

**Mississippi College
Physician Assistant Program**

Student Handbook

2014 - 2015



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MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The PA faculty shares the philosophy and mission of Mississippi College and supports its commitment to provide and promote higher education in Mississippi. Like their counterparts in other areas of the university, the members of the PA program faculty understand that to produce graduates of the highest quality, the curriculum—both didactic and clinical—must reflect the belief that the program exists within a larger world that shapes, and is shaped by, their efforts in teaching and service.

The focus of the program is to improve access to competent primary health care in the rural areas of Mississippi and other medically underserved communities. The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program focuses on a primary care curriculum including rural medicine; family medicine; geriatric medicine; pediatric and adolescent medicine; general internal medicine; women's health to include obstetrics and gynecology; psychiatry; general surgery; and emergency medicine. It is within these areas that the program directs its efforts, seeking to prepare PA graduates who can improve access to primary health care and coordinate the delivery of health care of the highest caliber. The curriculum emphasizes the role of the physician assistant as a patient advocate. The didactic portion of the program uses systems theory to integrate health promotion, preventive medicine, and medical treatment modalities, as well as to introduce scholarly research, and inculcate an ethical standard of medical practice. The curriculum as a whole emphasizes interdisciplinary and team-based learning. Faculty members and clinical preceptors serve as mentors to students, modeling professional behaviors and attitudes and imparting the requisite medical knowledge and skills.

The primary mission of the PA program is to prepare physician assistants to provide primary health care services in medically underserved areas of Mississippi and surrounding states. Secondary missions are to prepare graduates for roles in surgery and as hospitalists. The program goals are:

- ❑ To provide a progression of study which is carefully sequenced and balanced with core medical sciences, behavioral sciences, technical skills, clinical problem solving skills, research, and appropriate supervised clinical experiences.
- ❑ To promote independent learning skills; incorporate research as a core component of the educational process; require a working knowledge of library, faculty, and community resources; and promote the graduate's quest for continuing professional development and lifelong learning.
- ❑ To provide a course of instruction which develops interpersonal skills necessary for PA/patient relationships and interactions and enhances the ability of graduates to function effectively in the work environment and as members of the interdisciplinary health care team.
- ❑ To maintain an accredited physician assistant program within Mississippi College whose graduates have the ability to provide effective and conscientious primary health care
- ❑ To provide the optional resources, environment, and opportunities for learning.
- ❑ To encourage enrollment of educationally underserved (including minority and disadvantaged) students, promote program completion, and provide professional training to facilitate gainful employment of program graduates.
- ❑ To maintain a course of study which emphasizes the importance of participation in the professional physician assistant organizations and enables graduates to assume positions as members and leaders in professional and community organizations.
- ❑ To train graduates who meet the Mississippi requirements for practicing PAs.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

A candidate for the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program must have the following abilities and skills stipulated by the faculty, Accreditation Review Committee on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), and state of Mississippi for admission to and continuance in the program.

These standards have been developed as evaluative criteria for admission and continuance in the Physician Assistant Program, and are subject to continuing revision and improvement.

Communication: Candidates should be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written English. Communications include the ability to speak intelligibly, hear sufficiently and observe patients accurately in order to formulate an appropriate assessment of mood and general appearance to assimilate the components of non-verbal communication. They must possess the ability to read at a level sufficient to accomplish curricular requirements, comprehend technical materials, medical and/or laboratory reports, medical texts and journals in English to define complex problems and prepared solutions. They also must possess the capability of completing appropriate medical records, documents and plans according to protocol in a thorough and timely manner.

Sensory, Motor, Coordination, and Function: Candidates are required to possess abilities dependent to the practice of medicine and provision of healthcare including motor skills to perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and observation. Such actions requiring coordination of gross and fine muscular movement, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision include but are not limited to airway management, visualization techniques of ophthalmic and otoscopic examinations, catheter placement, application of adequate pressure for bleeding control and auscultation of heart and lung sounds. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities. Candidates will be required to demonstrate their proficiencies in these tasks.

Intellectual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities: Abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demand of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual abilities. Candidates must be able to independently access and interpret medical histories or files; identify significant findings from history, physical examination, and laboratory data; provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnosis, prescribed medications, and therapy; and recall and retain information in an efficient and timely manner. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the medical literature in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, diagnosis, and therapeutic planning is essential. Students must be able to identify and communicate their knowledge to others when appropriate. In addition, the candidate must be able to perform assigned duties in the appropriate time frame.

Behavioral and Social Attributes: Candidates must possess the emotional health for full utilization of their intellectual capacity, to exercise good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities, attend to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. It is required of the candidate to possess emotional stability to withstand stress, uncertainties, and changing circumstances that characterize the dependent practice of medicine. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the didactic year and during clinical training. The students must be able to use supervision appropriately and act independently, when indicated. Compassion, integrity, ethical standards, concern for others, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admission and educational process. They also must have the interpersonal skills to cooperate and interact at all levels with faculty, health care professionals, preceptors, students, staff, the public, employees, and patients.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION*

- I. The physician assistant is academically and clinically prepared to provide health care services with the direction and responsible supervision of a doctor of medicine or osteopathy. Within the physician/physician assistant relationship, physician assistants make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive and health maintenance services. The clinical role of physician assistants includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. Physician assistant practice is centered on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activities.
- II. The role of the physician assistant demands intelligence, sound judgment intellectual honesty, the ability to relate to people and the capacity to react to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. An attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare are essential attributes.
- III. The specific tasks performed by individual physician assistants cannot be delineated precisely because of the variations in practice requirements mandated by geographic, political, economic and social factors. At a minimum however, physician assistants are educated in those areas of basic medical science, clinical disciplines and discipline-specific problem solving. Physician assistant practice is characterized by clinical knowledge and skills in areas traditionally defined by family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, surgery, and psychiatry/behavioral medicine. Physician assistants practice in ambulatory, emergency, inpatient and long-term care settings. Physician assistants deliver health care services to diverse patient populations of all ages with a range of acute and chronic medical and surgical conditions. They need knowledge and skills that allow them to function effectively in a dynamic health care environment.
- IV. Services performed by physician assistants while practicing with physician supervision include, but are not limited to the following:
 - A. Evaluation – Elicit a detailed and accurate history, perform an appropriate physical examination, order, perform and interpret appropriate diagnostic studies, delineate problems, develop management plans, and record and present data.
 - B. Monitoring – Implement patient management plans, record progress notes, and participate in the continuity of care.
 - C. Therapeutics – Perform therapeutic procedures and manage or assist in the management of medical and surgical conditions, which may include assisting surgeons in the conduct of operations and taking initiative in performing evaluation and therapeutic procedures in response to life-threatening situations.
 - D. Patient Education – Counsel patients regarding issues of health care management to include compliance with prescribed therapeutic regimens, normal growth and development, family planning, and emotional problems of daily living.
 - E. Referral – Facilitate the referral of patients to other health care providers or agencies as appropriate.

