. Students must adhere to the schedule of the academic and clinical year.

### **Approved and other types of absences in the Didactic Year:**

#### **Anticipated absences:**

Request for an anticipated absence must be made in advance (at least four weeks or as soon as possible) in writing (Program time-off request form) and by email to the Director of Didactic Education AND the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator. Students are limited to two approved absence days per didactic semester. Approved absences may be utilized for personal reasons including key life events and routine medical appointments. Any partial day will be counted as a half day. Make-up work must be completed for all excused absences. These assignments might differ from the work missed. Subsequent absences will be considered unapproved, and no make-up work will be accepted. Failure to notify the appropriate individuals in a timely manner may result in conduct sanctions. Unapproved absences are considered a reflection of unprofessional conduct and may result in referral to the Faculty Advisor and/or Director of the PA Program. Any student requiring more frequent absences must discuss the need with the Director of the PA Program for approval.

Students may request to be excused for religious holidays; however, these dates must be discussed and approved by the Director of Didactic Education. These holidays will not count against the two approved absence maximum.

#### **Unexpected absences:**

In the event of illness or other unexpected reason for absence, the student must notify the Director of Didactic Education AND the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator by e-mail, text, or telephone as soon as possible. A routine doctor’s appointment is not unexpected and would fall into the anticipated absences above. For an absence due to illness of more than two “work days,” the student is required to provide a medical note to the Director of Didactic Education from a medical provider (who cannot be a family member or friend) who saw, examined, and treated the student in an office/clinic or hospital setting. Make-up work will be assigned as appropriate.

#### **Return after breaks:**

Students should plan to arrive back locally 24-48 hours prior to resumption of class after scheduled breaks (e.g., spring break, semester break, holiday break). Any missed class days after break due to travel delays will be considered unexcused.

### **Absences in the Clinical Year: See the Clinical Year Manual for the complete policy**

Students are not permitted to take “vacations” during the clinical year. Students must adhere to the schedule of the rotation/site/preceptor during the clinical year.

Requests for time off for non-urgent personal reasons should be for *major life events only* and are **NOT** guaranteed to be approved by the Clinical Year Team. A Request for Time Off form must be submitted through CORE six weeks prior to the expected absence. This request is subject to approval or denial by the Director of Clinical Education or the Clinical Coordinator(s). If the Clinical Year Team approves the request, student may then inform the preceptor of the approved absence. **Students are not to request time off from a preceptor or clinical site without first seeking approval from the Clinical Year Team.** Students are required to make up all missed time. Failure to notify the appropriate individuals in a timely manner may result in conduct sanctions.

### **Absences of three (3) or more consecutive “workdays” from required activities**

Three or more consecutive workdays missed constitutes significant missed content/activities in the didactic year and significant time in the clinical year. As above, the student will be required to make up all missed activities. If this cannot be achieved during the semester or clinical rotation block, the PA Program may require the student to complete the activities at other times. This may in turn delay the student’s graduation from the PA Program or result in deceleration to the next cohort. A delayed graduation could involve additional time enrolled as a student and additional tuition and fees.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of the *Attendance and Promptness* Sections of the Physician Assistant Program Standards of Professional Conduct and the JWU Code of Conduct. When an attendance or tardiness problem cannot be resolved at the PA Program level, the student may be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct. This office will review the case and make a determination that could include probation, suspension, or dismissal from the PA Program and university. (See Appendix A.)

## **2. Cellphones**

Communication devices such as cellphones and pagers may not be used in the PA Program classrooms, clinical skills lab, or gross anatomy lab without the permission of the appropriate faculty member.

Students will place all electronic communication devices (pagers, cell/smart phones) in the **OFF** mode, set to vibrate, or otherwise render devices inaudible while at clinical sites. Use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) is **not** permitted in the classroom or while at the clinical site. Students are prohibited from recording, discussing, uploading, sharing, or transferring any data, images, videos, or any information related to their clinical experiences without the express written permission of the clinical site and the Director of the PA Program. Students are required to comply with site policies regarding the use of cell/smart phones within the facility.

Student use of cell/smart phones, iPads, tablets, and/or use of the facility site computer for clinical site work, Program business, or Program-related research **must be approved by the preceptor.** Students are required to comply with site policies regarding the use of cell/smart phones within the clinical facility.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of the *Respect and Civility, Integrity, and Confidentiality* Sections of the Physician Assistant Program Standards of Professional Conduct, subject to disciplinary review. (See Appendix A.)

### **3. Examination Protocol (may be modified for remote exams)**

The following rules apply to all students during an examination:

1. Students are required to be present for all scheduled examinations.
2. A student who arrives late to an examination will not be given additional time to complete the examination. If a student arrives 15 or more minutes late from the exam start time, it is the prerogative of the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator to determine if the student will be permitted to take the examination or whether the examination will be rescheduled for that student. If the examination is rescheduled, the examination will cover the same subject material as covered by the original examination; however, it may be modified from the original examination. Furthermore, any student arriving after other students have completed the examination and left the testing area will not be allowed to start the examination.
3. A student who is unable to attend a scheduled examination for any reason must notify both the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator AND the Director of Didactic Education (in person, via text, or via e-mail) as soon as possible **prior** to the start of the exam. The Principal Faculty Course Coordinator and the Director of Didactic Education will determine whether the student will be permitted to make up the missed examination. They may require a health provider note for absences due to illness.
4. If the student is granted a make-up examination, the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator and the Director of Didactic Education will determine the time and date. Students who miss an examination must contact the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator and the Director of Didactic Education to discuss the scheduling of the examination upon their return to campus. If the examination is rescheduled, the exam will cover the same subject material as covered by the original examination; however, it may be modified from the original examination.
5. Failure to make up the examination within the specified time period will result in a grade of zero for that examination.
6. If a student fails to appear for an examination and fails to notify the Principal Faculty Course Coordinator and the Director of Didactic Education prior to the examination, formal documentation will be placed in the student file. In addition, the student will receive a grade of zero for the examination, and no make-up examination will be offered. Such behavior violates the PA Program Standards of Professional Conduct.
7. All examinations remain property of the PA Program. No student is permitted to retain a copy or any part of an examination. Possession of an examination outside of a classroom constitutes theft under the Student Code of Conduct.
8. Upon entry into the examination site, students must place all books, notes, study aids, coats, and personal possessions on the floor at the front of the room. No talking is allowed once an examination begins. Any student engaging in disruptive behavior or inappropriate conduct during an examination is subject to disciplinary action. Obtaining a copy of the examination or a previous year's exam or questions and/or getting help from another student during the examination are considered cheating and may result in disciplinary action related to Academic Integrity.

9. The following items are prohibited in the seating area of the testing room. Possession of any of these items will result in expulsion from the examination and a score of zero for the examination. Students may also face disciplinary actions related to Academic Integrity.

- Watches with an alarm, computer, or memory capability
- Cellular phones
- Paging devices
- Recording/filming devices
- Personal digital assistants of any kind
- Reference materials
- Backpacks, briefcases, and coats
- Food/drink items except for water bottles
- Students may not wear hats of any kind, sweatshirt hoods, or sunglasses during examinations.

#### **4. Needle Stick/Bodily Fluids Exposures (ARC-PA Std A3.08b, c)**

Exposure to bodily fluids and/or inadvertent needle sticks represent a health and safety concern.

If an exposure occurs during the didactic year, the student should instantly cleanse the affected area and report the exposure to the Director of Didactic Education **immediately**. Immediate medical care and lab work will be done at either the nearest appropriate emergency department or with the student's primary care provider, at the sole discretion of the Director of Didactic Education. Any and all expenses for the care and treatment are the responsibility of the student.

If an exposure occurs at a clinical site, the supervising physician or supervisor must be notified **IMMEDIATELY**. The protocol at the clinical site may govern the medical approach to that exposure. Immediate medical care and lab work will be done at either the nearest appropriate emergency department or at the rotation site. Additional care and follow up may be with the student's primary care provider. **Clinical sites are under no obligation to provide the student with free medical care.** Any and all expenses for the care and treatment are the responsibility of the student.

Students must also notify the Director of Clinical Education as soon as possible of the exposure and complete the *Student Exposure Form* located Appendix C of this Handbook. Any and all expenses for the care and treatment are the responsibility of the student. Please see *Needle Stick/Bodily Fluids Exposure Guidelines* in Appendix C.

#### **E. Clinical Rotation Placement Policy (ARC-PA Std A3.03)**

Clinical rotation placement for each student is the responsibility of the Clinical Coordinator(s) and the PA Program. The Program makes all decisions regarding student placement.

The Program develops and maintains many clinical education sites and educates clinicians who work with the Program to provide clinical experience and training; priority is given to student placement in these sites. Students are not required to find their own rotation sites or preceptors. While students will have the opportunity to request new sites and/or preceptors through the Rotation Placement Preference Form, they may not independently develop or arrange their own clinical sites or clinical schedule.

