

**Mississippi College Physician
Assistant Program**

Student Handbook

2022 - 2023



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The Physician Assistant Program offered at Mississippi College is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA). (12000 Findley Road, Suite 150, Johns Creek, GA, 30097; Phone: 770-476-1224. www.arc-pa.org).

See www.mc.edu/academics/departments/pa/ for Program duration, tuition, fees, and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success, and other important info. [check this website carefully and thoroughly to be sure nothing there is inconsistent with the Handbook – particularly with regard to student rights]

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to orient you to current policies and procedures, guidelines, and resources relevant to your participation in the Mississippi College, Master of Science of Medicine. Please read this student handbook carefully as its contents will govern your enrollment in the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program. Additionally, this student handbook contains information about the Physician Assistant (PA) profession and its professional organizations. Periodically, additional policies and/or procedures may be established or changes made in the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program's policies and procedures. Policy and/or procedure changes can be made at any time and without notice. PA staff seek to keep students informed about changes or additions to policies and procedures as they become effective, but it is your responsibility to stay informed about changes and the effect they may have on you and your program of study. We hope this handbook will be useful to you but keep in mind this handbook is not a contract. Please feel free to contact the Program Director or your faculty advisor if you have any questions. Other policies and procedures regarding enrollment in Mississippi College can be found in the Mississippi College Student Handbook or the Program Catalog or the general policies governing the University.

The Mississippi College Physician Assistant (PA) Program strives to provide educational experiences where faculty, staff, clinical instructors, students, and other healthcare providers work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, cooperation, and commitment. The Program's focus is on the continuous operation of a quality PA educational program which will prepare graduates to participate in clinical leadership roles in an evolving healthcare system. The Program encourages lifelong learning skills with proficiency in critical thinking, creative problem solving, and information literacy.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Mississippi College does not illegally 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. Mississippi College 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 Mississippi College'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 Coordinator for Mississippi College is Dr. Kristena Gaylor, Associate Professor of Business, located in Self Hall, Room 200B. Dr. Gaylor may be contacted by email at kgaylor@mc.edu, by phone at 601-925-3415 or by using the *Report It* link on the MC website or also found on the Title IX website. A student may report an alleged violation of this policy to a faculty member or a staff member but they are obligated to report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. If a student desires to make a confidential report, they may report to the Student Counseling Center on the 4th floor of Alumni Hall. In the event that the complaint is against the Title IX Coordinator, the student shall report the complaint to the Provost located in Nelson Hall.

The information about non-discrimination in this handbook is provided for notice to students and is not intended to limit the rights claimed by Mississippi College as a private, religiously affiliated institution.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program was established in 2010. The educational goal of the Program is to provide a primary care focused training program for Physician Assistants. The educational objectives of the Program are based on the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education as established by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for Physician Assistants, Inc. (ARC-PA). The Program strives to prepare graduates to meet competencies expected of our graduates, as outline by faculty.

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. The members of the PA Program faculty understand that to produce graduates of the highest quality, the curriculum, both preclinical 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 primary mission of the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program is to help students acquire core competencies, as well as specialized knowledge and skills, necessary to perform effectively as physician assistants and to prepare physician assistants to provide primary healthcare services in medically underserved areas of Mississippi and other medically underserved communities.

The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program focuses on a primary care curriculum including: family medicine, geriatric medicine, pediatric and adolescent medicine, general internal medicine, women's health to include obstetrics and gynecology, behavioral medicine, 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 healthcare and coordinate the delivery of healthcare of the highest caliber. The curriculum emphasizes the role of the physician assistant as a patient advocate. The preclinical 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.

PROGRAM GOALS

The physician assistant curriculum is closely related to the purpose and goals of the institution as well as to the degree. The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program offers a Master of Science of Medicine degree that promotes lifelong learning, critical thinking, and varied academic experiences to provide students with the expertise and work ethic required to achieve personal and professional fulfillment.

The goals of the Program are to:

- Recruit highly qualified students who demonstrate predictors of success.
- Matriculate an inclusive and diverse student cohort.
- Attain a graduation rate of at least 90% for each matriculated cohort.
- Maintain a five-year first-time pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) of at least 90%.
- Educate students in each of the Program's defined competency domains in preparation for clinical practice.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

In order to ensure that patients receive the best medical care possible, the faculty of Mississippi College Physician Assistant (MCPA) Program have identified certain skills and professional behaviors that are essential for

successful progression of physician assistant students in the Program. A candidate for the MCPA 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. Minimum performance standards include critical thinking, integrative and quantitative abilities, communication skills, observation skill, sensory, motor, coordination, and function skills, and behavioral and social attributes.

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.

Critical Thinking: All students must possess the intellectual, ethical, physical and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty. The ability to solve problems, a skill that is critical to the practice of medicine, is essential.

Integrative and Quantitative Abilities: Abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. 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.

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 curriculum 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.

Observation Skills: Candidates must be able to observe a patient accurately, both at a distance and close at hand. This ability requires the functional use of vision and somatic sensation.

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.

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 preclinical year and during clinical training. The students must be able to use supervision appropriately and act independently, when indicated. Compassion, integrity, ethical standards, moral standards, professionalism, 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, healthcare professionals, preceptors, students, staff, the public, employees, and patients.

MCPA CORE COMPETENCIES FOR GRADUATES

The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program provides competency-based education designed to ensure that graduate PA's have the fundamental knowledge and skillset needed to provide medical care to a diverse population. Competencies are categorized according to 5 major domains: medical knowledge, clinical & technical skills, interpersonal & communication skills, professionalism & professional practice, and clinical reasoning/problem solving skills. Course objectives and instructional/learning outcomes are derived from these. Each student must demonstrate competence in the following areas to be eligible for graduation.

Medical Knowledge (MK)

Medical knowledge includes the fundamental understanding of the pathophysiology principles, patient presentations, differential diagnosis, patient management options, surgical principles, health promotion, disease prevention strategies and social determinants of health required to successfully provide patient centered care. The graduate PA will be able to:

- 1-1 Recognize normal and abnormal health states in the context of the patient's life
- 1-2 Demonstrate understanding of etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, prognosis, and epidemiology for common medical conditions
- 1-3 Identify signs and symptoms of medical conditions
- 1-4 Differentiate between acute, chronic, and emerging disease states
- 1-5 Select the most appropriate laboratory and diagnostic studies for patients presenting in various settings.
- 1-6 Manage general medical and surgical conditions to include understanding the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities
- 1-7 Recognize when referral is needed and correctly identify the appropriate provider type/patient setting needed.
- 1-8 Identify the appropriate methods to detect yet undiagnosed conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- 1-9 Provide relevant and appropriate patient education and information regarding their disease states as well as primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

Interpersonal & Communication Skills (ICS)

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and written exchanges of information that will allow the graduate PA to effectively communicate information with patients, patient families, physicians, professional associates, and the healthcare system. The graduate PA will be able to:

- 2-1 Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information to patients, their families and members of the healthcare team.
- 2-2 Effectively communicate information to patients, their family and other health care agents using language and terms that are understandable and meaningful

Clinical & Technical Skills (CTS)

Clinical and technical skills include history-taking, physical examination, basic procedural techniques, interpretation of historical data, exam findings, & diagnostic testing, and documentation. The graduate PA will be able to:

- 3-1 Obtain an appropriate patient history to gather essential and accurate information about the patient's needs
- 3-2 Perform an appropriate physical exam to gather accurate findings relevant to the patient's needs
- 3-3 Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to perform medical and surgical procedures considered