* Adapted from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education of the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

NCCPA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CERTIFIED AND CERTIFYING PAs*

Preamble

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants endeavors to assure the public that certified physician assistants meet professional standards of knowledge and skills. Additionally, NCCPA attempts to ensure that the physician assistants it certifies are upholding appropriate standards of professionalism and ethics in practice. The NCCPA's *Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying Physician Assistants* outlines principles that all certified or certifying physician assistants are expected to uphold.

Breaches of these principles may be cause for disciplinary review. Disciplinary actions taken at the conclusion of that review may include formal censures, fines, revocation of certification or eligibility for certification and/or other actions as deemed appropriate by NCCPA. Some disciplinary actions are reported to the state licensing authorities and the National Practitioner Data Bank. This *Code of Conduct* represents some, though not necessarily all, of the behaviors that may trigger review under NCCPA's *Disciplinary Policy*.

Principles of Conduct

Certified or certifying physician assistants shall protect the integrity of the certification and recertification process.

- They shall not engage in cheating or other dishonest behavior that violates exam security (including unauthorized reproducing, distributing, displaying, discussing, sharing or otherwise misusing test questions or any part of test questions) before, during, or after an NCCPA examination.
- They shall not obtain, attempt to obtain or assist others in obtaining or maintaining eligibility, certification, or recertification through deceptive means, including submitting to the NCCPA any document that contains a misstatement of fact or omits a fact.
- They shall not manufacture, modify, reproduce, distribute or use a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized NCCPA certificate.
- They shall not represent themselves in any way as a Physician Assistant-Certified (PA-C) designee unless they hold current NCCPA certification.
- When possessing knowledge or evidence that raises substantial question of cheating on or misuse of questions from an NCCPA examination, fraudulent use of an NCCPA card, certificate or other document or misrepresentation of NCCPA certification status by a physician assistant or any other individual, they shall promptly inform the NCCPA.

Certified or certifying physician assistants shall comply with laws, regulations and standards governing professional practice in the jurisdictions and facilities in which they practice or are licensed to practice.

- Certified or certifying physician assistants shall respect appropriate professional boundaries in their interactions with patients.
- Certified or certifying physician assistants shall avoid behavior that would pose a threat or potential threat to the health, well-being or safety of patients apart from reasonable risks taken in the patient's interest during the delivery of health care.
- Certified or certifying physician assistants shall recognize and understand impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency, or mental illness.
- Certified or certifying physician assistants shall maintain and demonstrate the ability to engage in the practice of medicine within their chosen areas of practice safely and competently.

**Adapted from the National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)*

MC PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Notice: The University and the Physician Assistant Program reserve the right to modify curriculum requirements as necessary to ensure the academic integrity of its program. Students will be notified of any changes in curriculum or program requirements prior to implementation in accordance with ARC-PA Standards.

PHASE I: PRECLINICAL PHASE (approximately 15 months)

The preclinical phase spans five (5) semesters and incorporates basic medical sciences, applied behavioral sciences, clinical didactic instruction and the professional role of the PA. Selected patient contact experiences are also integrated throughout the didactic curriculum.

First Summer (12 weeks)

BIO 6515	8cr	Anatomy and Physiology w/lab
PAS 6010	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine I
PAS 6011	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine I Lab
PAS 6020	2cr	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics I
PAS 6030	3cr	Fundamentals of Medical Science I
PAS 6040	2cr	Professional Development I
PAS 6050	2cr	Behavioral and Community Medicine I
Total 19cr		

Fall (15 weeks)

PAS 6100	6cr	Clinical Medicine I
PAS 6110	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine II
PAS 6111	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine II Lab
PAS 6120	1cr	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics II
PAS 6130	1cr	Fundamentals of Medical Science II
PAS 6140	1cr	Professional Development II
PAS 6151	3cr	Evidence Based Medicine I
PAS 6160	2cr	Cross Cultural Medicine
Total 18cr		

Spring (15 weeks)

PAS 6200	6cr	Clinical Medicine II
PAS 6210	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine III
PAS 6211	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine III Lab
PAS 6220	1cr	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics III
PAS 6230	1cr	Fundamentals of Medical Science III
PAS 6240	1cr	Professional Development III
PAS 6250	2cr	Behavioral and Community Medicine II
PAS 6260	3cr	Fundamentals of Surgery
Total 18cr		

Summer A (6 weeks)

PAS 6300	3cr	Clinical Medicine III
PAS 6310	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine IV
PAS 6311	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine IV Lab
PAS 6320	1cr	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics IV
PAS 6330	1cr	Fundamentals of Medical Science IV
PAS 6340	1cr	Professional Development IV
PAS 6350	1cr	Behavioral and Community Medicine III
PAS 6360	1cr	Orthopedics
PAS 6451	1cr	Critical Care Medicine I

Total 11cr

Summer B (6 weeks)

PAS 6400	3cr	Clinical Medicine IV
PAS 6410	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine V
PAS 6411	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine V Lab
PAS 6420	1cr	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics V
PAS 6430	1cr	Fundamentals of Medical Science V
PAS 6440	1cr	Professional Development V
PAS 6452	1cr	Critical Care Medicine II
PAS 6460	1cr	Emergency Medicine

Total 10cr

TOTAL CREDIT HOURS FOR PRECLINICAL PHASE: 76

Class times and/or dates are not to be negotiated by students.

PHASE II: CLINICAL PHASE (approximately 15 months)

The clinical phase is composed of eight (8) six-week clinical practicums (PAS 6510-6580), end of practicum seminars, an end-of-clerkship seminar, and summative reviews for students who successfully complete the preclinical curriculum and are promoted to the clinical phase. Students will complete the following required clinical practicums (40 credit hours):

PAS 6510	Clinical Practicum I	5 credit hours
PAS 6520	Clinical Practicum II	5 credit hours
PAS 6530	Clinical Practicum III	5 credit hours
PAS 6540	Clinical Practicum IV	5 credit hours
PAS 6550	Clinical Practicum V	5 credit hours
PAS 6560	Clinical Practicum VI	5 credit hours
PAS 6570	Clinical Practicum VII	5 credit hours
PAS 6580	Clinical Practicum VIII	5 credit hours

Supervised clinical experiences will be assigned at each practicum such that students will complete assignments in Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Behavioral Health, OB/GYN, and an elective. Students will be assigned to specific sites to insure patient experiences in the above disciplines. Housing cannot be guaranteed for any rotation or clerkship. Housing is the responsibility of the student. It is the responsibility of the Director of Clinical Education to secure and schedule rotation or clerkship sites for students. Additional guidelines are discussed in the

Clinical Phase Manual, as well as class discussions with students during the Preclinical Phase, and at “orientation-to-rotations” at the beginning of the clinical phase.
Additional courses during PHASE II: Clinical Phase includes:

PAS 6640	Advanced Professional Seminar I	2 credit hours
PAS 6650	Advanced Professional Seminar II	2 credit hours
PAS 6660	Advanced Professional Seminar III	2 credit hours
PAS 6670	Advanced Professional Seminar IV	2 credit hours
PAS 6680	Advanced Professional Seminar V	2 credit hours
PAS 6152	Evidence Based Medicine II	2 credit hours
PAS 6700	Advanced Clerkship	14 credit hours

TOTAL CREDITS FOR PHASE II: CLINICAL PHASE: 66

Rotation times and/or dates are not to be negotiated by students.