Once the rotation schedule has been set, rotation site assignments are non-negotiable. The PA Program is not required to take into account the personal circumstances of a student in making assignments to sites. While personal considerations are respected when possible, the primary focus of rotation assignments is to give each student a well-rounded clinical experience. Therefore, students are required to attend each site to which they are assigned. Students may not switch rotation assignments with other students or arrange their own rotations.

## **F. DRESS CODE POLICY**

As a representative of Johnson & Wales University, the College of Health and Wellness, and the Center for PA Studies, the image you project must be a professional one. Students must dress professionally at all times. Revealing, inappropriate, or offensive clothing is not permitted in the classroom or clinical setting. Along with a neat and tidy appearance, students are expected to maintain appropriate personal hygiene. Students who are participating in any clinical experience (during the didactic year on hospital visits or in the clinical year on rotations) are required to wear clinical attire at all times.

**The following apply to both didactic and clinical years. Clinical year may impose additional dress code requirements based on clinical site placement (see Clinical Year Handbook).**

### ***1. Classroom Attire and Appearance***

Appropriate attire and grooming in the didactic setting includes: clean and neat clothing and hair (including facial hair), fingernails trimmed short, minimum jewelry, and minimum or no fragrances. Please note that long, acrylic, and/or gel fingernails interfere with performing physical examination and diagnostic skills and are prohibited during the didactic and clinical years.

The required professional dress is considered business casual. Jeans, shorts, athletic wear, tee shirts, hats, sweatshirts, flip-flops, and other leisure/beach wear are not permitted. Students are not to wear hospital-specific attire, such as scrubs, unless told to do so. Students are expected to wear appropriate footwear while attending class. The following should be avoided: plunging or revealing necklines, midriff exposures, strapless or strapped blouses, cropped tops, tank tops, mini-skirts, prominent slogans or images that may cause offense, and clothing of any kind with tears, holes, or rips.

Clinical skills and anatomy laboratory attire depends upon the anticipated laboratory assignment. Laboratory attire may include: in the clinical skills lab—gym and/or swim apparel and hospital gowns; in the anatomy lab—individually purchased scrubs, student lab coat and closed toe shoes.

### ***2. Clinical Attire (ARC-PA Std A3.06)***

When in the clinical setting, students should be well groomed and appropriately dressed for working with patients and other health-care professionals. Students not meeting these standards of dress and grooming may be denied access to clinical settings and to patients.



- Full professional attire is required to properly identify PA students in a clinical setting and includes a short white lab coat with a JWU PA program logo and JWU PA name tag.
- Students shall dress in business attire consistent with office/clinic standards and appropriate to the given clinical rotation. Students are not to wear scrubs unless told to do so.
  - The following should be avoided: plunging or revealing necklines, midriff exposures, strapless or strapped blouses, cropped tops, tank tops, mini-skirts, prominent slogans or images that may cause offense, and clothing of any kind with tears, holes, or rips.
- Back to campus attire: When clinical year students return to JWU for Back to Campus Days, they should dress professionally in business casual.

Clinical supervisors, preceptors, and PA Program faculty reserve the right to remove any student from a clinical site/experience who is not appropriately dressed.

## **G. IDENTIFICATION POLICY (ARC-PA Std A3.06)**

Physician assistant students must be clearly identified while in any clinical setting by wearing the PA-Program-issued white coat with the JWU PA logo and JWU nametag. At minimum, students will introduce themselves as physician assistant students and sign all documentation with their legible full signature followed by 'PA-S' or 'PA student.' At no time should a student misrepresent themselves as being other than a physician assistant student. While in the PA Program, students may not use previously earned titles (e.g., RN, MD, DC, PhD, etc.). Failing to identify oneself appropriately or misrepresenting oneself will result in immediate dismissal from the PA Program.

Failure to comply with this section is a violation of the *Behavior and Professional Image* Sections of the Physician Assistant Program Standards of Professional Conduct and is subject to disciplinary review. (See Appendix D.)

## **H. STUDENT MISCONDUCT**

Student misconduct falls into one of three categories: behavioral misconduct (see Student Code of Conduct below), academic misconduct, and behavior that violates the Physician Assistant Program's Standards of Professional Conduct.

### **1. Student Code of Conduct**

The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct and the Conduct Review Process is to help the university maintain a safe, healthy, and positive campus community and online environment for living, learning, and working, where individuals act lawfully and in compliance with university policies and rules and act with honesty, integrity, civility, and respect for themselves and others and for the university community and its surrounding communities. The Student Code of Conduct sets forth the behavioral requirements for community. Violations of this Code are resolved through the Conduct Review Process. For more information please see: <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/studentaffairs/studentcodeofconduct/>.

## **2. Academic Misconduct**

Instances of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration, are prohibited under the Student Code of Conduct. Allegations of academic dishonesty that originate in the academic setting are managed by faculty and resolved through the “Academic Integrity Review Process” found at: <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>.

## **3. The Physician Assistant Program’s Standards of Professional Conduct.**

PA students are required to conduct themselves consistently in a professional manner commensurate with the role and responsibility of a health care professional. The standards of such behavior are set forth in the PA Program’s Standards of Professional Conduct. The standards are in effect at all times, apply to all students while enrolled in the PA program, and cover all student conduct, whether that student is on or off campus. The Standards of Professional Conduct are found in Section IV, Appendix A.

# **III. GENERAL UNIVERSITY RULES AND REQUIREMENTS**

The following section contains information on policies that are of particular importance to the PA Program. However, please note that students are responsible for reviewing and understanding all provisions of the Student Handbook (generally applicable to all students).

## **A. ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **1. Leaves of Absence**

Under certain circumstances, students may request a leave of absence from the university. A “leave of absence” enables a student to remain enrolled in the university during their time away. Students may not request a leave of absence for academic reasons. Student Academic & Financial Services, in consultation with the PA Program Director, reviews requests and required documentation in a timely manner and will approve or deny as appropriate.

For more information about leaves of absence, please see: <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/generalinformationandpolicies/withdrawalfromjwu/medicalwithdrawal/>

### **2. Withdrawal and Readmittance**

Students may withdraw from a course or a term or the university. Prior to withdrawing, students must meet with the PA Program Director, Student Academic Services and Student Financial Services to address the impact of withdrawal on their status. Students may be denied a withdrawal from a course or rotation.

For more information on withdrawal and readmittance, please see:

<https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/generalinformationandpolicies/withdrawalfromjwu/medicalwithdrawal/>

<https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/academicpolicies/readmittancepolicy/>

## **B. ACADEMIC RESOURCES (ARC-PA Std A1.04)**

### **1. Academic Advising**

All students are assigned a Faculty Advisor. Students must meet with their Faculty Advisor at least once each semester during their didactic year and as determined by the faculty at Back to Campus Day(s) during their clinical year. Faculty Advisors schedule required student advising meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to review the student's progress and to discuss any problems the student may be experiencing. Students are encouraged to meet with their Faculty Advisors more frequently if they are having academic problems or if they would like to strengthen their experience. The PA Program Director will not be assigned advisees except under special circumstances.

### **2. Academic Success Center**

The Learning Centers are available to all students and offer tutoring and study skills workshop in areas such as time management, test-taking strategies, and stress management. For more information, go to: <https://sites.jwu.edu/academic-success/index.html>

### **3. Accessibility Services**

Johnson & Wales University complies with applicable laws governing disabilities that prohibit institutions of higher education from discriminating against students with disabilities. JWU is committed to achieving equal educational opportunities for persons with disabilities. It is our policy that no qualified person be excluded from participating in any university program or activity, including the PA Program.

In order to be qualified to participate in the PA Program, students must be able to meet the university and PA Program requirements (including but not limited to technical standards, clinical requirements, and professional requirements) with or without reasonable accommodations.

The Center for Academic Support provides a variety of reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. To request an accommodation or for more information, please contact the Center at 401-598-4689 or visit <https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/student-services/accessibility-services/services/>

## **C. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **1. Faculty Serving as Healthcare Providers for Students (ARC-PA Std A3.09)**

The PA Program Principal Faculty, the Program Director, and the Medical Director must not participate as health care providers for students in the PA Program, except in an emergency situation.

### **2. Health Insurance**

While matriculated in the PA Program, students are responsible for the costs associated with any routine or non-routine medical care.

All students are *required* to have health insurance coverage while enrolled in the PA Program. If students already have acceptable health insurance coverage, they do not have to enroll in the JWU student health insurance plan. Students can opt out of the university plan by submitting the online waiver form to demonstrate evidence of coverage. Students must submit a new waiver form each academic year. Students who do not waive the JWU plan will be enrolled in and charged for it. The online waiver form and details of

the plan can be found on the [University Health Plans](https://www.universityhealthplans.com/) website. <https://www.universityhealthplans.com/>

### **3. Student Health Services and Student Counseling Services (ARC-PA Std. A1.04, A3.10)**

The university maintains two Health Services offices where health care is provided to students: one at Wales Hall for the Downcity Campus and one at the Harborside Academic Center. Students may visit either office. For more information visit: <https://health.jwu.edu/providence/index.html>.