- essential in the primary care setting
- 3-4 Interpret and differentiate between normal and abnormal laboratory and diagnostic study results, relevant history, and physical exam findings to formulate a differential diagnosis and management plan.
 - 3-5 Accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the medical care process for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

Professionalism & Professional Practice (PP)

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. The graduate PA will demonstrate professionalism by demonstrating awareness of their limitations, exhibiting a high level of responsibility, ethical standards and sensitivity while providing patient centered care to a diverse patient population. Professional practice involves adherence to legal and regulatory requirements for practicing medicine and maintaining licensure. Graduates will be able to practice medicine in a beneficent manner, recognizing and adhering to standards of care. The graduate PA will be able to:

- 4-1 Recognize one's limitations in regard to patient care, knowledge and skill and seek help as needed
- 4-2 Demonstrate respectful, culturally competent healthcare for the dignity and privacy of patients while maintaining confidentiality in the delivery of team-based care
- 4-3 Collaborate effectively with physician and other healthcare professionals as a member or leader of a healthcare team.
- 4-4 Demonstrate an understanding of the different types of health systems, funding streams, and insurance types, and financial implications as related to healthcare delivery.
- 4-5 Demonstrate an understanding of the current standards of care, legal and regulatory requirements, and the appropriate role of the physician assistant as they relate to patient management.

Clinical Reasoning & Problem Solving (CRPS)

Clinical Reasoning and problem-solving skills involve identifying current evidenced based solutions to clinical questions for individual patients and for those of the community served. By using the concepts of information literacy to navigate and interpret current medical literature, the graduate PA will be able to answer those questions and apply evidence-based knowledge to formulate a solution. The graduate PA will be able to:

- 5-1 Locate, interpret, appraise and apply information from evidenced based literature to guide clinical reasoning and make informed decisions related to patient centered care
- 5-2 Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods

DESCRIPTION OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION*

- I. The Physician Assistant is academically and clinically prepared to provide healthcare 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 healthcare 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 healthcare 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 healthcare 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 healthcare 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 healthcare.
- 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

PHASE I: PRECLINICAL PHASE (approximately 15 months) (77 credit hours)

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

Semester I Summer (13 weeks)

Total 19 credits

BIO 6516	5cr	Human Anatomy
BIO 6517	3cr	Human Physiology
PAS 6010	1cr	Diagnostic Medicine I Lecture
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

Semester II Fall (16 weeks)

Total 20 credits

PAS 6100	7cr	Clinical Medicine I
PAS 6110	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine II Lecture
PAS 6111	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine II Lab
PAS 6120	2cr	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

Semester III Spring (16 weeks)

Total 18 credits

PAS 6200	7cr	Clinical Medicine II
PAS 6210	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine III Lecture
PAS 6211	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine III Lab
PAS 6220	2cr	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 6270	1cr	Essentials of Musculoskeletal Care

Semester IV Summer II (13 weeks)

Total 20 credits

PAS 6300	6cr	Clinical Medicine III
PAS 6310	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine IV Lecture
PAS 6311	2cr	Diagnostic Medicine IV Lab
PAS 6320	2cr	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics IV
PAS 6330	2cr	Fundamentals of Medical Science IV
PAS 6340	2cr	Professional Development IV
PAS 6350	1cr	Behavioral and Community Medicine III
PAS 6370	3cr	Emergency Medicine

PHASE II: CLINICAL PHASE (approximately 15 months) (66 credit hours)

The clinical phase is composed of eight (6) 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. 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 medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics, women's health, behavioral health, surgery, and an elective. Students will be assigned to specific sites to ensure 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	4 credit hours
PAS 6670	Advanced Professional Seminar IV	2 credit hours
PAS 6152	Evidence Based Medicine II	2 credit hours
PAS 6700	Advanced Clerkship	14 credit hours

Notice: The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program reserves 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.

GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES

PROGRAM 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 student handbook may supersede similar Mississippi College policies. Any questions should be directed to the PA Program faculty.

Drug Violations

Physician Assistant students must adhere to policies as put forth from Federal, State and Local agencies in addition to policies of both Mississippi College and the MC Physician Assistant Program. Use, possession, distribution, sale, manufacture, or evidence of consumption of narcotics, controlled substances or illegal drugs on or off Mississippi College property, or at a Mississippi College-sponsored events or programs in accordance with any agency policy is grounds for immediate dismissal from the Program.

Examples of violations include, but are not limited to:

1. Misuse of over-the-counter drugs
2. Misuse or sharing of prescription drugs
3. Possessing, using, being under the influence of, distributing, or manufacturing any form of illegal drug
4. Possessing paraphernalia (i.e. rolling papers, pipes, bongs, grinders, etc.) for intended or implied use of any form of illegal drug
5. Possessing paraphernalia that contains or appears to contain illegal drug residue
6. Purchasing or passing illegal drugs from one person to another
7. Using mail services to purchase, pass, or distribute illegal drugs

Substance Abuse and Screening

Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program is committed to protecting the safety, health, and welfare of its faculty, staff, students and the community of interest including patients and staff in clinical agencies. To this end, the Physician Assistant Program prohibits the illicit use, possession, sale, conveyance, distribution and manufacture of illegal drugs, intoxicants, and/or controlled substances in all instances. The Program may require all students to submit to drug testing under any or all of the following circumstances:

1. Upon confirmation of successful completion of criteria for continuation into clinical level course work
2. Random testing
3. Testing as required by clinical agencies
4. For cause

Failure of a drug screen will be dealt with consistent with the policy of the Physician Assistant Program, and may include failure and/or dismissal from the Program. For more information about Mississippi College Drug & Alcohol Prevention Program & drug violation policies, please use the link below:

<https://www.mc.edu/students/policies/application/files/6516/0683/7053/DAAP2020.pdf>

Student Grievance Procedures

Students who have complaints that they want to have addressed about any aspect of their collegiate experience should submit their complaints in writing to the Course Director, Clinical Medicine Course Section Director, or to the PA Program Director.

The Course or Section Director or the PA Program Director will address the grievance first. It may then be appealed to the Dean of Science and Mathematics, Dr. Stan Baldwin whose decision will be final. sbaldwin@mc.edu Depending on the nature of the grievance, the Dean may individually consider the grievance appeal or may seek the joint counsel of other academic administrators.

Any complaint or issue regarding Title IX (sexual harassment) may be addressed by contacting Dr. Kristena Gaylor, Title IX Coordinator, at kgaylor@mc.edu. No student filing or reporting complaints or concerns will be retaliated against. See Mississippi College Policies 1.09 (Retaliation Policy) and 1.18 (Whistleblower Policy)

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS

Application to the Physician Assistant Program is a very competitive process. Satisfaction of the specified educational prerequisites do not guarantee an applicant an interview or admission to the Physician Assistant Program at Mississippi College. In evaluating applicants, the Program will try to consider all relevant aspects of the applicant's record prior to matriculation into the Program and suitability for graduate study at Mississippi College.

Matriculates to the PA Program must hold at a minimum a bachelor's degree. Admission to the PA Program may be provisional. A provisional admission incorporates incomplete requirements that are currently being satisfied and must be completed by a set time to be removed from provisional status to full status.

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. As a religiously affiliated institution, Mississippi College is exempt from the application of certain non-discrimination laws in order to fulfill its mission and purpose.