Total Preclinical Phase credits:	76
Total Clinical Phase credits:	66
Total Master of Science in Physician Assistant credits:	142

MC PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Upon matriculation, all students will be provided with a copy of the Mississippi College Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog. Students are expected to review and be familiar with all policies as detailed therein. Policies and guidelines stated in this handbook may supersede similar university policies. Any questions should be directed to the PA Program faculty.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Students who have complaints that they want to have addressed about any aspect of the collegiate experience should submit the complaints in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School, Nelson Hall Room 202 or send to Mississippi College, Box 4029, Clinton, MS 39058, or to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mississippi College, Box 4002, Clinton, MS 39058.

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for admission to the PA graduate study program must hold bachelor's degree. Admissions to the PA program may be regular or provisional. Even though one may be accepted as a provisional PA student, the applicant may be required to take additional undergraduate courses if lacking any of the undergraduate prerequisites. Satisfaction of the specified educational prerequisites does not guarantee an applicant's admission to the Physician Assistant Program at Mississippi College. In evaluating applicants, the university will make an effort to consider all relevant aspects of the applicant's record and suitability for graduate study at Mississippi College.

In compliance with federal law, including provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Mississippi College does not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, or military service in admissions, in the administration of its education policies, programs, and activities or in employment. Under federal law, the university may exercise religious preferences in employment in order to fulfill its mission and purpose.

Application to the Physician Assistant Program is a very competitive process. The University reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant or to forbid any student's continued enrollment without assigning reason. It also reserves the right to change any of its regulations, charges, rules, and courses without notice, and to make such changes applicable thenceforth, not only to new students but also to students already registered.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Mississippi College has a history of providing assistance to students with disabilities. In addition to moral responsibility and the university's commitment to access, there is a legal imperative which is embodied in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To comply with these mandates, Mississippi College ensures that comparable educational programs and services offered to other qualified students are available to qualified students with disabilities. A qualified student with disabilities is one who, with reasonable accommodation, can meet all of an educational program's requirements notwithstanding the disability.

To accomplish this goal, both physical and programmatic access is provided. This means that reasonable accommodations are made in the instructional process to ensure appropriate educational opportunity. This principle applies to teaching strategies and modes, as well as to institutional and departmental policies. It does not mean, however, that essential elements of a course or program will be deleted or substantially altered because of the disability. The objective is to assist the student in meeting established academic standards, not to provide a program different in substance from that provided to other qualified students.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Mississippi College accommodates students with disabilities in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Any student with a documented disability is eligible for assistance in meeting the needs for accommodations. To request accommodations, students should follow the procedures outlined below.

1. **Initial Contact.** Students should contact the Director of Student Counseling Services to make an initial request for accommodations relating to a disability. The Director can be contacted at Alumni Hall, Room 4, and reached by phone at 601.925.7791. Forms to be completed in conjunction with a request for accommodation are located in the Student Counseling Services in Alumni Hall. It should be emphasized that students who desire accommodations for disability must assume responsibility for making the initial contact and for providing supporting documentation.
2. **Written Documentation of Disability.** It is the responsibility of the student to provide written documentation of the disability for which accommodation is requested. The following guidelines should be followed to assure that the diagnostic evaluation report is appropriate for verifying accommodation needs:
 - Testing must be comprehensive.
 - Testing must be current which, in most cases, means that the test results must be no more than three years old.
 - There must be clear and specific evidence and identification of a disability.
 - Professionals conducting the assessment must be qualified, as evidenced by appropriate licensure or certification.
 - Diagnostic reports must include the names and titles of the evaluators as well as testing dates, together with particular recommendations for educational interventions.
3. **Confidentiality.** Material submitted to verify a disability and to determine whether accommodations are warranted is treated as confidential information; that is, such information is not stored with the student's general files but is kept in the Student Counseling Center where access is strictly limited. This information will be released to one or more of the student's teachers only if the involved student gives permission. Consequently, a student must contact the Director of the Student Counseling Center every semester to renew his or her request for accommodations; otherwise, the appropriate faculty members cannot be informed of the student's needs.
4. **Recommendation on Appropriate Accommodations.** The Director of the Student Counseling Center thoroughly reviews each request for accommodation, together with the supporting documentation, before making his recommendation as to the accommodations, if any, that are warranted in particular cases. The Director's decision making process will involve consultations with the student and may include a solicitation of advisory opinions from other Mississippi College personnel. At the conclusion of this process, an effort will be made to adopt accommodations that are mutually acceptable to the university and the student.
5. **Changing Needs.** The student is obliged to keep the university informed as to changes relating to his or her needs for accommodations. The process for establishing accommodations in the first instance (see above) should also be followed in requesting a change in accommodations.

6. Appeals Process. Students who are displeased with some aspect of the accommodations recommended by the Director of the Student Counseling Center may have the recommendation reviewed by following the procedures set forth below.
- An appeal must be filed in writing with the Committee on Disabilities within thirty days after a final recommendation has been communicated to the student by the Director of the Student Counseling Center. This appeal should be addressed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, at P.O. Box 4002, Mississippi College, Clinton, MS 39058, who will in turn forward the appeal to the Committee on Disabilities.
 - The Committee on Disabilities will interview the student to obtain a complete account of the reasons for the appeal. The Committee and student will seek to reach an agreement on a compromise which is satisfactory to the student.
 - If the student remains unsatisfied with the Committee's accommodations, a further appeal may be filed with the President of the university at Box 4001, Mississippi College, Clinton, MS 39058. Such an appeal must be in writing and filed within 30 days of the Committee's action. The President will make whatever investigation is warranted and thereafter render a prompt decision.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Mississippi College does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, color, or national origin in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities, or with respect to admission or employment. The university is committed to the principle that no form of illegal discrimination or harassment will be tolerated.

Complaints of illegal discrimination, harassment, and abuses of social justice principles will be addressed in an objective and timely manner. Investigations will afford all parties with the right to present relevant information. The confidentiality of all parties involved shall be strictly respected insofar as it does not interfere with the university's obligation to investigate allegations of discrimination and to take corrective action. Faculty, staff, students, and applications are protected from retaliation for filing complaints or assisting in an investigation.