In addition, the university offers student counseling services on its campuses. Counseling services, available on both the Downcity Campus and the Harborside campus, provides counseling and referral to students. Its confidential services include but are not limited to individual and group counseling, emergency psychological services, and sexual assault support services. For more information visit: <https://health.jwu.edu/providence/index.html> or call 401-598-1016.

Students may make their own appointments or may be referred by their faculty advisor, course coordinators, or the PA Program Director in a timely manner as deemed necessary. All student health records will be kept confidential as required by applicable law and will be maintained in Student Health Services and Counseling Centers except as otherwise consistent with applicable law.

#### **Downcity Health Services**

Wales Hall, 3rd floor  
401-598-1104

#### **Harborside Health Services**

Harborside Academic Center  
401-598-1151

After business hours or for emergencies, students should contact Campus Safety & Security at 401-598-1103.

### **4. Recreational Facilities**

Students enrolled in the PA Program may take advantage of the fitness programs available on campus. There are two fitness centers: the Wildcat Center Gym & Fitness Center on the Harborside campus and Wales Hall Fitness Center Downcity.

For more information on these facilities and specific fitness programs, see: [http://providence.jwuathletics.com/information/fitness\\_programs/index](http://providence.jwuathletics.com/information/fitness_programs/index)

### **5. Coping with Stress**

The PA Program is an intensive and rigorous program of academic and experiential learning. The PA Program requirements can be highly demanding and stressful, alone or in combination with other events in students' personal lives. We strongly encourage students to utilize the resources available to them on campus, including Student Health Center, the counseling centers, the Learning Center, and recreational facilities.

In addition, we encourage students to inform their Faculty Advisors in the event they experience problems or stresses that might affect their academic obligations. Students **must** inform their Faculty Advisors in the event they are unable to maintain patient care responsibilities. The Faculty Advisor will endeavor to work with the student to try to arrive at a solution in which both the student's and patients' needs are met, within the parameters of the academic program.

### **6. Smoking Policy**

<https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/generalinformationandpolicies/smoking/>

Smoking and use of any other tobacco products are strictly prohibited in all campus facilities. This includes but is not limited to residence halls, common work areas, classrooms, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, elevators, hallways, stairs, restrooms, vehicles, and all other enclosed facilities.

## **7. *Drug and Alcohol Policy***

<https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/generalinformationandpolicies/drugandalcoholpolicy/>

In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, Johnson & Wales University prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of narcotics, drugs, other controlled substances, or alcohol at the workplace and in the educational setting. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages anywhere on university premises is prohibited except for lawful use at events, operations, or programs sanctioned by university officials (see the Student Code of Conduct). Disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed on a student found to be in violation this policy include but are not limited to revocation of certain privileges, community service, conduct warning, conduct probation, fine or restitution for loss, suspension or dismissal from the university and/or university housing, and referral to alcohol education classes.

## **8. *Campus Safety and Security (ARC-PA Std A1.02g)***

Campus Safety & Security promotes the safety and well-being of JWU students, faculty, staff, and property. Campus Safety & Security contributes to the quality of university life by fostering an environment in which security is balanced with freedom of movement, and individual rights are balanced with community needs. JWU strongly encourages the prompt and accurate reporting of all suspicious or criminal activity that occurs on or near university property. Students and staff should report this activity immediately by calling 401-598-1103. In any emergency situation, students should dial 911 or (9) 911 from a university telephone. Officers are available 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Johnson & Wales University publishes an Annual Security Report and an Annual Fire Safety Report that contains information about campus security and statistics concerning reported crimes that occurred on campus, on public property close to campus, or on other property used or controlled by the university.

For information on that Report and for more information on Campus Security & Safety, please see: <https://safety.jwu.edu/providence>

## **D. OTHER INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES**

### **1. *Communication***

E-mail is the official method of communication to university students. Students are required to check their university e-mail on a daily basis (at least once every 24 hours). The PA Program is not responsible if students have inaccurate or missed information because they do not routinely read, check, and clear their e-mail accounts. E-mail from accounts other than the student's JWU e-mail will not be accepted or used for any communication. Students are expected to keep their JWU e-mail inboxes accessible to PA Program communications. If a student's e-mail is returned due to a "full" account, the returned e-mail will not be resent, and the student will be responsible for the content of the returned e-mail.

### **2. *Inclement Weather***

<https://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/academicpolicies/classcancellations/providence/>

Any cancellation of classes due to inclement weather will be announced over radio stations WPRO-AM (630) and WWBB-FM (101.5) and television stations WLNE (Channel 6) and WJAR (Channel 10). Cancellations will also be sent via JWU e-mail and posted in the emergency alerts section of jwuLink and the campus website.

In addition, you may access class cancellation information by phone: 401-598-5555.

### **3. *Change of Address***

Throughout the PA Program, students are **required** to notify the PA Program immediately when there is a change in their address or phone number. The PA Program will not be responsible for lost mail or late notification when a student does not provide notification of a change. This is in addition to following required university policies for maintaining addresses.

Visit <https://sites.jwu.edu/alerts/update-your-information.html> for additional information.

### **4. *Student Employment while in the PA Program (ARC-PA Std A3.04, A3.05, A3.15e)***

**Students are strongly discouraged from having outside employment while in the PA Program.** PA Program expectations, assignments, deadlines, and responsibilities will not be altered or adjusted to accommodate working students. Student employment must not interfere with the student's learning experience.

Students are not required to work for the PA Program. Students may not substitute for or function as instructional faculty. Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences, and skills may assist faculty in didactic and laboratory sessions to share their knowledge and skills; however, these students will never be asked or permitted to serve as the primary instructor or instructor of record for any component of the curriculum. Additionally, students may not and will not substitute for clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical practical experiences.

### **5. *Transportation and Housing***

Students are required to secure their own reliable transportation to class, laboratory, on- or off-campus patient encounters, simulation exercises, and clinical sites.

Some of the clinical rotation experiences in the clinical year may require travel to sites outside the greater Providence area. Students are responsible for all costs associated with these clinical rotations, including but not limited to travel, parking, and living expenses.

### **6. *Discrimination and Harassment Policy (ARC-PA Std A3.15f)***

Johnson & Wales University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, or any other legally protected status in admission of students, in its programs and activities, or its employment, as required by Title IX and other laws. Inquiries about nondiscrimination can be made to: Nondiscrimination Coordinator, 8 Abbott Park Place, Providence, RI 02903, 401-598-2703, [titleix@jwu.edu](mailto:titleix@jwu.edu), or the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20202-1100, 800-421-3481. Individuals found responsible for acts of discrimination will be subject to the Student Code of Conduct and/or Human Resources policies, as appropriate.

To review the university's full Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy, including information about how to file a complaint, please see:

<http://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/generalinformationandpolicies/discriminationandharassment/>

## **7. *Complaints and Grievances (ARC-PA Std A3.15g)***

The University maintains a complaint and grievance procedure for the resolution of conflict between members of the university community. This procedure is not intended to be a forum to redress inappropriate or prohibited conduct or challenge university policy. Rather, it is a means by which an individual can seek a timely and fair review of their concerns. For information on this procedure, including the types of grievances it covers and the steps to follow, please see:

<http://catalog.jwu.edu/handbook/generalinformationandpolicies/complaintsandgrievances/>

## **Section IV – APPENDIX A**

### **Physician Assistant Studies Program Standards of Professional Conduct**

#### ***I. OVERVIEW***

Both professional conduct and academic progress are important in determining a student’s success in the PA Program and assessing readiness for entry into clinical practice. The PA Program encourages students to strive for academic, professional, and personal excellence in all things. Success requires certain behavioral attributes including empathy, discipline, honesty, integrity, the ability to work collaboratively and effectively with others in a team environment, and the ability to address a crisis or emergency situation in a composed manner. Additional qualities and characteristics include civility, accountability, commitment, demeanor, and appearance displayed by the students to faculty, staff, preceptors, clinical site staff, peers, patients, and colleagues in health care, other educational settings, and the public.

In addition to adhering to the JWU Student Code of Conduct, PA students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner commensurate with the role and responsibilities of a health care professional, i.e., demonstrating respect, compassion, integrity, and sensitivity to others. Students must meet the PA Program technical standards on a continual basis, and demonstrate emotional resilience, stability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety. Such conduct is defined in Section III below, which may be modified from time to time by the university.

#### ***II. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE***

The Physician Assistant Faculty Committee investigates suspected violations of these Standards of Professional Conduct. The Committee reviews and discusses the relevant circumstances and, if appropriate and necessary, meets with the student, other students, the Faculty Advisor, the Clinical Preceptor, or other individuals to obtain additional information. Upon a review of all facts, the Faculty Committee suggests a course of action to the PA Program Director. The PA Program Director will determine the appropriate outcome.

When a problem related to the above cannot be resolved at the program level, the student will be referred to JWU Student Affairs and the Director of Student Conduct. This office will review the case and make a determination that could include probation, suspension, or dismissal from the PA Program and university. Probation and/ or suspension may be appealed to the Office of the Provost. Dismissal can be appealed to the Deans Appeals Committee.