Advanced Standing

No student will be given advanced standing in either preclinical or clinical courses in the professional phase, regardless of academic or healthcare 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.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to moral responsibility and the Program 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 seeks to provide access to educational programs and services to qualified students with disabilities. A qualified student with disabilities is one who, with reasonable accommodation, can meet all educational Program requirements notwithstanding the disability.

Students may request reasonable accommodations to access educational opportunities. 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 accessing established academic requirements, not to provide a program different in substance from that provided to other qualified students.

Reasonable Accommodation

The Mississippi College Office of Student Disability Services is committed to ensuring that educational programs are accessible to all qualified students. The mission of the Office of Student Disability Services is to create an environment that fosters academic excellence, personal responsibility, and growth in students with disabilities.

It is the responsibility of the Office of Student Disability Services to aid students with disabilities in the form of accommodations, advising, and referral services so they may have equal access to the academic and non-academic programs at Mississippi College and participate fully in all aspects of student life. To guard against discrimination on the basis of disability, the Office of Student Disability Services in conjunction with the Accessibility Committee provides reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis for otherwise qualified students who have demonstrated a need for these services.

Qualified students can access current accommodation procedures and applicable forms in the Disability Services Handbook. The Handbook can be found online at <https://www.mc.edu/offices/counseling/student-disabilities/disability-handbook>. Alternatively, a copy can be obtained from the Office of Student Disability Services on the 4th floor of Alumni Hall. Note: The Disability Handbook is updated frequently so interested parties should consult the handbook on a regular basis.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program recognizes that excellence in medical education cannot be dependent solely upon any calendar, be it secular or religious. Faculty members recognize, however, that some students may have special needs in the scheduling of quizzes, examinations, and clerkship duties because of religious beliefs and practices. To this end, individualized requests should be directed to the Program Director, Director of preclinical education, or Director(s) of clinical education. The faculty strives continually to provide the highest quality of education to students and remain ever responsive to patient care needs while respecting students' privileges and rights. In a further attempt to assist students with their special needs due to religious beliefs and practices, guidelines and related factors are as follows:

- Students who anticipate conflicts with regularly scheduled classes, quizzes, examinations, and have the opportunity to notify the Director of Preclinical Education each year during their orientation
- To minimize conflicts during the preclinical phase, the faculty members try to avoid scheduling quizzes, examinations, and classes on Saturdays, Sundays, and religious holidays. When scheduling causes conflicts with the religious observances of students, the students should be given the opportunity to make up work at the earliest convenience of the responsible faculty member and the students

- During the clinical phase, when the schedule of patient care and clinical conferences conflicts with a student's religious observances, the student should arrange substitutions and make-up work in consultation with, and in agreement with, the Director of clinical education or clinical coordinator and the immediate clinical supervisor (attending, resident, intern, etc.). Due to the "non-scheduled" nature of the clinical training, each student is expected to recognize his/her own personal responsibility for patient care and his/her own learning experience. Preparing students to assume the responsibility for patient care is the nature of clinical training and is critical to students' professional training
- The faculty continues to be sensitive to the religious observances of students. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the involved parties (i.e., course Directors, attending physicians, house officers, and the Program Director) of any request to modify scheduled work because of religious observances. This notification should be made at least 15 calendar days in advance of the conflicting date(s) and made through designated channels as noted above. It is the joint responsibility of students, faculty, and house officers to schedule make-up or substitute work at the earliest possible date convenient to those involved.

COMMUNICATION

Students are required to maintain an active MC email address. Email is the primary route of contact during both preclinical and clinical phases. The student must advise the office of any changes in their email address immediately. Students are required to check email daily and should make every effort to respond to faculty/staff inquiries in a timely fashion.

Student mailing addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers are required to be current and on file in the Program office. Throughout the course of study at Mississippi College, a variety of events occur (some unexpected, others, matters of routine business) making it necessary for students to be reached. The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program is not responsible for information missed by students who have not maintained up-to-date, reliable contact information with the Program office.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES FOR EMERGENCIES OR INCLEMENT WEATHER

It is Program 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/or through the MC Alert system. The PA Program 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.

The PA office is open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. An automated voice mail system is operational after hours.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mississippi College maintains an institutional attendance policy to support the academic achievement of its students. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class, laboratory, examination periods and class activities, including those activities scheduled during class time and those scheduled outside of class time. Students, whether present or absent from class, are responsible for knowing all that is announced, discussed, and/or lectured upon in class or laboratory, as well as for mastering all assigned reading. In addition, students are responsible for submitting (on time) all assignments and examinations as required in the class.

The PA Program may have specific policies (which in some cases may be more stringent than the Mississippi College attendance requirements) as to the effect of attendance on class meetings, course assignments, off-campus activities, internships/externships, clinical and practicum activities, and other Program requirements.

Due to the rigorous nature and limited time span to learn all material, regular, on-time attendance is essential for successful completion of the PA Program. It is the expectation of the Progress and Promotions Committee that all students will attend all scheduled classes, conferences, seminars, laboratory experiences and clinical practice. Any student (preclinical or clinical) who misses a required scheduled activity must notify their respective Director (preclinical or clinical) of the absence. Please see reporting of absences below. The student assumes the responsibility for obtaining all materials and making up all work that is missed during an absence.

Absences

Attendance is mandatory, and roll may be taken at any class. Failure to follow attendance guidelines will result in a course of action delineated by the Director of preclinical education. The Director of preclinical education or Director of clinical education will notify the Progress and Promotion Committee of any student who is consistently absent from preclinical or clinical experiences.

Reporting Absences

During the preclinical year, students must report/request an absence in advance via the following protocol. This should be done as far in advance as possible, and no less than 3 business days before the planned absence, using the advanced absence protocol. In the event of an unplanned absence (i.e., illness or accident), you should report the absence as far in advance as possible, using the short notice protocol.

Advanced absence protocol:

1. The student requesting the absence must complete the preclinical year absence request form and submit it to the Director of preclinical education. This can be delivered in person or via email.
2. The preclinical Director will be responsible for approving or denying the request and deeming it excused or unexcused. Justification may be required (i.e., doctor's note, court hearing documentation, funeral notice, etc.).
3. The preclinical Director will then notify the student and any involved instructors of the absence and the status of the absence.
4. The student will then be responsible for arranging any allowed make-up assignments with the course instructor(s).

Short notice protocol:

1. If a student must miss class with short notice, he/she will notify the preclinical Director, the faculty of record for the class(es) being missed and the team leader as soon as possible. This should be done via email, but a text or call is also permissible.
2. The preclinical Director will be responsible for deeming it excused or unexcused. Justification may be required (i.e., doctor's note, court hearing documentation, funeral notice, etc.).
3. On the day the student returns to campus, you will complete the absence notification form and provide any required documentation. This will be turned in to the preclinical Director. **THIS IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY.** Failure to do this will result in an automatic unexcused absence.
4. If the absence is deemed excused, the student will then be responsible for arranging any allowed make-up assignments with the course instructor(s).

Documentation Requirements

An original or faxed copy of the excuse from a physician, attorney, etc. must be provided on the first day back to class. ***The excuse must include the date and time of the appointment and date when cleared to return to class, if applicable.***

Types of Absences

Excused: the student may make-up any missed assignment, quiz or exam. In the case of a quiz or exam, an instructor may choose to administer an alternative assessment.

Unexcused: the student will not be allowed to make-up assignments and the student will receive a zero for the missed work.