The Title IX/EEO Coordinator for Mississippi College is Dr. Debbie Norris, Vice President for Planning and Assessment, located in Nelson Hall, Room 202. A student may report an alleged violation of this policy to a faculty member or a staff member. A student may also report an alleged violation to the Student Counseling Center. The contact shall be reported within 24 hours to the Title IX/EEO Coordinator for consideration. It is also acceptable for complaints to be filed directly with the Title IX/EEO Coordinator. In the event that the complaint is against the Title IX/EEO Coordinator, the student shall report the complaint to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Normal campus hours are 5 am to 10 pm, Monday through Thursday, 5 am to 8 pm Friday, 7 am to 5 pm Saturday, and 1 pm to 6 pm on Sunday. Lecture scheduling for both program faculty and non-program faculty may require evenings and Saturdays as needed. Attendance for all classes is **mandatory**.

The discipline of attending all academic classes prepares one for the rigors of life in the clinical phase, where study and clinical practice must be highly integrated. Therefore, unexcused absences are not viewed favorably by the PA Program. **Each unexcused absence could result in lowering of the final course grade by one letter grade.**

In order for an absence to be excused, it is the student's responsibility to:

1. Contact the PA Program Office prior to the absence from a scheduled program class/activity. This may be done by telephone (601.925.7371) or by e-mail.

And

2. Provide the PA Program Office with an original copy or faxed copy of an excuse detailing the nature of the absence from a physician, attorney, etc. on the first day back to class. Or, the student may also use the allowed number of sick days without an excuse if applicable. See below for details.

Only absences (1) approved by the course director/master and program director (for non-illness absences); or (2) with documented illnesses (signed note from a health care provider) or hospitalizations; or (3) with documented illness or death in the immediate family will be deemed EXCUSED.

Students are allowed three (3) "sick" absences during the preclinical phase without an excuse from a physician or health care provider that will be deemed as excused. The preclinical phase begins the first day of the Summer Semester. The student or dependent of the student (i.e. child) must be sick, but not need the care of a health provider (i.e. "cold," "virus"). The three allowed sick days are **NOT** to be taken as "days off" or will be deemed unexcused. However, the student must call the PA Program at the number provided above to advise the faculty of their absence or the absence will be considered unexcused (see below for unexcused absences).

Students who foresee being late for a scheduled program class/activity must notify the PA Program Office. Failure to notify the office **AND** being twenty (20) minutes or more late for a class/activity may be deemed an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences may result in a zero (0) score for **any** announced or unannounced quiz, evaluation, or test administered during the unexcused absence. Make-up quizzes and other learning evaluations due to excused absences will be determined in accordance with the course syllabus and the course director/master.

Attendance will be taken by the course director/master and/or at the discretion of the Program Director. **Any student signing in for another student may be dismissed from the program for unprofessional behavior due to dishonesty.**

All students are expected to pay attention and show respect to the lecturer. Talking between class members, studying for other classes and/or causing a disturbance (i.e. cell phones, instant message, texting, internet surfing, etc) will not be tolerated. Anyone engaging in these behaviors will be asked to leave the room by the instructor, which may result in an unexcused absence and the lowering of the student's final course grade by one (1) letter grade for each occurrence.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

In exceptional circumstances (i.e. sudden onset of a serious medical condition) a leave of absence from the PA Program may be granted by the Program Director. Due to the cohort progression of the didactic curriculum, leaves of absence during the didactic phase may result in withdrawal from all PA courses. Students may be required to re-register and re-take courses in their entirety when they are re-instated.

All requests for student initiated leaves of absence must be made in writing to the Program Director, citing specific circumstances that warrant the leave. The Program Director may deny any request that does not cite due cause for the requested leave. Requests for reinstatement must be made in writing to the Program Director. The student must show that the problems leading to the leave of absence have been resolved such that success in the program will follow if the student is reinstated. Reinstatement during the clinical phase is also dependent on the availability of clinical training sites.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES FOR EMERGENCIES OR INCLEMENT WEATHER

It is university policy to remain in operation whenever possible. When weather conditions are so severe as to require reduced operations, students will be notified through announcements on radio stations and through the MC Alert system. Please refer to the Mississippi College Student Handbook for specific information.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION/SERVICE WORK BY STUDENTS

At no time will students replace faculty/course instructors. Likewise, in the clinical phase, **at no time** may students replace or substitute for absent site employees.

ADVANCED STANDING

No student will be given advanced standing in either didactic or clinical courses in the professional phase, regardless of academic or health care experiences. Advance standing is defined as substituting a course previously taken at another learning institution or a course taken in another medical field for a PA Program course.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

The professional image a PA Program student projects is very important to both the PA Program and the PA profession. **Students should bear this in mind when selecting their attire.**

Didactic Year

- Photo ID tags must be worn during all Physician Assistant Program functions and classes during both the didactic and clinical phases.
- Casual business attire (for men, slacks/long pants and long sleeve button up shirts or neat polo shirts, for women, skirts/slacks and sweater/blouse).
- No jeans, cargo pants, Capri pants or cut-offs are allowed.
- No sneakers, opened-toed shoes, sandals, flip flops/thongs are allowed.

Anatomy Laboratory

- White lab coats, black scrub tops, and black scrub pants, as well as closed-toed shoes and socks are required apparel in the laboratory. Lab coats and other apparel are to be laundered weekly.
- Opened-toed shoes, thongs, sandals, or flip-flops are unacceptable footwear in the laboratory. Socks must be worn with all footwear.
- No CAPS or HEAD APPAREL of any type will be worn in the laboratory.
- You must wear your special Anatomy ID in the laboratory. You may not enter the lab without this ID.

Diagnostic Medicine Laboratory

- T-shirts and athletic shorts are appropriate attire during lab time.
- Patient gowns are provided and can be worn instead of a t-shirt. Women must wear a sports bra underneath gowns.
- All types of footwear are permissible.

Official MC PA program scrubs are allowed to be worn on Diagnostic Medicine Lab day, for all classes, as long as the entire class wears the official MC PA program scrubs on that day, unless a guest lecturer is presenting during any classes that day. If so, the MC PA program dress code is enforced.

Clinical Year Regardless of Location

- Short white jackets should be worn during all Physician Assistant Program functions and classes, as well as all clinical sites. The white jacket should have the MC PA Program patch sewn onto it as instructed by the program.
- Hair should be neat.
- No facial piercing or visibly offensive tattoos. Simple small earrings are acceptable for women outside of the surgical setting.
- A minimum of jewelry such as wedding rings or class rings is acceptable outside of the surgical setting.
- Dress shirts and ties for men, professional blouse or sweater for women, unless instructed or approved to wear scrubs by your attending.
- No jeans, cargo pants, Capri pants or cut-offs.
- Shoes should be neat and clean, and always with closed toes. Do not wear sandals, flip flops/thongs. Clean sneakers/clogs when wearing scrubs are acceptable.
- Refrain from excessive use of fragrant hairspray, perfume and cologne.
- Fingernails should be of a modest length and should not interfere with your patient's care and minimize excessively bright, dark or creatively-colorful nail polish. No false nails of any type are acceptable.
- Any clothing which exposes, or presents the illusion of exposing, the cleavage, lower abdominal or buttocks areas is considered inappropriate for professional students. Tight pants, short skirts or dresses are considered inappropriate for professional students.