Students who are found to have violated these Standards of Professional Conduct are subject to disciplinary outcomes, including but not limited to suspension (which may delay graduation and increase costs to the student) or dismissal from the PA Program. The PA Program is required to provide all information related to such proceedings to any credentialing body, which may negatively impact the student’s ability to obtain or retain a job.



The PA Program retains primary jurisdiction over disciplinary matters involving violations of the Standards of Professional Conduct and may impose the sanctions discussed in this Handbook, following the procedures discussed, separate and independent from Student Conduct.

### **III. STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENTS**

#### **A. Behavior and Professional Image**

Students are expected to behave in a mature, responsible, reliable, and dependable manner that engenders the humanistic qualities of compassion, trust, integrity, and openness. Student must project a professional image in manner, dress, grooming, speech, and interpersonal relationships consistent with being a medical professional.

While engaged in academic activities, students are required to adhere to the dress code identified in the PA Program Handbook.

While engaged in clinical experiences, students must wear a short white clinical jacket while at all clinical sites unless instructed not to do so by the clinical site or the PA Program. Students must always wear their official nametags while at clinical sites. If they are instructed not to by their preceptor, they must immediately contact the PA program for further guidance.

#### **B. Attendance, Promptness, Preparedness, and Initiative**

**Students are required to attend all program-sponsored activities and remain through the duration of the activity.** Student must be on time. Repeated tardiness is a violation of these Standards.

Students are responsible for taking an active part in their education and experiential activities and for demonstrative initiative and an eagerness to learn. Students are responsible for following up in areas for which they need further review or explanation. Students are responsible for completing missing work.

*Clinical experience:* It is the responsibility of the student to report to clinical sites promptly at assigned times designated by the Preceptor and to comply with the clinical site and the PA Program defined policies regarding attendance, tardiness, and absence. Students are obligated and required to contact BOTH the preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education prior to their report time in case of absence. Students must report to clinical sites fully prepared for work with all necessary equipment (e.g., stethoscope).

#### **C. Respect and Civility**

Students are expected to treat all individuals whom they encounter during their academic and clinical experiences with respect (thoughtfulness and politeness) and civility (courtesy, good manners, and consideration). Students are expected to be sensitive and tolerant of diversity including but not limited to socioeconomic status, physical stature, body size, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political beliefs. Conflicts should be resolved in a diplomatic and reasoned manner. The Program does not tolerate incivility. Examples of incivility include rude, sarcastic, obscene, disruptive, or disrespectful remarks or behavior, verbal or physical threats, or damage to property.

Other forms of prohibited discrimination are addressed in the university's Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

#### ***D. Integrity***

Integrity is the quality of consistent and steadfast adherence to a defined code of principles, conduct, and ethics. It includes truthfulness, honor, and reliability. Students are expected to demonstrate integrity by following all policies and procedures defined by JWU, the Graduate School, the PA Program, and their clinical rotation sites. In addition, the student is expected to demonstrate integrity in regards to academic requirements and ethical standards commensurate with those expected of a future health care professional.

#### ***E. Accountability and Commitment***

PA students are expected to exemplify the qualities of accountability and commitment. Accountability includes accepting responsibility, being reliable and dependable, and completing tasks and responsibilities as defined and expected. Examples of commitment include offering to assist others, willingness to stay longer than required, or taking extra steps to resolve a difficult situation.

#### ***F. Flexibility and Resilience***

PA training, like clinical practice, involves unpredictability. At times, lectures, classes, examinations, or clinical rotation placements or schedules may need to be modified on short notice. The ability to adapt and adjust to change (i.e., demonstrate flexibility) and manage the ambiguity and anxiety these changes may create (i.e., demonstrate resilience) are critical to navigating PA studies successfully and ultimately success as a health care provider.

#### ***G. Confidentiality***

Students must respect the confidentiality of patients and fellow students. Academic assignments and presentations must not include patient identifying data, including name, initials, date of birth, or facility. Students must not discuss patients by name outside the clinical encounter, nor discuss other students with preceptors.

Students must not discuss, record, upload, share, or transfer any information, issues, images, videos, or other information on social media (or any other technology) without the express written permission of the Director of the PA Program.

#### ***H. Health and Safety***

Students must not engage in any activities that threaten the health, safety, well-being, or property of any individual, including self. This includes refraining from behaviors, activities, or actions that may result in mental, intellectual, and/or physical impairments to self or others, such as the excessive use of alcohol, use of non-prescribed drugs, injurious behavior, or carrying a concealed weapon. Effective self-care is a critical component of the provision of effective medical services.

### ***I. Adherence to the PA Program Reporting Requirements and Clinical Site Policies and Procedures***

The student must meet all procedural requirements of the PA program, including but not limited to clinical schedules, patient logs, rotation deliverables, and evaluations. The student must follow all policies, regulations, and procedures set forth by the clinical locations, including any additional training and/or testing required by the facility.

### ***J. Standard of Care / Due Regard for Student Function***

PA students must always identify themselves as PA students to patients and site staff and **never** present themselves as physicians, residents, medical students, or graduate PAs. While in the PA Program, students may not use previously earned titles (e.g., RN, DC, Ph.D.) for identification purposes.

Students must adhere to the generally approved practices for PA students. Students at clinical sites must always work under the supervision of a clinical preceptor. Students may not function in the place of an employee or assume primary responsibility for a patient's care. Students must seek advice when appropriate and may not evaluate or treat patients without supervision from and direct access to a supervising clinical preceptor at all times.

Unusual or abnormal physical findings must be confirmed by a licensed provider. Students shall perform only those procedures authorized by the preceptor. Students must adhere to all regulations of the PA Program and the clinical sites. The student is to contact the PA Program immediately with any questions or concerns about the student role at a site. Students shall not treat and discharge a patient from care before the patient is seen by the clinical preceptor. All patients must be seen by a licensed provider prior to leaving the facility.

### ***K. Communication***

Timely and appropriate written and oral communication is key to the professional work of a PA and paramount during the educational process of becoming a medical professional. Students must check their JWU e-mail accounts daily as any and all communication to and from the PA Program will be through the University e-mail system. Student should empty e-mail mailboxes regularly to ensure space for incoming message from the PA Program, staff, and faculty. "Not checking my e-mail" is not an allowable excuse for missing a PA Program event or notification. Student must respond to PA Program e-mails within 24 hours. Communication is also critical while on rotation site between the student, the preceptor, the site staff, and the PA Program. The student and preceptor should communicate on a regular basis to discuss expectations, goals, and performance.

## Section V – APPENDIX B

### Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession

(Originally adopted 2005; revised 2012; revised 2020)

<https://www.aapa.org/download/90503/>

#### INTRODUCTION

This document defines the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that physician assistants (PA) in all clinical specialties and settings in the United States should be able to demonstrate throughout their careers. This set of competencies is designed to serve as a roadmap for the individual PA, for teams of clinicians, for health care systems, and other organizations committed to promoting the development and maintenance of professional competencies among PAs. While some competencies are acquired during the PA education program, others are developed and mastered as PAs progress through their careers.

The PA professional competencies include seven competency domains that capture the breadth and complexity of modern PA practice. These are: (1) knowledge for practice, (2) interpersonal and communication skills, (3) person-centered care, (4) interprofessional collaboration, (5) professionalism and ethics, (6) practice-based learning and quality improvement, and (7) society and population health. The PA competencies reflect the well-documented need for medical practice to focus on surveillance, patient education, prevention, and population health. These revised competencies reflect the growing autonomy of PA decision-making within a team-based framework and the need for the additional skills in leadership and advocacy.

As PAs develop greater competency throughout their careers, they determine their level of understanding and confidence in addressing patients' health needs, identify knowledge and skills that they need to develop, and then work to acquire further knowledge and skills in these areas. This is a lifelong process that requires discipline, self-evaluation, and commitment to learning throughout a PA's professional career.

#### BACKGROUND

The PA competencies were originally developed in response to the growing demand for accountability and assessment in clinical practice and reflected similar efforts conducted by other health care professions. In 2005, a collaborative effort among four national PA organizations produced the first Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession. These organizations are the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, the American Academy of PAs, and the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA, formerly the Association of Physician Assistant Programs). The same four organizations updated and approved this document in 2012.

#### METHODS

This version of the *Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession* was developed by the Cross- Org Competencies Review Task Force, which included two representatives from each of the four national PA organizations. The task force was charged with reviewing the professional competencies as part of a periodic five-year review process, as well as to “ensure alignment with the *Core Competencies for New PA Graduates*,” which were developed by the Physician Assistant Education Association in 2018 to provide a framework for accredited PA programs to standardize practice readiness for new graduates.