Tardiness

Tardiness is a professional behavior issue and will not be tolerated in either the preclinical or clinical phases of the Program. Students are expected to be in class/clinic and ready to participate on time. Each preclinical class will be monitored by faculty to identify those students who arrive late. In the clinical phase of the Program, preceptors are responsible for monitoring attendance and tardiness. Students not meeting expectations in these areas may be referred to the Program Director and Progress and Promotions Committee.

Students who foresee being late for a scheduled Program class/activity must notify the preclinical Director and the faculty instructor of record as soon as possible. A tardiness may result in a zero (0) score for any announced or unannounced assignment, quiz, evaluation, or exam administered.

Attendance related referrals to progress and promotions Students may be referred to progress and promotions for the following:

1. More than two (2) excused absences during any given semester
2. Any unexcused absence
3. Failure to adhere to absence reporting protocols, regardless of excused or unexcused
4. More than three tardiness infractions in a given semester.

Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence from the PA Program may be granted by the Program Director. Due to the cohort progression of the preclinical curriculum, leaves of absence during the preclinical phase may result in withdrawal from all PA courses. Students may be required to reregister and retake courses in their entirety when they are reinstated.

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.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION/SERVICE WORK BY STUDENTS

At no time will students replace faculty/course instructors. Students will not be required to work for the Program. Likewise, in the clinical phase, at no time may students replace or substitute for clinical site employees.

CLASSROOM POLICY

As a graduate student in a professional medical program, you must demonstrate professionalism in every setting. This applies in the classroom, labs, clinics, hospitals and other locations, including your online presence.

Mississippi College Physician Assistant classroom:

1. It is expected that students will arrive 15 minutes prior to lecture, prepared to discuss relevant topics. Attendance policies are outlined elsewhere in the PA Student Handbook.
2. Texting, e-mail, and other electronic social networking activities are not permitted during class. Relevant internet searches are permitted as long as this privilege is not abused.
3. Every manner of respect should be given to the lecturer. Any student who is disrespectful to any lecturer may be brought before the Progress and Promotions Committee.
4. Only spill proof containers are permitted in the classroom
5. No food/snacks of any type are allowed in the classroom

UMMC Hospital classroom:

1. It is expected that students will arrive 15 minutes prior to lecture, prepared to discuss relevant topics. Attendance policies are outlined elsewhere in the PA Student Handbook.
2. Texting, e-mail, and other electronic social networking activities are not permitted during class. Relevant internet searches are permitted as long as this privilege is not abused.
3. Every manner of respect should be given to the lecturer. Any student who is disrespectful to any lecturer may be brought before the Progress and Promotions Committee.
4. Coffee, tea, soda is allowed in the UMMC classroom
5. No food/snacks of any type are allowed in the classroom
6. Do not leave any items in the hallway outside the classroom

Online Class Etiquette

1. Be alert & look interested; NO sleeping - if you're tired, temporarily turn off your video and return standing or after you wake yourself up
2. Dress should be acceptable and be aware of hygiene (brush your hair);
3. NO HATS, unless for religious purposes
4. Make sure your space is private, quiet and well-lit
5. **center your face** on the camera; display your name on your video feed (first and last)
6. no cell phone or other device use while attending lectures
7. remove distractions (TV, music, children, pets, roommates, family, etc.) while in lectures
8. no eating; drinks ok
9. keep your microphone muted while listening; "raise your hand" or unmute and wait for a pause to ask a question
10. Every manner of respect should be given to the lecturer. Any student who is disrespectful to any lecturer may be brought before the Progress and Promotions Committee.

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, You Tube.

Students are responsible 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. HIPAA 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 College 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.
 11. 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

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program students are required to place a high value on personal behavior and appearance, including attire. The reasons are rooted in concerns for infection control, professionalism, the facilitation of trust and good communication with patients and colleagues, and sensitivity to diverse cultural mores and attitudes. This section briefly describes standards for dress and appearance necessary to meet the service and safety objectives of placing patient comfort and welfare first, and the educational objectives of preparing the student to assume the role of a professional healthcare worker. The professional image a Mississippi College PA Program student projects is very important to both the Program and the PA profession.

Students should bear this in mind when selecting their attire.

The following standards of dress and appearance are to be observed while on campus, within clinical settings, during small group activities or at any other time you are representing MC, MCPA or the PA profession:

- Business professional or business casual attire is required for all learning activities, special functions or clinical activities, regardless of location, except when otherwise mandated for the setting.
 - Business Professional:
 - A two-piece pant or skirt suit in a solid color or a simple pattern
 - A conservative dress shirt or blouse with a collar (not low cut or sheer)
 - Closed-toe dress shoes with a low or moderate heel
 - Conservative jewelry or makeup, worn in moderation
 - Business Casual:
 - A collared dress shirt with slacks and close-toed shoes (no tie required)
 - A dress cut in suit-like fabric and paired with a blazer
 - Skirt or slacks paired with a collared shirt or blouse without a collar and a sweater/blazer
 - Skirt like bottoms (i.e., gauchos', culottes or palazzo pants) in conservative patterns may be worn as long as they are at least knee length and not form fitting or tightly contoured.
 - dress slacks, trousers, khaki pants paired with a collared shirt.
 - Shoes should be closed-toe, closed heel. They should be clean/polished shoes with a low or moderate heel
 - Shoes and socks should fit the color of your slacks
 - Conservative jewelry or makeup, worn in moderation

- Each student's name tag must be worn during all preclinical and clinical education experiences, including when on campus.
- Except for the earlobes, body piercings should not be visible when in professional settings, including the classroom and when on campus. No more than two in each ear may be worn.
- Every effort should be made to conceal tattoos or other forms of body art when in professional settings, including the classroom and when on campus
- Hair must be kept well-groomed, clean, and neat, of a natural human color and must be in a professional, conservative hairstyle.
- Clothing must be clean and in good repair, allowing for freedom of movement without inappropriate exposure.
- Dress and skirt length must be appropriate for a dignified and professional appearance, allowing room for modest movement without indecent exposure.
- In the interest of the comfort of your fellow students, good personal hygiene is to be maintained at all times. This includes regular bathing, use of deodorants/antiperspirants, and regular dental hygiene. Avoid distracting perfumes or colognes, odors due to smoking, and halitosis that may precipitate allergic responses or be sensitizing or disturbing
- **The following items considered inappropriate at all times, except where otherwise allowed:**
 - Any clothing which exposes, or presents the illusion of exposing, the cleavage, lower abdomen or buttock areas
 - Denim clothing
 - Tight pants
 - Any dress or skirt in which the hem does not reach the knee
 - Jeans, cargo pants, and capri pants are prohibited except where otherwise stated.
 - Leggings, jeggings, sweatpants, cut-offs and shorts
 - t-shirts, tank tops, spaghetti straps, and exercise clothing
 - Open-toed shoes, sandals with open toes, bare feet, and some styles of clogs, flip-flops

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 & Professional Development Skills Labs

- Official MC PA blue scrubs as designated by the Program must be worn during lab time. Female students should wear a sports bra under their scrubs. Some labs may require wearing sports shorts. These shorts must be grey in color, made of cotton, and of modest length and design. They must not have lettering or designs on them other than small manufacturer's logos (such as the Nike logo).
- Patient gowns can be worn during a physical examination in the examination rooms. Women must wear a sports bra underneath the gown.
- Casual shoes are permissible, but do not include opened-toed shoes, thongs, sandals, or flip-flops.
- Official MC PA Program scrubs are allowed to be worn on lab days, for all classes. The entire class must wear them on that day.