Any student who violates the dress code may be sent home and directed to return dressed appropriately. Any PA student who does not adhere to the dress code will be given one warning concerning their dress violation. Further violations of the dress code may result in that student wearing a mandatory uniform as set forth by the PA Program Director.

Any absences in PA classes/activities due to inappropriate dress will be unexcused.

PROGRAM NAME TAGS

Students are required to obtain a photo ID badge from the Office of Public Safety on the ground floor of Alumni Hall. Badges are to be worn at all times during both the preclinical and clinical phases.

GRADING SYSTEM

The following grading system will generally be used for all PA Program courses, unless explicitly described as different in the individual course syllabus. Course director/instructor(s) may adjust/curve grades for individual exams.

A	=	90 – 100	Excellent work
B+	=	86 – 89	Good work
B	=	80 – 85	Average work
C+	=	76 – 79	Fair work
C	=	70 – 75	Minimum standards of PA Program
F	=	≤69	Failure

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to have computer access as well as a dedicated MC email address. E-mail is the primary route of contact during both preclinical and clinical phases. The student must advise the office of any changes in their e-mail address immediately. Students must check their MC e-mail at least once a day after 5:00 p.m. for any program announcements.

PA STUDENT PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

As students in a professional program, you will be looked at by other health professional students as the prototypes for those who follow. It is imposed upon each PA student to assure that his/her commitment to the profession reflects personal and professional integrity in every aspect of his/her participation in the activities of the university, community and PA profession. It is the responsibility of each PA student to see that his/her study and participation in all aspects of the academic process and clinical training is so conducted that there can be no question concerning his/her integrity or professionalism.

Students will conduct themselves in a professionally ethical and responsible manner, which will reflect credit upon themselves and Mississippi College, in terms of professional responsibility, morality, honor, truth, and good citizenship; to observe high standards of conduct so that the integrity of the university and Physician Assistant profession may be preserved. A student will avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all activities; and abide by program and university policies of conduct, local, state, and federal law, and the Code of Ethics for the Physician Assistant Profession.

All PA students who attend any function that represents Mississippi College must not consume alcoholic beverages. ***This rule applies to ALL PA students during the preclinical as well as clinical phase of their training.*** This is not limited to, but includes dinners and functions provided by various drug representatives during or after class hours. You are representing the PA program, the university and the PA profession – please be on your best behavior! Remember, you must wear your ID, and preferably white coat, to all functions. At certain functions, your program sanctioned white coat may be mandatory attire.

Students whose behavior is disruptive or inappropriate for a medical professional shall be brought to the attention of the Program Director. The Program Director may, at his/her discretion, sanction any PA student who has failed to adhere to the requirements of Professional Behavior and Conduct.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media are internet-based tools designed to create a highly accessible information highway. They are powerful and far reaching means of communication that, as a physician assistant student at Mississippi College, can have a significant impact on your professional reputation and status. Examples include, but are not limited to, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Second Life, Flickr, YouTube, and MySpace.

Students are liable for anything they post to social media sites and the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines are expected to be maintained as if you were interacting in person. The Mississippi College PA Program supports your right to interact knowledgeably and socially. Guidelines have been developed to outline appropriate standards of conduct for your future and the reputation of our program.

Guidelines

1. Social networking (or 'friending') MC PA Program faculty and staff, guest lecturers, clinical preceptors, or current/former patients is strictly prohibited.
2. Take responsibility and use good judgment. Incomplete, inaccurate, inappropriate, threatening, harassing posts or use of profanity on your postings is strictly prohibited.
3. Think before you post as your reputation will be permanently affected by the Internet and email archives.
4. HIPPA laws apply to all social networking so it is the utmost priority to protect patient privacy by not sharing information or photographs.
5. You must protect your own privacy as to not let outsiders see your personal information.
6. Social networking is permanently timed and tracked. Therefore, in order to respect work commitments, social networking during class, program activities, and clinical time is strictly prohibited.

7. If you state a connection to the Mississippi PA Program, you must identify yourself, your role in the program, and use a disclaimer stating that your views are that of your own and do not reflect the views of the Mississippi College PA program.
8. All laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material must be followed.
9. Consult your faculty advisor or the Program Director if you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of social networking use.
10. You are strictly prohibited from communicating with a member of the media or outside source attempting to gather information regarding the MC PA Program through the social network. Refer all questions regarding program information, policies and procedures to the MC PA Program Director.

Failure to follow the above stated guidelines may be considered a breach of appropriate professional behavior and be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from the program.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT WARNINGS

Observed breaches of professional conduct could result in written warnings from the PA program faculty. These warnings are intended to serve as reminders of minor infractions that, if repeated, could result in disciplinary action. The warnings become a part of the student file. In most cases, the student may be required to appear before the Progress and Promotions Committee after the third offense. Serious offenses could result in immediate referral to the Progress and Promotions Committee.

PA PROFESSIONAL PROBATION

PA professional probation is a designation that is incurred when a student's professional demeanor through the program is not satisfactory. Professional probation occurs when there is demonstration of attitudes or behaviors unbecoming of a medical professional student.

Unprofessional behavior/attitude may be defined as:

Cheating, lying, plagiarism, fabrication of clinical data, repeated unexcused absences, engaging in criminal activity, falsifying preceptor/faculty grade evaluations, collaborating on individual take home assignments, copying/reproducing examination questions, informing other students of examination questions, misrepresentation of role/identity in a preclinical or clinical setting, breach of patient confidentiality, using drugs or alcohol during assigned Program activities, sexual harassment of patients/peer/colleagues, engaging in discrimination on the basis of a legally protected status, performing any clinical activities without adequate training and supervision, breaking state or federal laws governing physician assistant practice, exploiting the professional role for personal gain, and rude and/or disruptive behavior or attitude.

*This list is not meant to be wholly inclusive. Other behaviors deemed unprofessional by Program faculty will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The PA Program Director may place a student on professional probation based on the recommendation of the Progress and Promotions Committee. Professional probation includes a formal written reprimand placed in the student's file stating the student's professional bearing (i.e. attitudinal, professional or behavioral performance) is below expected standards. The program may define any requirements, timelines, or procedures expected of the student prior to removing the student's probationary status. Requirements may include, without limitation, professional counseling, community/volunteer service, attendance of behavior modification courses, written reports, and/or other procedures deemed appropriate to the specific violation.

The PA Program Director will remove any student from professional probation when the student has demonstrated adequate professional progress. Removal from probation occurs when the student meets the requirements established by the Program Director when instituting the professional probation;

however, the written reprimand will remain in the student's file. Further violations while the student is on professional probation may result in immediate dismissal from the PA Program with no opportunity for readmission.