The Cross-Org Competencies Review Task Force began by developing the following set of guiding principles that underpinned this work:

1. PAs should pursue self- and professional development throughout their careers.
2. The competencies must be relevant to all PAs, regardless of specialty or patient care setting.
3. Professional competencies are ultimately about patient care.
4. The body of knowledge produced in the past should be respected, while recognizing the changing healthcare environment.
5. The good of the profession must always take precedence over self-interest.

The task force reviewed competency frameworks from several other health professions. The result is a single document that builds on the *Core Competencies for New PA Graduates* and extends through the lifespan of a PA's career.

The competencies were drawn from three sources: the previous [Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession](#), PAEA's [Core Competencies for New PA Graduates](#), and the Englander et al article [Toward a Common Taxonomy of Competency Domains for the Health Professions and Competencies for Physicians](#) which drew from the competencies of several health professions.<sup>1</sup> The task force elected not to reference the source of each competency since most of these competencies were foundational to the work of multiple health professions and are in the public domain. The task force acknowledges the work of the many groups that have gone before them in seeking to capture the essential competencies of health professions.

1. Englander R, Cameron T, Ballard AJ, Dodge J, Bull J, Aschenbrener CA. Toward a common taxonomy of competency domains for the health professions and competencies for physicians. *Academic Medicine*. 2013 Aug 1;88(8):1088-94.

## COMPETENCIES

### 1. Knowledge for Practice

Demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care. PAs should be able to:

- 1.1 Demonstrate investigative and critical thinking in clinical situations.
- 1.2 Access and interpret current and credible sources of medical information.
- 1.3 Apply principles of epidemiology to identify health problems, risk factors, treatment strategies, resources, and disease prevention/health promotion efforts for individuals and populations.
- 1.4 Discern among acute, chronic, and emergent disease states.
- 1.5 Apply principles of clinical sciences to diagnose disease and utilize therapeutic decision-making, clinical problem-solving, and other evidence-based practice skills.
- 1.6 Adhere to standards of care, and to relevant laws, policies, and regulations that govern the delivery of care in the United States.
- 1.7 Consider cost-effectiveness when allocating resources for individual patient or population- based care.
- 1.8 Work effectively and efficiently in various health care delivery settings and systems relevant to the PA's clinical specialty.

- 1.9 Identify and address social determinants that affect access to care and deliver high quality care in a value-based system.
- 1.10 Participate in surveillance of community resources to determine if they are adequate to sustain and improve health.
- 1.11 Utilize technological advancements that decrease costs, improve quality, and increase access to health care.

## **2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills**

Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals. PAs should be able to:

- 2.1 Establish meaningful therapeutic relationships with patients and families to ensure that patients' values and preferences are addressed and that needs and goals are met to deliver person-centered care.
- 2.2 Provide effective, equitable, understandable, respectful, quality, and culturally competent care that is responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.
- 2.3 Communicate effectively to elicit and provide information.
- 2.4 Accurately and adequately document medical information for clinical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.
- 2.5 Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in all conversations, including challenging discussions about death, end of life, adverse events, bad news, disclosure of errors, and other sensitive topics.
- 2.6 Demonstrate emotional resilience, stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.
- 2.7 Understand emotions, behaviors, and responses of others, which allows for effective interpersonal interactions.
- 2.8 Recognize communication barriers and provide solutions.

## **3. Person-centered Care**

Provide person-centered care that includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management and health care that is evidence-based, supports patient safety, and advances health equity. PAs should be able to:

- 3.1 Gather accurate and essential information about patients through history-taking, physical examination, and diagnostic testing.
- 3.2 Elicit and acknowledge the story of the individual and apply the context of the individual's life to their care, such as environmental and cultural influences.
- 3.3 Interpret data based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and clinical judgment to make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.
- 3.4 Develop, implement, and monitor effectiveness of patient management plans.
- 3.5 Maintain proficiency to perform safely all medical, diagnostic, and surgical procedures considered essential for the practice specialty.
- 3.6 Counsel, educate, and empower patients and their families to participate in their care and enable shared decision-making.
- 3.7 Refer patients appropriately, ensure continuity of care throughout transitions between providers or settings, and follow up on patient progress and outcomes.

- 3.8 Provide health care services to patients, families, and communities to prevent health problems and to maintain health.

#### **4. Interprofessional Collaboration**

Demonstrate the ability to engage with a variety of other health care professionals in a manner that optimizes safe, effective, patient- and population-centered care. PAs should be able to:

- 4.1 Work effectively with other health professionals to provide collaborative, patient-centered care while maintaining a climate of mutual respect, dignity, diversity, ethical integrity, and trust.
- 4.2 Communicate effectively with colleagues and other professionals to establish and enhance interprofessional teams.
- 4.3 Engage the abilities of available health professionals and associated resources to complement the PA's professional expertise and develop optimal strategies to enhance patient care.
- 4.4 Collaborate with other professionals to integrate clinical care and public health interventions.
- 4.5 Recognize when to refer patients to other disciplines to ensure that patients receive optimal care at the right time and appropriate level.

#### **5. Professionalism and Ethics**

Demonstrate a commitment to practicing medicine in ethically and legally appropriate ways and emphasizing professional maturity and accountability for delivering safe and quality care to patients and populations. PAs should be able to:

- 5.1 Adhere to standards of care in the role of the PA in the health care team.
- 5.2 Demonstrate compassion, integrity, and respect for others.
- 5.3 Demonstrate responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest.
- 5.4 Show accountability to patients, society, and the PA profession.
- 5.5 Demonstrate cultural humility and responsiveness to a diverse patient populations, including diversity in sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and abilities.
- 5.6 Show commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of care, confidentiality, patient autonomy, informed consent, business practices, and compliance with relevant laws, policies, and regulations.
- 5.7 Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and education of students and other health care professionals.
- 5.8 Demonstrate commitment to personal wellness and self-care that supports the provision of quality patient care.
- 5.9 Exercise good judgment and fiscal responsibility when utilizing resources.
- 5.10 Demonstrate flexibility and professional civility when adapting to change.
- 5.11 Implement leadership practices and principles.
- 5.12 Demonstrate effective advocacy for the PA profession in the workplace and in policymaking processes.

#### **6. Practice-based Learning and Quality Improvement**

Demonstrate the ability to learn and implement quality improvement practices by engaging in critical analysis of one's own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self-evaluation, lifelong learning, and practice improvement. PAs should be able to:

- 6.1 Exhibit self-awareness to identify strengths, address deficiencies, and recognize limits in knowledge and expertise.
- 6.2 Identify, analyze, and adopt new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.
- 6.3 Identify improvement goals and perform learning activities that address gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- 6.4 Use practice performance data and metrics to identify areas for improvement.
- 6.5 Develop a professional and organizational capacity for ongoing quality improvement.
- 6.6 Analyze the use and allocation of resources to ensure the practice of cost-effective health care while maintaining quality of care.
- 6.7
- 6.8 Understand of how practice decisions impact the finances of their organizations, while keeping the patient's needs foremost.
- 6.9 Advocate for administrative systems that capture the productivity and value of PA practice.

## **7. Society and Population Health**

Recognize and understand the influences of the ecosystem of person, family, population, environment, and policy on the health of patients and integrate knowledge of these determinants of health into patient care decisions. PAs should be able to:

- 7.1 Apply principles of social-behavioral sciences by assessing the impact of psychosocial and cultural influences on health, disease, care seeking, and compliance.
- 7.2 Recognize the influence of genetic, socioeconomic, environmental, and other determinants on the health of the individual and community.
- 7.3 Improve the health of patient populations
- 7.4 Demonstrate accountability, responsibility, and leadership for removing barriers to health.



## Section VI – APPENDIX C

### Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession

(Adopted 2000, reaffirmed 2013, amended 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2018)

#### Introduction

The PA profession has revised its code of ethics several times since the profession began. Although the fundamental principles underlying the ethical care of patients have not changed, the societal framework in which those principles are applied is constantly changing. Economic pressures, social pressures of church and state on the healthcare system, technological advances, and changing patient demographics continually transform the landscape in which PAs practice. This policy, as written, reflects a point in time and should be reviewed through that lens. It is a living document to be continually reviewed and updated to reflect the changing times, be they related to societal evolutions or the advancement of medical science.

Previous codes of the profession were brief lists of tenets for PAs to live by in their professional lives. This document departs from that format by going a step further and describing how these tenets apply to PA practice. Each situation is unique. Individual PAs must use their best judgment in a given situation while considering the preferences of the patient and the healthcare team, clinical information, ethical principles, and legal obligations. Context and/or casuistry (extracting reasoning from case study), often play key roles in decision making.

Four main bioethical principles broadly guided the development of these guidelines: patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

Autonomy, strictly speaking, means self-rule. Patients have the right to make autonomous decisions and choices, and PAs should respect these decisions and choices.

Beneficence means that PAs should act in the patient's best interest. In certain cases, respecting the patient's autonomy and acting in their best interests may be difficult to balance.

Nonmaleficence means to do no harm, to impose no unnecessary or unacceptable burden upon the patient.

Justice means that patients in similar circumstances should receive similar care. Justice also applies to norms for the fair distribution of resources, risks, and costs.