Any student who violates the dress code may be sent home and directed to return dressed appropriately. Class time missed will be unexcused and any coursework, assignment or assessment that is missed during this time will not be made up. Any PA student who does not adhere to the dress code may be given a letter of concern or professionalism warning. Repeated infractions will result in referral to the Progress and Promotions Committee and may result in Professional probation or suspension.

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. These badges are to be worn at all times during both the preclinical and clinical phases. Students may be issued and required to wear other ID badges at times, from hospitals for example, but students must still wear the Mississippi College ID badge while on campus. In all clinical settings, students **MUST** be clearly identified to distinguish them from physicians, medical students, and other health profession students and graduates. The MC PA Program has issued you a specific name tag for this purpose which clearly identifies you as a “Physician Assistant Student”.

PA STUDENT PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

As students in our 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 Program, 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, students will observe high standards of conduct so that the integrity of the Program and physician assistant profession may be preserved. A student will avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all activities, personal and professional; and abide by Program and Mississippi College policies of conduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct

(https://www.mc.edu/students/policies/application/files/5116/3153/9092/Mississippi_College_Student_Code_of_Conduct_2021-2022.pdf), local, state, and federal law and the Code of Ethics for the Physician Assistant Profession. As a professional program, the PA Program interprets “professionalism” broadly to include general behavior and conduct related expectations and infractions.

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, which may result in an academic warning, an absence and the lowering of the student’s final course grade.

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, Mississippi College and the PA profession, please be on your best behavior! Remember, you must wear your ID, and preferably your MC PA 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.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONALISM

In the belief that physicians and PAs are called to the highest standards of honor and professional conduct and understanding that this responsibility begins at the inception of one’s medical education rather than upon receipt of a degree, the students of the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program must uphold standards that serve

as an embodiment of the conduct and integrity to which they aspire. These standards are intended to promote an atmosphere of honesty, trust, and cooperation among the students, the faculty, their patients, and society. Students in the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program are expected to demonstrate behavior that is considered appropriate for a career in medicine. Appropriate behavior includes, but is not in any way limited to honesty, trustworthiness, professional demeanor, respect for the rights of others, personal accountability, and concern for the welfare of patients – all of which are outlined below. General conduct infractions and violations of these Standards of Professionalism may result in referral to the Progress and Promotions Committee.

Honesty Being truthful in communication with others at all times.

Trustworthiness Maintaining the confidentiality of patient information; admitting errors and not intentionally misleading others or promoting self at the patient's expense.

Professional Demeanor Being thoughtful and professional when interacting with patients and their families; striving to maintain composure under pressures of fatigue, professional stress or personal problems; maintaining a neat and clean appearance and dress in attire that is reasonable and accepted as professional to the patient population served.

Respect for the rights of others Dealing with professional, staff, and peer members of the health team in a considerate manner and with a spirit of cooperation; acting with an egalitarian spirit toward all persons encountered in a professional capacity regardless of age, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, gender, sexual preference, socioeconomic status, or veteran/Reserve/National Guard status; respecting the rights of patients and their families to be informed and share in patient care decisions; respecting patients' modesty and privacy.

Personal accountability Participating responsibly in patient care to the best of your ability and with appropriate supervision; undertaking clinical duties and persevering until they are complete; notifying the responsible person if something interferes with your ability to perform clinical tasks effectively.

Concern for the welfare of patients Treating patients and their families with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with others; discerning accurately when supervision or advice is needed and seeking these out before acting; recognizing when your ability to function effectively is compromised and asking for relief or help; not using alcohol or drugs in a way that could compromise patient care or your own performance; not engaging in romantic, sexual, or other nonprofessional relationships with a patient, even upon the apparent request of a patient.

Personal Aptitude for Medicine Awarding a degree from the Physician Assistant Program is predicated on the determination by the faculty that a student is suitable for the practice of medicine in terms of his/her personal characteristics and conduct as well as scholastic achievement. Students in the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program are participants in a professional training program whose graduates seek positions of high responsibility as providers of healthcare. Accordingly, students are evaluated not only on their academic and clinical skills but also on their interpersonal skills, reliability, appearance and professional conduct.

The faculty will refer students whose professionalism has been questioned to the Progress and Promotions Committee. Students in the Program are expected to develop behaviors and habits expected of a professional physician assistant. The American Academy of Physician Assistants Guidelines for Ethical Conduct is a statement of the values and principles used to promote and maintain the high standards of behavior for physician assistants. Students must read, be familiar with, and follow these principles and values located on the American Academy of Physician Assistants website:

<https://www.aapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/16-EthicalConduct.pdf>

The primary purpose for the imposition of non-academic discipline in the Mississippi College Physician Assistant

Program is to protect and preserve the quality of the educational environment in the campus community. This purpose entails several basic expectations: that the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program and Mississippi College at large assume high standards of courtesy, integrity, and responsibility in all of its members; that each student is responsible for his/her conduct and that continuation as a student is conditional upon compliance with the requirements of student conduct expressed or implied in this code. The Mississippi College Physician Assistant Program reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and well-being of the campus community.

The Program is not designed or equipped to rehabilitate students who do not abide by this Code. It may be necessary to remove those students from the Program and to sever the institution's relationship with them as provided in this code.

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, Mississippi College 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.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND CONTINUATION IN THE PROGRAM

After admission to the Mississippi College PA Program, students must achieve all required benchmarks to remain in the Program and be promoted to the next semester, to the clinical year and, finally, for graduation and eligibility to register for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). Acceptable grades represent the minimum criteria necessary for successful promotion to the next level. 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 preclinical or clinical phase of training. If a student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory academic performance or fails to exhibit professional behaviors, 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.

It is essential for their professional development that students adopt and exhibit a self-directed responsibility for their mastery of knowledge and skills. Students are required to complete and pass all requisite preclinical and clinical course work in its entirety.

To be eligible for promotion and continuation in the Program, students must remain in good academic and professional standing. The following criteria will be used as the basis for advancing preclinical PA students to the next semester or clinical phase and for advancing clinical PA students to the next semester or to graduate from the PA Program and become eligible to register for the PANCE.

1. Students must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 or higher. If the overall grade point average is below a 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation.
2. A student should not be on academic probation for two consecutive semesters. If that situation arises, the Progress and Promotions Committee may consider Program dismissal.
3. All students must pass a comprehensive summative evaluation before entering the clinical phase of the Program and before advancement to graduation status. This evaluation will consist of written, clinical performance, and professional components.
4. An overall preclinical grade point average of at least 3.0 is required to progress to the clinical phase of the Program. A PA Program GPA of 3.0 must be achieved to graduate from the Program.
5. The student must have an end of Program GPA of at least 3.0 in order to be advanced to graduation status.
6. Students must demonstrate acceptable levels of maturity, integrity, and professional behavior normally expected of health professionals.
7. Students on any type of probationary status in the Program will not be eligible for advancement to the clinical phase or graduation.
8. Students must successfully complete all elements of the clinical phase as set forth in the Clinical Handbook to be eligible for graduation.
9. Students must be free of any impediments to licensure or performance as a PA.

REFERRAL TO THE PROGRESS AND PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

Student progress is monitored on an ongoing basis. Any student who fails to meet all advancement criteria will be referred to the Progress and Promotions Committee. The Committee will meet separately and with the student. The student may be suspended or dismissed from the PA Program if they fail to successfully complete the advancement criteria as set forth by the Committee.