No student on professional probation in PHASE I: Preclinical Phase may progress to PHASE II: Clinical Phase. No student on professional probation in PHASE II: Clinical Phase may be recommended for graduation.

TESTING GUIDELINES

Academic dishonesty is in direct violation of both individual accountability and integrity and cannot be tolerated in those who seek to become physician assistants. In order to discourage cheating during test taking, the PA faculty implements and enforces the following procedure:

1. The proctor may assign students to designated seats during examinations.
2. There will be no materials on a student's desk during an examination other than the writing instrument, eraser, test and answer sheet. Any other items must be approved in advance by the course director/master.
3. Student name, date and examination name/course must be recorded on the Scan-Tron answer sheet and on test booklet. Failure to do so may result in no grading of the answer sheet or test booklet.
4. During the administration of all PA Program examinations, written or practical, the proctor will not answer any questions concerning an examination question. In the event a student identifies a typographical error or other error in the examination structure, the proctor will announce the correction to the entire class.
5. Talking during an examination is absolutely prohibited. Talking under any circumstances will be construed as cheating.
6. The testing environment must be quiet, free of interruptions and disturbances, and proctored with fairness of all students.
7. The proctor of the examination will not provide or display the answer key to any student during the scheduled test time.
8. If a student needs assistance or needs to leave the test room for any reason, the student will so indicate by raising his/her hand and wait to be acknowledged. When the student is acknowledged to leave the test room, he/she will take the examination and answer sheet to the proctor before leaving and pick it up when returning. No more than one student may leave the test room at one time. If there is more than one proctor in the test room, one proctor may accompany the student. No student who has not completed the examination will be allowed to leave the test room when a student who has already completed the examination has left the test room.
9. Students will remain in their assigned seat during the examination.
10. Upon finishing the examination, the student will hand the examination, answer sheet and scratch paper to the proctor and leave the room immediately. The proctor cannot answer any questions at this time. Only one student is allowed with the proctor at one time.
11. Examinations must be returned in the same condition and in its entirety, i.e., no torn pages, no missing pages.
12. Students who have completed the examination are to leave the immediate vicinity of the testing room and refrain from talking within hearing distance of the testing room. Do not stand in the halls after an examination.
13. Students arriving no more than twenty (20) minutes late for an examination will be allowed to work only from their arrival time to the end of the scheduled testing time. Instructions and/or

corrections given at the beginning of the test time will not be repeated. No student will be allowed to enter the test room to begin the examination after a student who has completed the examination has left the test room OR more than twenty (20) minutes after the examination has begun. Arriving more than twenty (20) minutes late for an exam will constitute an unexcused absence and the student's grade for the exam will be a zero (0).

14. Grading of the examination will be as soon as possible, pending format of examination i.e., all multiple choice vs. short answer or essay.
15. Students are expected to take course examinations at the designated time.
16. In the event of illness on the day of an examination, the student must contact the PA Program Office **before** the exam, reporting that the student is unable to take the test due to illness. A student who has missed an examination due to an excused absence must take the examination at the time limit and discretion of the director/master. If the absence was unexcused, the student's grade for the exam will be a zero (0). See definition of excused/unexcused absences.
17. Students who have a serious and/or prolonged illness will be reviewed individually, and arrangements may be made accordingly at the discretion of the director/master.
18. The duration of each exam will be determined by the course director/master. Standard program testing guidelines recommend one (1) minute per question for multiple choice examinations.
19. Any questions or discrepancies regarding the exam must be addressed in writing, citing the discrepancy. Books listed on the syllabus and/or handouts given in class are the only reference materials to be used.
20. PA Program faculty and/or staff will proctor the administration of exams to assure integrity of the testing process.
21. Individuals may discuss their performance by appointment with course directors/masters. Course directors/masters may hold exam reviews as a class activity if time permits.
22. Unannounced quizzes may be given during class periods at the discretion of the course director/master.
23. Any student who has been absent for two (2) exams in one course may result in automatic administrative withdrawal of that course and may receive an "F" in that course.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Admission to the PA Program and acceptable grades represent the minimum criteria necessary for the successful completion of the PA Program. While grades are important, the decision to promote a student is based on the composite picture of the ability of the student to perform satisfactorily in the next didactic or clinical phase of training. If a student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic, attitudinal, or behavioral performance, or if the faculty does not believe the student is prepared to assume patient care responsibilities, a student may be required to complete a specified remediation regimen.

The following criteria will be used as the basis for promoting preclinical PA students to the clinical phase and for recommending clinical PA students for graduation from the PA Program. Students who fail to meet all promotion criteria may be suspended or dismissed from the PA Program if they do not successfully complete the remediation regimen as set forth by the Progress and Promotions Committee.

1. Maintain a program grade point average of at least 3.0 or higher throughout all semesters during the preclinical and clinical phases, and attain at least a grade of 70 (C) on all examinations.
2. A minimum program grade point average of at least 3.0 is required to progress to the clinical phase of the program. If a student does not meet the minimum GPA, he/she will be required to remediate for the duration of at least five (5) weeks (but could be increased in five (5) week increments) in areas of individual academic needs.
3. All students must pass a comprehensive preclinical summative evaluation before entering the clinical phase of the program. This evaluation will consist of written, clinical performance, and professional components. If a student fails the written or clinical performance exams twice,

he/she will be required to complete a specified remediation regimen for at least five (5) weeks and will start clinical rotations on a delayed cycle.

4. A PA Program GPA of 3.0 must be achieved in order to graduate from the program. If a student does not maintain an average program GPA of 3.0, he/she must remediate to the satisfaction of the Progress and Promotions Committee before graduation will be granted.
5. Demonstrate acceptable levels of maturity, integrity and other attitudes and behaviors normally expected of health professionals before progressing to the clinical phase and before releasing a student for graduation
6. Students must be free from professional probation status in the Physician Assistant Program before progressing to the clinical phase and before releasing a student for graduation.
7. Students must be free of any impediments to licensure or performance as a PA.

Program Suspension (behavioral) is defined as a formal mandate by the program director that a student suspend all activities as a student with the Physician Assistant Program for a specified period of time. The program director may define requirements, time lines, or procedures expected of the student prior to being reinstated in the program. Requirements may include, without limitation, professional counseling, community/volunteer service, attendance in behavior modification courses, written reports, and/or other procedures deemed appropriate to the specific violation. Reinstatement occurs when the student meets all requirements to the satisfaction of the program director.

Program Dismissal is defined as a formal action of administrative withdrawal from all Physician Assistant Program courses and Physician Assistant Program with no opportunity for readmission. Students who are dismissed from the program may receive an "F" in all courses in which the student was registered at the time of dismissal but in which the student has not yet completed.