PAs are expected to behave both legally and morally. They should know and understand the local, state and federal laws governing their practice. Likewise, they should understand the ethical responsibilities of being a healthcare professional. Legal requirements and ethical expectations will not always be in agreement. Generally speaking, the law describes minimum standards of acceptable behavior, and ethical principles delineate the highest moral standards of behavior.

When faced with an ethical dilemma, PAs may find the guidance they need in this document. If not, they may wish to seek guidance elsewhere – possibly from a hospital ethics committee, an ethicist, trusted colleagues, or other AAPA policies. PAs should seek legal counsel when they are concerned about the potential legal consequences of their decisions.

The following sections discuss ethical conduct of PAs in their professional interactions with patients, physicians, colleagues, other health professionals, and the public. The "Statement of Values" within this

document defines the fundamental values that the PA profession strives to uphold. These values provide the foundation upon which the guidelines rest. The guidelines were written with the understanding that no document can encompass all actual and potential ethical responsibilities, and PAs should not regard them as comprehensive.

### **Statement of Values of the PA Profession**

- PAs hold as their primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings.
- PAs uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.
- PAs recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- PAs do not discriminate; PAs treat equally all persons who seek their care.
- PAs hold in confidence the patient-specific information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- PAs actively seek to expand their knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- PAs assess their personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve their practice of medicine.
- PAs work with other members of the healthcare team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- PAs use their knowledge and experience to contribute to a healthy community and the improvement of public health.
- PAs respect their professional relationship with all members of the healthcare team.
- PAs share and expand clinical and professional knowledge with PAs and PA students.

### **The PA and Patient**

#### **PA Role and Responsibilities**

The principal value of the PA profession is to respect the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings. This concept is the foundation of the patient–PA relationship. PAs have an ethical obligation to see that each of their patients receives appropriate care. PAs should be sensitive to the beliefs and expectations of the patient. PAs should recognize that each patient is unique and has an ethical right to self-determination

PAs are professionally and ethically committed to providing nondiscriminatory care to all patients. While PAs are not expected to ignore their own personal values, scientific or ethical standards, or the law, they should not allow their personal beliefs to restrict patient access to care. A PA has an ethical duty to offer each patient the full range of information on relevant options for their healthcare. If personal moral, religious, or ethical beliefs prevent a PA from offering the full range of treatments available or care the patient desires, the PA has an ethical duty to refer a patient to another qualified provider. That referral should not restrict a patient’s access to care. PAs are obligated to care for patients in emergency situations and to responsibly transfer patients if they cannot care for them.

PAs should always act in the best interests of their patients and as advocates when necessary. While respecting the law, PAs should actively resist policies that restrict free exchange of medical information whether the restrictions are coming from their institution, regulators or legislators. For example, PAs should inform patients of financial incentives to limit care, use resources in a fair and efficient way, and avoid arrangements or financial incentives that conflict with the patient’s best interests.

## **The PA and Diversity**

The PA should respect the culture, values, beliefs, and expectations of the patient.

### **Nondiscrimination**

PAs should not discriminate against classes or categories of patients in the delivery of needed healthcare. Such classes and categories include gender, color, creed, race, religion, age, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, nature of illness, disability, socioeconomic status, physical stature, body size, gender identity, marital status, or sexual orientation.

*See also section on Nondiscrimination in the Workplace and Classroom.*

### **Initiation and Discontinuation of Care**

In the absence of a preexisting patient–PA relationship, the PA is under no ethical obligation to care for a person unless no other provider is available. A PA is morally bound to provide care in emergency situations and, when necessary, to arrange proper follow-up. PAs should keep in mind that contracts with health insurance plans might define a legal obligation to provide care to certain patients.

Care can be discontinued for many reasons, some positive (such as retirement or a new position) and some negative (such as threatening behavior by the patient or demonstrating non-compliance with recommended medical care).

A professional relationship with an established patient may be discontinued as long as proper procedures are followed. The patient should be provided with adequate notice, offer to transfer records, and arrange for continuity of care if the patient has an ongoing medical condition. In the event that discontinuation is the result of a problematic relationship, discontinuation should be undertaken only after a serious attempt has been made to clarify and understand the expectations and concerns of all involved parties.

If the patient decides to terminate the relationship, they are entitled to access appropriate information contained within their medical record.

Many regulatory boards have rules or position statements addressing termination of care. PAs should understand any regulatory requirements before taking action.

### **Informed Consent**

PAs have a duty to protect and foster an individual patient’s free and informed choices. The doctrine of informed consent means that a PA provides adequate information that is comprehensible to a patient or patient surrogate who has medical decision-making capacity. At a minimum, this should include the nature of the medical condition, the objectives of the proposed treatment, treatment options, possible outcomes, and the risks involved. PAs are expected to be committed to the concept of shared decision making, which involves assisting patients in making decisions that account for medical, situational and personal factors.

*See also, AAPA policy paper, Use of Medical Interpreters for Patients with Limited English Proficiency.*

In caring for adolescents, the PA must understand all of the laws and regulations in the PA’s jurisdiction that are related to the ability of minors to consent to or refuse healthcare. Adolescents should be encouraged to involve their families in healthcare decision making. The PA is expected to understand consent laws pertaining to emancipated or mature minors.

*See also, the section on Confidentiality and AAPA's policy paper, Attempts to Change a Minor's Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression.*

When the person giving consent is a patient's surrogate, a family member, or other legally authorized representative, the PA should take reasonable care to assure that the decisions made are consistent with the patient's best interests and personal preferences, if known. If the PA believes the surrogate's choices do not reflect the patient's wishes or best interests, the PA should work to resolve the conflict. This may require the use of additional resources, such as an ethics committee.

### **Confidentiality**

PAs should maintain confidentiality. By maintaining confidentiality, PAs respect patient privacy and help to prevent discrimination based on medical conditions. If patients are confident that their privacy is protected, they are more likely to seek medical care and more likely to discuss their problems candidly.

In cases of adolescent patients, family support is important but should be balanced with the patient's need for confidentiality and the PA's obligation to respect their emerging autonomy. Adolescents may not be of age to make independent decisions about their health, but providers should respect that they soon will be. To the extent they can, PAs should allow these emerging adults to participate as fully as possible in decisions about their care. It is important that PAs be familiar with and understand institutional policies and local, state and federal laws and regulations in their jurisdictions that relate to the confidentiality rights of adolescent patients.

*See also, the section on Informed Consent.*

Any communication about a patient conducted in a manner that violates confidentiality is unethical. Because written, electronic, and verbal information may be intercepted or overheard, the PA should always be aware of anyone who might be monitoring communication about a patient.

PAs should use and advocate for methods of storage and transmission of patient information that minimize the likelihood of data becoming available to unauthorized persons or organizations. Computerized record keeping and electronic data transmission present unique challenges that can make the maintenance of patient confidentiality difficult. PAs should advocate for policies and procedures that secure the confidentiality of patient information.

### **The Patient and the Medical Record**

PAs have an obligation to keep information in the patient's medical record confidential. Information should be released only with the written permission of the patient or the patient's legally authorized representative. Specific exceptions to this general rule may exist (e.g., workers compensation, communicable disease, HIV, knife/gunshot wounds, abuse, substance abuse). It is important that a PA be familiar with and understand the institutional policies and local, state and federal laws and regulations that relate to the release of information. For example, stringent legal restrictions on release of genetic test results and mental health records often exist.

Both ethically and legally, a patient has certain rights to know the information contained in the patient's medical record. While the chart is legally the property of the practice or the institution, the information in the chart is the property of the patient. Most states have laws that provide patients access to their medical records. The PA should know the laws and facilitate patient access to the information.

### **Disclosure of Medical Errors**

A patient deserves complete and honest explanations of medical errors and adverse outcomes. The PA should disclose the error to the patient if such information is significant to the patient's interests and well-being. Errors do not always constitute improper, negligent, or unethical behavior, but failure to disclose them may.

*See AAPA policy paper, Acknowledging and Apologizing for Adverse Outcomes.*

### **Care of Family Members and Co-workers**

Treating oneself, co-workers, close friends, family members, or students whom the PA supervises or teaches is contextual (2)(3) and casuistic (extracting reason from case study). For example, it might be ethically acceptable to treat one's own child for a case of otitis media, but it probably is not acceptable to treat one's spouse for depression. PAs should be aware that their judgment might be less than objective in cases involving friends, family members, students, and colleagues and that providing "curbside" care might sway the individual from establishing an ongoing relationship with a provider. If it becomes necessary to treat a family member or close associate, a formal patient-provider relationship should be established, and the PA should consider transferring the patient's care to another provider as soon as it is practical. If a close associate requests care, the PA may wish to assist by helping them find an appropriate provider.

There may be exceptions to this guideline, for example, when a PA runs an employee health center or works in occupational medicine. Even in those situations, the PA should be sure they do not provide informal treatment, but provide appropriate medical care in a formally established patient-provider relationship.