Students may be referred to the progress and promotions committee if any of the following situations arise (LIST IS NOT FULLY INCLUSIVE)

- Failure to maintain a GPA of 3.0
- Failure to achieve a grade of at least 70% on primary assessments in any course or individual course section during the Program
- Failure to demonstrate acceptable levels of maturity, integrity, conduct, or other professional behavior expected of health care providers at all times during enrollment in the Program, including at MC&MCPA sponsored events.
- Failure to successfully complete any component of the clinical year as outlined in the clinical year Handbook.
- Remediation of more than three assessments during the didactic year.

NOTE: Failure of a single exam will not in result in referral to the progress and promotions committee but does require the student to arrange for a meeting with the pre-clinical Director, course Director or both. This shall be done within 24 hours of the score being posted

Decisions of the Committee

Once the Progress and Promotions Committee has met with the student, they will discuss possible recommendations. These recommendations will be reviewed by the Program Director before being finalized. The student will then be notified of the Committee's decision. ***Although this list is not comprehensive***, the following recommendations may be made by the Committee:

- Individual Item Remediation
- Clinical Medicine Section remediation (may incur extra tuition cost and delayed graduation)
- Course Remediation (may incur extra tuition cost and delayed graduation)
- Academic deceleration
- Academic or professional probation, alone or in conjunction with other options
- Program suspension
- Program dismissal
- Other: Leave of absence, counseling, self-reflection assignment, tutoring, select/mandatory study techniques

Individual Item Remediation

Each student is expected to obtain a basic mastery in each area of medical knowledge and skill. This is demonstrated by achieving a passing score on every assessment, unless otherwise stated in the syllabus. Individual Item Remediation (IIR) is included in all PA courses. ALL primary assessments and select secondary assessments in which a student does not achieve a satisfactory score must be remediated.

Remediation for failing grades

If the score is below 70%, (failing) the student will be required to complete a remediation assignment and take a written remediation exam.

Marginal Pass Remediation

For scores above 70, but below a 75%, the student will be required to complete a remediation assignment and an assessment of the course director's choosing (written exam, oral exam, oral presentation, etc.).

Students must successfully remediate ALL failed primary assessments. There will be no grade adjustment after remediation. Failure to remediate a primary assessment on the first attempt will result in failure of the course or course section (Clinical Medicine), regardless of the overall score in the course. The student will then be referred to the Progress and Promotions Committee.

Remediation of 2 assignments will result in a meeting with the Director of Preclinical Education and an academic warning. Remediation of 3 or more assessments will result in referral to the Progress and Promotions Committee and academic probation. A student failing more than 5 primary assessments over the course of their entire didactic phase will be referred to Progress and Promotions for consideration of deceleration or dismissal from the Program.

Individual Remediation Protocol:

When a student scores <75% on a primary assessment, the following protocol will be followed:

1. Within 24 business hours of grade posting, the student must notify the Director of Preclinical Education of the score AND contact the Course/Section Director to arrange for remediation.
2. The Course/Section Director will review the student's strength and weaknesses report and discuss it with the student.
3. The Course/Section Director will then give the student a remediation assignment with passing criteria and completion timeframe.

Clinical Medicine Section Remediation

Section Remediation (SR) is offered when the student fails to pass a section in clinical medicine. This option is offered when the student has demonstrated knowledge deficit in a single area and is believed capable of correcting the deficit while concurrently completing other sections. If more than one area of deficit is identified, the student may not be eligible for MR and may be required to complete course remediation. Failure to successfully complete section or remediation is grounds for Program dismissal. Participation in section remediation will require the student to enroll in Selected Topics in Medicine. Financial aid may not cover the cost of this course. The course will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. A score of 80% must be achieved for academic credit. PLEASE NOTE: THIS OPTION IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR SUMMER SEMESTER I - ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

Course Remediation

In the event of course failure, the Progress and Promotions Committee may recommend Course Remediation (CR) in lieu of dismissal from the Program. If this is recommended, the student will be required to enroll in the Selected Topics in Medicine course. This course may not be covered by financial aid. CR will, except in rare circumstances, delay Program completion and, thus, graduation. Failure to successfully complete course remediation will result in Program dismissal. The course will be graded on a credit/no credit basis, but a score of 80% must be achieved to get credit. PLEASE NOTE: THIS OPTION IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR SUMMER SEMESTER I ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

1. If offered, the student must request course remediation for a failed course using a form that is available in the PA Program office. This request must be approved by the Progress and Promotions Committee
2. Participation in CR does NOT guarantee passage of the failed course
3. The student must successfully complete all prescribed assignments, assessments, and activities and earn at least an 80% on each before remediation will be considered successful
4. The Course Director will determine the material to be remediated and the means of measuring the success of the remediation attempt
5. A student may request CR for only one course in a given semester and no more than 2 courses during the entire preclinical phase of the Program

Academic Deceleration

Every semester of the Physician Assistant Program is very challenging. Despite the fact that students enter the Program with very good grades from undergraduate programs, many may have had insufficient rigor to prepare them for the challenges of a physician assistant program. Other students struggle with personal issues which ultimately impact their academic performance during the Program. In the event that a student fails a portion of the semester, and the knowledge deficit is deemed significant by the Progress and Promotions Committee, academic deceleration may be recommended.

1. The purpose of academic deceleration is to allow students who matriculated into the Program but experienced academic difficulty to be given an opportunity to retake courses. This is possible only if the Progress and Promotions Committee feels that it is appropriate and necessary for the student to successfully complete the Program.
2. A Deceleration Agreement will be drafted and recommended by the Progress and Promotions Committee for approval by the Program Director. The Student will then be placed in the Academic Deceleration Track and required to complete identified components of the curriculum. If, during the deceleration period, the student is not meeting the expectations prescribed in the Deceleration Agreement, the Committee may recommend termination or modification of the Agreement.
3. In most cases the student will be required to restart the Program with the next matriculating cohort, although it may not require that all coursework be repeated. This may require the student to retake courses he or she previously passed. Exceptions to this requirement will be considered by the Committee on a case-by-case basis.

4. The Academic Deceleration Track is to be used for reasons of academic failure, or, in the absence of failure, demonstration of a significant knowledge deficit in the Program.
5. The Committee may, at any time during the deceleration process, recommend termination or modification of the Deceleration Agreement and/or dismissal from the Program.

Conduct Warnings

Observed breaches of conduct may result in written warnings from the PA Program faculty. These warnings are intended to serve as reminders of infractions that, if repeated, may result in disciplinary action. The academic warning will become part of the student's file. The student may be required to appear before the Progress and Promotions Committee after repeat offenses. Serious offenses could result in immediate referral to the Progress and Promotions Committee.

Academic Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation if any of the following circumstances occur:

- falling below a cumulative GPA of 3.0 at any point during the Program
- receiving a final clinical medicine section or course grade below 70% (C)
- needing to remediate more than three assessments during the preclinical phase or more than two courses during the entire preclinical phase of the Program
- failure to achieve a score of 70% (C) on the primary assessments in any course

A student may remain on academic probation for 1 semester. If not eligible to be placed in good academic standing at the end of one semester, the student will be referred to the Progress and Promotions Committee for recommendations. If **significant** progress has been made, as determined by the committee, a second semester on probation may be granted. Failure to become eligible for good academic standing at the end of the second semester will result in Program dismissal. Likewise, failure of any primary assessment while on probation *may* result in immediate dismissal and failure of any course *will* result in immediate dismissal.