Academic Standing

- Students will be placed on academic probation if their overall GPA falls below 3.0. Probationary status in such instances must be removed by the end of the following semester by the return of the overall GPA to a level equal to or greater than 3.0. Two consecutive semesters with an overall GPA below 3.0 will be grounds for academic dismissal from the Physician Assistant Program.
- A student who receives a course grade below 70% (C) during the preclinical phase will be automatically put on probation and referred to the Progress & Promotions Committee for remediation recommendations.
- A letter grade less than 70% (C) in any clinical practicum course rotation will require the repeat of the clinical experience. Students who do not complete a clinical rotation or are asked to leave a clinical rotation due to poor performance will not receive a passing grade for that clinical experience. Clinical rotations may be repeated only once. The location of a repeated clinical experience will be subject to available sites and at the discretion of the Clinical Coordinator with input from the Progress & Promotions Committee. Two clinical rotation course grades below a 70% (C) will be grounds for academic dismissal from the Physician Assistant Program.

MANDATORY REMEDIATION

Mandatory remediation is included in all PA courses in the form of additional assignments and/or a remediation evaluation. Any exams in which a student scores below 70% will be subject to mandatory remediation. For courses of 3 credit hours or less, only ONE failed evaluation grade will be replaced with a 70% if the student successfully remediates the material as determined by the course director. For courses of 4 or more credit hours, TWO failed evaluation grades will be replaced with a 70% if the student successfully remediates the material as determined by the course director. The maximum score that can be credited to a student on a remediation evaluation will be no more than 70% (C) regardless of the

actual score on the evaluation. Failure of a remediated evaluation will result in failure of the course regardless of the overall score in the course.

Failed clinical rotations/clerkships must be repeated/remediated at the completion of the full clinical rotation schedule. No more than two failed clinical rotations or clerkships may be repeated/remediated during the student's progression through the program. **Failure of a repeated/remediated clinical rotation or clerkship, or failure of more than 2 rotations during the program, constitutes immediate dismissal from the Physician Assistant Program.**

OPTIONAL REMEDIATION

Optional remediation is offered as a remedy to PA Program courses where our assessment has revealed high attrition rates. Please refer to individual syllabi for classes that may offer optional remediation. This remediation is offered where it is feasible to correct the student's insufficiency so the progression in the program will not be prolonged. Students may choose not to participate in optional remediation.

If the student fails a PA Program course that offers optional remediation, he/she may elect to participate by enrolling in **PAS 6900 Independent Study**. The cost of optional remediation is determined annually by the university per credit hour per student. The course will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Financial Aid may not cover the cost of this course.

1. If offered, the student *must request* optional remediation of a failed course using a form that is available in the PA Program office.
2. Participation in optional remediation does NOT guarantee passage of the failed course.
3. The student must successfully complete all prescribed material during the semester following the failed course and pass **all** exams/quizzes/case studies with at least a 70% before the remediation will be considered as a passing grade.
4. The instructor will determine the "retake" policy for exams/quizzes/case studies during **PAS 6900 Independent Study**.
5. The instructor(s) will determine the materials to be remediated and the means of measuring the student's success of remediation, i.e. tests, quizzes, case studies, and/or hands-on patient contact (with instructor's supervision).
6. Successful completion of PAS 6900 will result in a passing grade of no more than 70% for the failed course regardless of the scores earned on individual exams/quizzes/case studies comprising PAS 6900.
7. The student must be on time and only absences of documented emergencies or serious illness will be considered excused. **Any** unexcused tardiness or absence from optional remediation will result in a failing grade.
8. A student may request optional remediation for a total of no more than one course per semester during the preclinical phase of the program for a total of no more than two courses during the entire preclinical phase of the program. There is no optional remediation for clinical rotations or clerkships.

DURATION TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM

From initial entry into the PA Program, no student will be allowed more than three (3) years to complete PHASE I: Preclinical Phase courses.

The entire length of the program (PHASE I: Preclinical and PHASE II: Clinical Phases) may not be greater than forty-eight (48) months.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As professional students, PA students are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and ethical behavior. In addition to the guidelines detailed in this manual, the university publishes policies relevant to student conduct.

Cheating, plagiarism, lying or deception of any matter and material are viewed as a form of academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and cheating as defined in Mississippi College Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog. Students who are found to be lying, cheating, and/or stealing may be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program with no opportunity of readmission.

Academic dishonesty and cheating as defined by the PA Program may occur prior to, during, and/or following examination administration. Academic dishonesty and cheating may include, but are not limited to, participation in any of the following:

- Seeking and/or obtaining PA examination materials prior to the examination
- Plagiarism
- Copying answers from another examinee or classmate, or permitting one's answers to be copied
- Stealing examination materials for later use by self or others
- Using notes, books or other unauthorized materials during examination administration
- Failing to adhere to proctors' instructions and/or examination procedures
- Altering answers, scores, examination materials during review of graded examination
- Any other behavior that undermines the program's examination process or that tends to undermine the integrity of the program, the profession, and/or the examinations.
- Attempting to remove, copy, record or otherwise reproduce PA examination components or materials, or in any other way providing and/or receiving unauthorized information concerning the examination content. If a student discovers that he or she is in possession of questionable materials or notes this should immediately be brought to the attention of a PA program faculty member.

RECORDING DEVICES

Students are prohibited from using recording devices (audio/video) of any kind during course lectures, meetings, PA Program functions or events unless approved by the lecturer or through the Director of Counseling and Testing to accommodate a disability.

ADVISORS

Each student will be assigned to a learning team. Each team will have a faculty advisor, who will supervise a student's progression through the program. Students will meet with their advisor at least once a semester to review their progress.

VISITATION AT PA PROGRAM OFFICES

In the PA Program office, there is a lot of activity in a confined amount of space. Consultation with PA faculty members outside of published office hours is by appointment only. Students must not congregate in the PA Office space. This will preserve the confidentiality of student records maintained there. However, please feel welcome to come to the office if you have an urgent problem or situation that needs our assistance.

PA PROGRAM OFFICE COPY MACHINE

The copy machine in the PA Office is for **faculty and staff** use only.

COMMUNICATION MODES

E-mail will be utilized as the preferred communications mode. You should check your email at least DAILY after 5:00 p.m. The PA Program also utilizes the MC alert system to disburse important announcements. MC Alert is Mississippi College's online resource for information regarding campus alerts and emergency notifications. In situations such as inclement weather, power outages, or other

hazardous situations or campus emergencies, you will notice an "MC Alert" icon towards the top of each page on the site. This link will bring you to our MC Alert homepage with detailed information regarding the situation. Students must advise the office of any changes in their e-mail or home address and any changes in phone numbers. When possible, changes should be made during the break between semesters. If you cannot be reached concerning a change in class/test times due to an incorrect e-mail address or phone number, your absence will be unexcused.