### **Genetic Testing**

Evaluating the risk of disease and performing diagnostic genetic tests raise significant ethical concerns. PAs should be informed about the benefits and risks of genetic tests. Testing should be undertaken only after proper informed consent is obtained. If PAs order or conduct the tests or have access to the results as a consequence of patient care, they should assure that appropriate pre- and post-test counseling is provided.

PAs should be sure that patients understand the potential consequences of undergoing genetic tests – from impact on patients themselves, possible implications for other family members, and potential use of the information by insurance companies or others who might have access to the information. Because of the potential for discrimination by insurers, employers, or others, PAs should be particularly aware of the need for confidentiality concerning genetic test results.

### **Reproductive Decision Making**

Patients have a right to access the full range of reproductive healthcare services, including fertility treatments, contraception, sterilization, and abortion. PAs have an ethical obligation to provide balanced and unbiased clinical information about reproductive healthcare.

When the PA's personal values conflict with providing full disclosure or providing certain services such as sterilization or abortion, the PA need not become involved in that aspect of the patient's care. By referring the patient to a qualified provider who is willing to discuss and facilitate all treatment options, the PA fulfills their ethical obligation to ensure the patient's access to all legal options.

### **End of Life**

Among the ethical principles that are fundamental to providing compassionate care at the end of life, the most essential is recognizing that dying is a personal experience and part of the life cycle.

PAs should provide patients with the opportunity to plan for end of life care. Advance directives, living wills, durable power of attorney, and organ donation should be discussed during routine patient visits.

PAs should assure terminally-ill patients that their dignity is a priority and that relief of physical and mental suffering is paramount. PAs should exhibit non-judgmental attitudes and should assure their terminally-ill patients that they will not be abandoned. To the extent possible, patient or surrogate preferences should be honored, using the most appropriate measures consistent with their choices, including alternative and non-traditional treatments. PAs should explain palliative and hospice care and facilitate patient access to those services. End of life care should include assessment and management of psychological, social, and spiritual or religious needs.

While respecting patients' and their family's wishes for particular treatments when possible, PAs also must weigh their ethical responsibility to withhold futile treatments and to help patients understand such medical decisions. The same is true for evaluating a request to provide assistance in dying.

A PA should not make these decisions in a vacuum. Prior to taking action, the PA should review institutional policy and legal standards. A PA should also consider seeking guidance from the hospital ethics committee, an ethicist, trusted colleagues, a supervisor, or other AAPA policies.

*See also, AAPA policy paper, End-of-Life Decision Making.*

## **The PA and Individual Professionalism**

### **Conflict of Interest**

PAs should place service to patients before personal material gain and should avoid undue influence on their clinical judgment. Trust can be undermined by even the appearance of improper influence. Examples of excessive or undue influence on clinical judgment can take several forms. These may include financial incentives, pharmaceutical or other industry gifts, and business arrangements involving referrals. PAs should disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest to their patients.

Acceptance of gifts, trips, hospitality, or other items is discouraged. Before accepting a gift or financial arrangement, PAs should consider the guidelines of the American College of Physicians, "What would the public or my patients think of this arrangement?" (4)

### **Professional Identity**

PAs should not misrepresent directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, or identity. PAs should uphold the dignity of the PA profession and accept its ethical values.

### **Competency**

PAs should commit themselves to providing competent medical care and extend to each patient the full measure of their professional ability as dedicated, empathetic healthcare providers. Providing competent care includes seeking consultation with other providers and referring patients when a patient's condition exceeds the PA's education and experience, or when it is in the best interest of the patient. PAs should also strive to maintain and increase the quality of their healthcare knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence through individual study, self-assessment and continuing education.

### **Sexual Relationships**

It is unethical for PAs to become sexually involved with patients. It also may be unethical for PAs to become sexually involved with former patients or key third parties. The legal definition may vary by jurisdiction, but key third parties are generally individuals who have influence over the patient such as spouses or partners, parents, guardians, or surrogates. PAs should be aware of and understand institutional policies and local, state and federal laws and regulations regarding sexual relationships.

Sexual relationships generally are unethical because of the PA's position of authority and the inherent imbalance of knowledge, expertise, and status. Issues such as dependence, trust, transference, and inequalities of power may lead to increased vulnerability on the part of the current or former patients or key third parties.

However, there are some contexts where a strict moratorium, particularly when extended to third parties, may not be feasible (3). In these cases, the PA should seek additional resources or guidance from a supervisor, a hospital ethics committee, an ethicist or trusted colleagues. PAs should seek legal counsel when they are concerned about the potential legal consequences of their decisions.

### **Nondiscrimination in the Workplace and Classroom**

It is unethical for PAs to engage in or condone any form of discrimination. Discrimination is defined as any behavior, action, or policy that adversely affects an individual or group of individuals due to disparate treatment, disparate impact, or the creation of a hostile, inequitable or intimidating work or learning environment. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sex, color, creed, race, religion, age, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, nature of illness, disability, socioeconomic status, physical stature, body size, gender identity, marital status, or sexual orientation.

*See also, the sections on Nondiscrimination of Patients and Families, and Sexual Harassment*

### **Sexual Harassment**

It is unethical for PAs to engage in or condone any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or academic environment, or
- Accepting or rejecting such conduct affects or may be perceived to affect professional decisions concerning an individual, or
- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's training or professional position.

*See also, the section on Nondiscrimination in the Workplace and Classroom.*

### **The PA and Other Professionals**

#### **Team Practice**

PAs should be committed to working collegially with other members of the healthcare team to assure integrated, well-managed, and effective care of patients. PAs should strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with other healthcare professionals, their organizations, and the general public. The PA should consult with

all appropriate team members whenever it will safeguard or advance the welfare of the patient. This includes seeking assistance in situations of conflict with a patient or another healthcare professional.

### **Resolution of Conflict Between Providers**

While a PA's first responsibility is the best interest of the patient, it is inevitable that providers will sometimes disagree when working as members of a healthcare team. When conflicts arise between providers in regard to patient care, it is important that patient autonomy and the patient's trusted relationship with each member of the healthcare team are preserved. If providers disagree on the course of action, it is their responsibility to discuss the options openly and honestly with each other, and collaboratively with the patient.

It is unethical for a PA to circumvent the other members of the healthcare team or attempt to disparage or discredit other members of the team with the patient. In the event a PA has legitimate concerns about a provider's competency or intent, those concerns should be reported to the proper authorities.

PAs should be aware of and take advantage of available employer resources to mitigate and resolve conflicts between providers.

### **Illegal and Unethical Conduct**

PAs should not participate in or conceal any activity that will bring discredit or dishonor to the PA profession. They should report illegal or unethical conduct by healthcare professionals to the appropriate authorities.

### **Impairment**

PAs have an ethical responsibility to protect patients and the public by recognizing their own impairment and identifying and assisting impaired colleagues. "Impaired" means being unable to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety because of physical or mental illness, loss of motor skills, or excessive use or abuse of drugs and alcohol.

PAs should be able to recognize impairment in any member of the healthcare team and should seek assistance from appropriate resources to encourage these individuals to obtain treatment.

*See also, AAPA policy paper, PA Impairment.*

### **Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Health**

When a patient asks about complementary, alternative and/or integrative health approaches, the PA has an ethical obligation to gain a basic understanding of the therapy(ies) being considered or used and how the treatment will affect the patient. PAs should do appropriate research, including seeking advice from colleagues who have experience with the treatment or experts in the therapeutic field. If the PA believes the complementary, alternative or integrative health is not in the best interest of the patient, the PA should work diligently to dissuade the patient from using it, advise other treatment, and perhaps consider transferring the patient to another provider.

### **The PA and the Healthcare System**

#### **Workplace Actions**

PAs may face difficult personal decisions to withhold medical services when workplace actions (e.g., strikes, sick-outs, slowdowns, etc.) occur. The potential harm to patients should be carefully weighed against the



potential improvements to working conditions and, ultimately, patient care that could result. In general, PAs should individually and collectively work to find alternatives to such actions in addressing workplace concerns.

### **PAs as Educators**

All PAs have a responsibility to share knowledge and information with patients, other health professionals, students, and the public. The ethical duty to teach includes effective communication with patients so that they will have the information necessary to participate in their healthcare and wellness.

*See also, AAPA policy paper, PA Student Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences - Recommendations to Address Barriers.*

### **PAs and Research**

The most important ethical principle in research is honesty. This includes assuring subjects' informed consent, following treatment protocols, and accurately reporting findings. Fraud and dishonesty in research must be reported to maintain the integrity of the available data in research.

PAs are encouraged to work within the oversight of institutional review boards and institutional animal care and use committees as a means to ensure that ethical standards are maintained.

PAs involved in research must be aware of potential conflicts of interest. Any conflict of interest must be disclosed. The patient's welfare takes precedence over the proposed research project.

PAs are encouraged to undergo research ethics education that includes periodic refresher courses to be maintained throughout the course of their research activity. PAs must be educated on the protection of vulnerable research populations.

Sources of funding for the research must be included in the published reports.