Professionalism Probation

Failure of any student to demonstrate acceptable levels of maturity, integrity, conduct or other professional behavior expected of health care providers at all times during enrollment in the Program may result in Professional Probation. The Probationary Status will be evaluated at the end of each semester. Except in rare instances, the Committee **MUST** remove the student from Professional Probation before the student can be advanced in the Program. While on Professional Probation, any further infractions will result in either Program suspension or dismissal.

Examples of unprofessional behavior/attitude may include: 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 the preclinical phase may progress to the clinical phase. No student on professional probation in the clinical phase may be recommended for graduation.

Program Suspension

Program suspension is defined as a formal mandate by the Program Director, with or without concurrence of the Progress and Promotions Committee, 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. Failure to meet requirements for reinstatement in the allotted time frame is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Program Dismissal

Program Dismissal is defined as a formal action of administrative withdrawal from all Physician Assistant Program courses and the Physician Assistant Program with no opportunity for readmission. Students who are dismissed from the Program will 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.

Appeals of Program Suspension or Dismissal

Students who wish to appeal a suspension or a dismissal from the Program, without regard to the basis of the action, may file a written appeal within 7 days of the decision. The written appeal should be submitted to the Dean of the School of Mathematics and Sciences, Dr. Stan Baldwin, with notice to the PA Program Director. The appeal should clearly state the reasons the student thinks the decision was improper. The Dean may individually consider the appeal or may seek the joint counsel and review of other academic administrators to provide for a fair and impartial consideration of the appeal. The decision of the Dean or Dean's committee will be final.

GRADING SYSTEM

The MCPA Program has a "hard pass" policy when determining individual, section and course grades. The following rules apply to this policy:

- Grades ARE NOT rounded up – All grades will be calculated using two-decimal points.
- Students must have at least a 70% average on primary assessments (exams) to achieve a passing grade.
- If the primary assessment average is at least 70%, secondary assessment scores (quizzes, team-based assignments, presentations, papers, etc.) will be added to calculate the final score for sections and courses.

- The maximum grade on any given assignment is 100%.
- Extra credit, where offered, cannot be carried forward to another assignment and CANNOT be used to achieve a passing score.

Grading Scale: The following grading scale will be used for all PA Program courses, including Anatomy & Physiology during Summer I.

A	90.00 – 100.00	Excellent work
B+	86.00 - 89.99	Good work
B	80.00 - 85.99	Average work
C+	76.00 – 79.99	Fair Work
C	70.00 – 75.99	Minimum standard
F	0 - 60.99	Failure to meet minimum expectations

SUMMATIVE EXAMINATIONS

Summative Exams are given at the end of the preclinical and clinical phase. Students MUST pass all components of the summative exams to be advanced to the clinical phase and for advancement to graduation status. Summative Evaluations are comprehensive in nature and includes material from ALL coursework undertaken while enrolled in the Program.

Each Summative Evaluations will include the following components:

- A comprehensive written exam covering all organ systems, task areas and professionalism content covered during your entire Program.
- The PACKRAT – the national standardized exam for the evaluation of a student’s readiness to take (and pass) the PANCE
- Comprehensive OSCE examination. This is a simulated patient situation. Communication, professionalism, medical knowledge and decision-making skill, physical exam skill, procedure skill and other clinical skills (written notes, diagnostic testing interpretation, etc.) may be included
- Procedural Skills testing
- Oral exams *may* be used

Passing Criteria:

To pass the summative examinations, you must meet BOTH of the following criteria on each portion of the exams:

- A minimum score of 70% AND
- the score must be within 2 standard deviations of the mean

Failure of the Summative Exam

If a student fails to pass any component of the summative evaluation, the following protocol(s) will be used:

1. If a student fails to meet the passing criteria on any *single* portion of the summative examination, the standard remediation protocol will be followed and the student will be able to attempt remediation as quickly as he/she feels comfortable, but no sooner than 6th calendar day following score release. This will allow the student to advance to the next phase without delay.

2. If a student fails to meet the passing criteria on two or more components of the summative exams OR fails any portion twice (i.e., fails to remediate any portion), the 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.
3. If a student fails to meet the passing criteria on BOTH written exams, he/she will be referred to progress and promotions for recommendation, as this would demonstrate significant knowledge deficit.
4. If, at the end of any phase, a student has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0, regardless of passing scores, he/she will be required to complete a specified remediation regimen for at least five (5) weeks and complete an appropriate assessment to demonstrate competence in areas of weakness before being advanced to the clinical phase or graduate status.

COURSE EXAMINATIONS

Attendance is mandatory for all examinations, both written and oral. Students are responsible for being present at the beginning of all examinations. Exams will begin **ON TIME**. Students who arrive after an examination has begun may be refused admission to the examining room. If a student is tardy for an exam, and allowed admission to the exam, the student must complete the exam in the set exam time. Permission for any deviation from the regular test schedule must be requested through both the Director of preclinical education or Director of clinical education and the course Director/section leader. The Program Director will make final decisions on all requests.

Exam Review Policy

Exam reviews are NOT done, except in special circumstances. When all cohort members have completed an exam, item analysis will be done by the course director. Clarification will be given on selected test items based on item analysis. Scores will be released after item analysis is complete. At that point, grades are FINAL. If you scored below 80%, you may seek clarification from the course director regarding your exam, but only after you have reviewed your strength and weaknesses report and attempted to find the answer yourself. You may be asked to provide evidence and/or resources proving that you have attempted to find the information on your own.

Testing Guidelines

All students should be able to take exams in an environment conducive to achieving their highest level of success by minimizing distraction. In addition, academic dishonesty is in direct violation of both individual accountability and integrity and cannot be tolerated in those who seek to become physician assistants. Therefore, the following procedures will be enforced during all assessments:

Faculty Responsibility:

- PA Program faculty or staff will proctor the administration of exams to assure integrity of the process.
- The testing environment will be kept quiet, free of interruptions and disturbances, and proctored with fairness to all students.
- The proctor of the examination will not provide or display the answer key to any student during the scheduled exam times.
- The proctor may assign students to designated seats during examinations.
- 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.
- The duration of each exam will be determined by the course Director/section leader. Standard Program testing guidelines recommend one (1) minute per question for multiple choice examinations.

- Unannounced quizzes may be given during class periods at the discretion of the course or section Director.

Student Responsibilities:

- There will be no materials on a student's desk during an examination other than a writing instrument, eraser, exam, answer sheet, or scratch sheet. The scratch sheet must be signed and turned in at the completion of the exam. Any other items must be approved ***in advance by the course Director/section leader.***
- Students are not permitted to have any smart device on their person during an exam. Watches, smart phones, etc., must be left with the student's personal belongings during the exam.
- Hands must remain visible at all times.
- Talking during an examination is absolutely prohibited. ***Talking under any circumstances will be construed as cheating.***
- 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 exam room, he/she will take the examination and answer sheet to the proctor before leaving and pick it up when returning. If there is more than one proctor in the exam room, one proctor may accompany the student.
- No more than one student may leave the exam room at one time.
- After the first student completes the exam and leaves the room, NO OTHER student will be able to leave the room, unless accompanied by a faculty member, until he/she has completed the exam.
- Students will remain in their assigned seat during the examination.
- 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.
- Paper examinations must be returned in the same condition and in its entirety, i.e., no torn pages, no missing pages.
- 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.
- 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 a zero (0). If the exam/quiz is scheduled for less than 20 minutes, students arriving late will not be permitted entry and will receive a zero (0).
- Individuals may discuss their performance by appointment with course Directors/section leaders. Course Directors/section leaders may hold exam reviews as a class activity if time permits.