Faculty and staff mailboxes are located in the PA Program Office and students can leave messages/assignments for the faculty with the program administrative assistant as needed. The office is open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. An automated voice mail system is operational after hours.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The role of the Office of Public Safety is to work toward ensuring the safety of all individuals while on campus and provide for the security of all properties of the college. In doing so, it is recognized that security at Mississippi College is everybody's business. Although no community can be totally risk-free in today's society, the office works toward securing partnerships with students, faculty, staff, administration and guests in creating an atmosphere that is safe and conducive to learning. The Office is also responsible for the control, regulation and flow of traffic on Mississippi College property. The Office of Public Safety is located on the First Floor of Alumni Hall and can be reached at 601.925.3204 or security@mc.edu.

Mississippi College goes to great lengths to ensure safety on campus for all individuals. Some of the measures we take include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency Code Blue phone units are strategically placed around the campus. In addition to calling 911 and MC's Office of Public Safety, these phones may be used to report emergencies.
- Buildings are secured on campus during non-operating hours by the Office of Public Safety. Once a building is secured, access may be gained only by authorized persons with Mississippi College issued identification cards.
- All campus buildings, facilities, and grounds belonging to the institution are regularly patrolled by both vehicle and foot patrol by security officers. Specific areas of campus are also monitored by cameras.
- Within all residence halls, outside entrance doors, other than front door lobby doors, are locked at dusk. All nonresidents entering the halls after that time must use the front door entrance. All lobbies which remain open are monitored by lobby workers from 3:00 p.m. to midnight seven days per week. All nonresidents must be acknowledged by the lobby worker. All entrances are closed at midnight with access gained only by Mississippi College issued identification cards.
- Upon request, security officers will provide escort services from vehicles to buildings or from buildings to buildings should individuals feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- With safety concerns in mind, the College maintains appropriately manicured trees and shrubbery around buildings and on campus grounds. Appropriate campus lighting is also a priority in an effort to reduce the opportunity for criminal activity.
- Mississippi College provides informative programs to students and employees on the following topics Campus Security Procedures and Practice, Crime Prevention and Awareness, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Education, Sexual Assault and the Prevention of Sex Offenses.

IMMUNIZATIONS & HEALTH HISTORY

Consistent with recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for Health Care Workers, all students are required to complete immunizations for vaccine preventable diseases prior to matriculation (requirements are distributed with the enrollment packet materials). All immunizations must be completed prior to enrollment in the Program, unless a special exception is granted. These requirements may change throughout the student's time in the program due to changing recommendations from the CDC. If requirements do change, consideration will be given in registering for preclinical courses, but all must be completed before rotations begin.

HEPATITIS VACCINATIONS & TB SKIN TESTS

Prior to the start of the program, students must complete their hepatitis vaccination series and titer confirming immunity, and provide proof of this to the PA Program. In addition, all students must obtain a repeat TB skin test annually, or chest X-ray when required. Students will not be allowed to progress until these requirements are met. NOTE: A positive PPD test or positive CXR for tuberculosis, or no immunity to Hepatitis B may delay or prevent patient contact.

HEALTH AND DISABILITY INSURANCE

All students must show proof of medical insurance prior to matriculation in the PA Program. This must include both health and hospitalization and must be maintained throughout the duration of the program. Students without medical insurance, or any lapse in coverage, may result in withdrawal from all PA courses, or delay/cancel clinical rotations. Additionally, all students are **strongly encouraged** to carry disability insurance to cover possible consequences in the event of a needle stick injury or other potential exposure to HIV infection.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Students are required to secure coverage by professional liability insurance while enrolled or participating in supervised clinical experiences. This is included in tuition and fees and will be attained by the PA Program.

NAME CHANGES

Any PA student who changes their name while enrolled in the PA Program (i.e. marriage, divorce) is responsible for filing the appropriate forms with Mississippi College requesting a name change.

FINANCIAL AID

All inquiries about financial aid information should be directed to the Financial Aid Office. The program has no control over the financial aid process.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT DURING THE PROGRAM

PA Program students may not be employed while enrolled in the program due to the rigors of the program. Petitions for exceptions to this guideline will require written approval by the program director.

The program recognizes absences due to military duty as EXCUSED. Students who need to attend military obligations should notify the program director and course director/master at least one week before the scheduled class or scheduled activity or as soon as possible after the student receives notice that he/she will be called to active duty.

Under no circumstances will a PA student be accepted for employment as a 'work study' within the PA Program office or as an aid to any PA instructors.

STUDENT COUNSELING

Program may assist in arranging counseling with the University Student Counseling Center. The Center serves students as they explore educational options, establish career directions and cope with personal adjustments. Because each individual is viewed as a whole person with personal, academic, and career concerns that are interrelated, the center offers a variety of services.

- Personal and career counseling
- Study skills and tutorial assistance
- Services to students with disabilities
- Personnel and contact information
- Mental health screening

Personal concerns of any type may be discussed privately with an experienced counselor.

These concerns may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Serious concerns about a friend, roommate, or family member
- Coping with a traumatic incident
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Suicidal thoughts
- Lack of concentration
- Relationship conflicts
- Stress
- Isolation and loneliness
- Grief
- Lack of confidence and/or self-esteem
- Eating disorders
- Test anxiety
- Sexual assault
- Phobias
- Family problems
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Depression

All information and communication between a student and counselor is confidential. Exceptions are made if information is disclosed pertaining to the harm of oneself or someone else. This is mandated by law. No student record in the counseling center is used on any transcript.

Through career counseling, students are assisted in the clarification of values and interests, the identification of abilities, the choice of an academic major, and the analysis of career options.

Referrals to other agencies are made when needed.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

All students are required to have their own medical equipment. When selecting equipment, keep in mind that it will be utilized during both the preclinical and clinical years of the Physician Assistant Program and also for several years thereafter as a practicing physician assistant. A list of medical equipment required will be distributed with the enrollment packet and available for purchase during student orientation. These diagnostic equipment packages can be charged to the student's MC account.

CONCLUSION

This program is very demanding, and stress will be felt by everyone – individually and in groups – in different ways, and at different times. This will include your support systems also. Each semester of the program has its own unique stresses and rewards. We expect you to develop functional ways of dealing with stress. Dysfunctional coping styles are a specific risk for all health care providers. The PA Program faculty can be a resource for you in dealing with stress, as well as advisors/counselors in Student Services. We encourage you to contact a faculty member to take advantage of counseling and advising services.

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM
MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE**

STATEMENT OF STUDENT ADVISEMENT

RE: Student Handbook
Class of 2016

I certify that I have been provided access to the Student Handbook for the MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE Physician Assistant Program

<http://www.mc.edu/academics/departments/pa/handbook/>

I certify that I have read and understand all institutional and program policies and requirements. By signing my name below I acknowledge my agreement to comply with all institutional and program policies and requirements as listed in the above policy and procedure manual.

Should I have any questions, I understand that it is my responsibility to ask program faculty/staff for clarification.

Furthermore, I understand that noncompliance with the stated policies and requirements may result in disciplinary action and may be grounds for my dismissal from the program.

Student Name (Please Print)

Student Signature

Date

Program Representative Signature

Date