The security of personal health data must be maintained to protect patient privacy.

Plagiarism is unethical. Incorporating the words of others, either verbatim or by paraphrasing, without appropriate attribution is unethical and may have legal consequences. When submitting a document for publication, any previous publication of any portion of the document must be fully disclosed.

### **PAs as Expert Witnesses**

The PA expert witness should testify to what they believe to be the truth. The PA's review of medical facts should be thorough, fair, and impartial.

The PA expert witness should be fairly compensated for time spent preparing, appearing, and testifying. The PA should not accept a contingency fee based on the outcome of a case in which testimony is given or derive personal, financial, or professional favor in addition to compensation.

*See also, AAPA policy paper, Guidelines for the PA Serving as an Expert Witness.*

### **The PA and Society**

#### **Lawfulness**

PAs have the dual duty to respect the law and to work for positive change to laws that will enhance the health and well-being of the community.

### **Executions**

PAs, as healthcare professionals, should not participate in executions because to do so would violate the ethical principle of beneficence.

*See also, AAPA policy HX-4100.1.9.*

### **Access to Care / Resource Allocation**

PAs have a responsibility to use healthcare resources in an appropriate and efficient manner so that all patients have access to needed healthcare. Resource allocation should be based on societal needs and policies, not the circumstances of an individual patient–PA encounter. (1) PAs participating in policy decisions about resource allocation should consider medical need, cost-effectiveness, efficacy, and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens in society.

### **Community Well Being**

PAs should work for the health, well-being, and the best interest of both the patient and the community. Sometimes there is a dynamic moral tension between the well-being of the community in general and the individual patient. Conflict between an individual patient’s best interest and the common good is not always easily resolved. When confronted with this situation, a PA may seek guidance from a supervisor, a hospital ethics committee, an ethicist, trusted colleagues, or other AAPA policies.

In general, PAs should be committed to upholding and enhancing community values, be aware of the needs of the community, and use the knowledge and experience acquired as professionals to contribute to an improved community.

### **Conclusion**

AAPA recognizes its responsibility to aid the PA profession as it strives to provide high quality, accessible healthcare. PAs wrote these guidelines for themselves and other PAs. The ultimate goal is to honor patients and earn their trust while providing the best and most appropriate care possible. At the same time, PAs must understand their personal values and beliefs and recognize the ways in which those values and beliefs can impact the care they provide.

### **References**

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4. American College of Physician’s Ethical Manual, Sixth Edition.

<https://www.acponline.org/clinical-information/ethics-and-professionalism/acp-ethics-manual-sixth-edition/acp-ethics-manual-sixth-edition>

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6. AAPA Policy Papers:
  - Guidelines for the PA Serving as an Expert Witness  
(Adopted 1977, reaffirmed 2004, 2009, amended 1987, 1991, 2001, 2014, 2018) *Cited at HP-3700.1.5*
  - PA Impairment  
(Adopted 1990, reaffirmed 2004, 2014 amended 1992, 2009, 2019) *Cited at HP-3700.1.3*
  - End-of-Life Decision Making  
(Adopted 1997, reaffirmed 2004, 2014, amended 2009, 2018) *Cited at HP-3700.1.4*
  - Use of Medical Interpreters for Patients with Limited English Proficiency  
(Adopted 2003, reaffirmed 2008, 2013, amended 2018) *Cited at HP-3300.2.10*
  - Acknowledging and Apologizing for Adverse Outcomes  
(Adopted 2007, reaffirmed 2012, amended 2013, 2018) *Cited at HP-3800.2.2*
  - Health Disparities: Promoting the Equitable Treatment of All Patients  
(Adopted 2011, amended 2016) *Cited at HX-4600.1.6.1*
  - PA Student Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences - Recommendations to Address Barriers  
(Adopted 2017, amended 2018, 2021) *Cited at HP-3200.1.6*
  - Attempts to Change a Minor's Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression  
(Adopted 2017) *Cited at HX-4200.6.2*

## Section VII – APPENDIX D

### Waiver of Liability

In full recognition of the risks identified in this handbook related to health (including infectious diseases and the possible consequences therefrom; needle sticks/bodily fluid exposures and the possible consequences therefrom; and criminal background checks and drug screenings and the possible consequences therefrom) and in consideration of being permitted to participate in the Physician Assistant Program, the Student releases, waives, and forever discharges the “University Parties” (defined to include the university and its past, present and future accountants, administrators, advisors, affiliates, agents, assigns, attorneys, consultants (including subconsultants), contractors (including subcontractors), corporations, directors, employees, faculty insurers and third-party administrators, invitees, joint venturers, law firms legal representatives, managers, members, officers, parents, partners, predecessors, principals, representatives, subsidiaries, successors or successors-in-interest, trustees or the Board of Trustees, and all other persons acting on University’s behalf) from and against any and all liability for any claims (defined to include any and all actions, arbitrations, causes of actions [at law, in equity, or otherwise], charges, claims [including but not limited to claims for contribution or indemnity], counterclaims, cross-claims, damages [whether from personal, property, or other alleged harms or injuries], defenses, demands, emotional injuries, injunctions, lawsuits, liabilities, losses, losses of consortium [or companionship or service], obligations, personal and physical injuries [up to and including death], property damages, rights, subrogations, or suits) of any nature related to the Student’s direct or indirect participation in the PA Program (including clinical training and patient care or contact), the Student’s past, present, or future drug use, and the Student’s current or future criminal history and the Student’s inability, as a result of such use or history, to, among other things:

Meet the eligibility requirements for a clinical site;

Find a desirable or proximate clinical site;

Meet one or more state licensure requirements; and/or

Obtain a job as a physician assistant.

The Student assumes all risk related to their direct or indirect participation in the PA Program, drug use, and criminal history. The Student further covenants not to sue any of the University Parties with respect to any of the foregoing.

In signing this Handbook, Student acknowledges and represents that Student has fully informed themselves of the content of the foregoing Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk and that they understand its contents.

## Needle Stick/Bodily Fluids Exposure Guidelines

Students who believe they have been exposed to bodily fluids or experienced a needle stick must:

1. **Immediately** cleanse the affected area:

- Wash needle sticks and cuts with soap and water
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile fluids

2. **Immediately** report the exposure to:

Didactic year: Academic Coordinator

Clinical year: supervising physician or other supervisor

3. **Immediately** seek medical evaluation and treatment. If there is no established protocol at a given site, seek treatment at the closest Emergency Department.

4. If an exposure occurs at a clinical rotation site, the student must notify the Clinical Coordinator as soon as possible.

5. Complete and submit the *Student Exposure Form* to the Director of Didactic Education (didactic year) or Director of Clinical Education (clinical year) within 24 hours.

## Student Exposure Form

This form is to be complete if there has been a needle stick or bodily fluid exposure to a student. Students must directly report the exposure incident to the Clinical Coordinator (Office 401.598.4886) as soon as possible of the exposure. Submit this form via CORE or e-mail to the Clinical Coordinator ([kkruzel@jwu.edu](mailto:kkruzel@jwu.edu)) within 24 hours of the exposure.

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

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Exposure: \_\_\_\_\_

Rotation #:  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

Rotation Type:  Internal Med.  Family Med.  Pediatrics  Emergency Med.

Women's Health  Behavioral Health  Surgery  Elective

Name of Clinical Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Notified at the Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Notification: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief description of incident, including how the exposure occurred, and location (body part).

*Continue to next page*

Did you receive medical evaluation and/or treatment?  Yes  No

Did you notify the PA program (Clinical Coordinator or Program Director)?  Yes  No

Name of person notified at the PA program: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Program Notification: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatures:**

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

Clinical Coordinator/ Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Disclaimer:**

*All information in this handbook is presented in good faith to inform the specific entering class of the university and PA Program current policies and procedures. The PA Program is responsible for graduating competent PAs who will be serving the public. As such, the PA Program maintains the right to refuse to matriculate or graduate a student deemed by the faculty to be academically or professionally incompetent, a student who does not meet the PA Program technical standards, a student who has violated university codes, policies, procedures, regulations, or rules or applicable legal requirements, or a student otherwise unfit or unsuited for continued enrollment. In addition, the PA Program reserves the right to make changes in the codes, policies, procedures, regulations, and rules of the Program, its academic calendar, admission policies, degree requirements, and standards necessary for successful completion of the PA Program in its sole discretion. Change may include, but is not limited to, changes in course content, scheduling of courses offered, and canceling of scheduled classes and/or other Program-related activities.*



# STUDENT SIGNATURE SHEET

I attest that I have received, read, fully understand, and agree to comply with all policies and procedures set forth in the JWU Physician Assistant Studies Student Handbook Class of 2025. In particular, I have read and understand the waiver of liability set forth in Appendix D.

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Student Signature

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Date

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Student Name (Print)

*Parent/Legal Guardian, if student is under the age of 18 years old:*

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Parent Signature

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Date

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Parent Name (Print)

**This form is due back to the Physician Assistant Office by noon on Friday, June 2, 2023.**