Missing/Make-Up Exams

Students are expected to take course examinations at the designated time. However, we acknowledge that circumstances may arise which would prevent a student from taking an exam at the scheduled time. In the event of such a circumstance, the following guidelines will be used:

- NO EXAMINATION WILL BE GIVEN EARLY
- Course or Section leaders reserve the right to give an alternative make-up exam.
- For an illness occurring on the day of an examination, the student must contact the PA Program office

before the exam, reporting that the he/she is unable to take the exam due to illness. Documentation may be required before allowing an excused make-up exam.

- A student who has missed an examination due to an excused absence must take the examination at the time limit and discretion of the course Director/section leader.
- If the absence was unexcused, the student's grade for the exam will be a zero (0) and NO OTHER assignment will be offered in lieu of the exam
- Students who have a serious and/or prolonged illness will be reviewed individually, and arrangements may be made accordingly at the discretion of the course Director/section leader.
- 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.

Testing via Online Platforms

Online testing may be used in the event of declared states of emergency, inclement weather or other circumstances requiring campus closure. However, as a rule, all testing will be done in person. Except in rare/dire circumstances, individual online testing will not be allowed. In the event that testing MUST be completed in an online format, the following protocol will be used:

- A meeting link will be provided by your proctor. Please join the Zoom link at the time indicated so that you your workspace can be approved by your proctor prior to receiving the password to start the exam. You should have your area prepared before testing time.
- You may have ear-plugs, a whiteboard, eraser and one writing implement if you wish. You will have to show this whiteboard before (blank) and after (erased) you complete the exam.
- All exams must be taken while seated at a table and in a room where no other student or person is present.
- Your workspace must be clear of books, bags, papers, bottles, and food. There is no drinking or eating during an exam.
- We will be inspecting your workspace through Zoom. You must have your phone (or other camera enabled device) charged and streaming you live at all times during the exam. Head/torso and hands must be visible at all times.
- We reserve the right to ask you to show us your space at any time during the exam.
- If we feel the workspace is not appropriate, we reserve the right to cancel your exam and require you to take a make-up exam once your workspace is appropriate. Make-up exam rules will apply.
- It is the exam-taker's responsibility to make sure their environment is distraction free and the Program cannot be held accountable for any distractions that occur in your home.
- You may not wear any electronic/digital watches (e.g. Apple watch, Fitbit etc.).
- Other than religious headwear, you are not allowed to wear any hats, caps etc.
- During test-taking, please refrain from the habit of "mouthing" the words as you read or acting out the questions by moving your limbs and/or head, as it will be considered suspicious behavior.
- Your Google Meets/Zoom device must be on mute during the exam. If you have a question type it into the private chat box or write it on the white board/paper. Your proctor may unmute you at any point during the exam.
- Once you have completed the exam, you, upload to Examsoft and notify your proctor ("thumbs up sign" or private chat). Your proctor will verify that the test has been uploaded and make a final "sweep" of your area before instructing you to log out.

All exams will be recorded through Zoom

DURATION TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM

From initial entry into the PA Program, no student will be allowed more than thirty-six (36) months to complete phase I, the preclinical courses.

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

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 preclinical medicine 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 regularly 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.

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 ground floor of the B.C. Rogers Student Center and can be reached at 601.925.3204 or security@mc.edu.

Mississippi College goes to great lengths to provide 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 MC 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.

Security of the PA Program areas is very important. Only known individuals should be allowed access. Do not allow anyone unknown to you to follow you through the card-controlled door in the lobby. If someone states they are here to meet faculty or staff, ask them to please wait and notify a faculty or staff member to verify their access. Report any suspicious persons to faculty or staff immediately.

IMMUNIZATIONS & HEALTH HISTORY

Consistent with recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for Healthcare Personnel Vaccination, all students are required to complete vaccinations for vaccine preventable diseases **prior** to matriculation (requirements are distributed with the enrollment packet materials). All vaccination requirements must be completed **prior** to enrollment in the Program, unless a special exception is granted. Failure to do so may result in the inability to matriculate into the Physician Assistant Program. 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 clinical practicums begin or the student will not be promoted to the clinical phase. Please note, ANY immunization that will expire within 90 days of matriculation, **MUST** be repeated **PRIOR** to matriculation.

In addition, all students must obtain a repeat TB screening annually. All students must obtain annual influenza vaccination unless special circumstances prevent this. Students will not be allowed to progress until these requirements are met.

NOTE: Failure to comply with vaccination requirements and standards **WILL** result in disciplinary action by the Program.

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 practicums. 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 or similar catastrophic event.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Clinical agencies hosting PA students for supervised clinical experiences for often require students and supervising faculty to maintain professional liability insurance coverage during the period of their clinical experience. Mississippi College provides professional liability coverage for students as part of the students' tuition and fees.

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. The student must inform the Program when the name has been changed.

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/section leader 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

The Program may assist in arranging counseling with the Mississippi College 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
- 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 are 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. Personal concerns of any type may be discussed privately with an experienced counselor.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

All students are required to have their own medical equipment. A list of medical equipment required will be distributed with the enrollment packet and it is required to purchase the equipment package available during student orientation. These diagnostic equipment packages will be charged to the student's MC account.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Computer: You will be required to have a computer (not a tablet or other smart device) that meets the following specifications:

- Hardware
 - Modern, network-aware operating system
 - Up-to-date Windows operating system, Mac OS Mavericks or above
 - WiFi Wireless network capability
 - 802.11n is strongly recommended
 - Sound capable with a headphone jack
 - At least one USB port
 - 720p or greater webcam
 - Long-life battery*
 - Printer**
- Software
 - Malware protection
 - Current, fully-patched operating system
 - Anti-virus software installed and up to date
 - Anti-spyware software installed and up to date
 - Modern, standards-compliant Web browser
 - Google Chrome, Vivaldi, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Safari, or Opera are good choices.
 - Standards-based email client
 - Must be capable of accessing campus email.
 - Some students may wish to use the campus email exclusively.
 - Standard "runtime" environment for Java programs
 - Software to read/write Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint formats***
 - Ability to read PDF files

* Laptop batteries have a limited lifespan. It is very common for students to experience less than one-hour battery life. This is a sign that the battery is old and should be replaced. Given the length of the school day, we strongly encourage students to replace old, failing batteries; and invest in a second spare battery. The Lithium-ion (LiON) battery type is preferred.

** Printers should be able to produce large numbers of copies at a low price.

***Microsoft Office is available at no cost for the duration of enrollment.

STUDENT ACCESS TO THE HEALTHPLEX BUILDING

The Baptist Healthplex building hours are 5 am to 10 pm, M-TH, 5 am to 8 pm Friday, 7 am to 5 pm Sat, and 1 pm to 6 pm on Sunday. The students are allowed to be in the front student PA lounge during the listed hours. The classroom and examination rooms are available from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday. Lecture scheduling for both Program faculty and non-Program faculty may require evenings and Saturdays as needed.

CONCLUSION

This Program is very demanding. 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 healthcare 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 2024

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

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. I further acknowledge this handbook does not constitute a contract and may be modified from time to time without notice and that it is my responsibility to stay informed about changes that may affect my Program.

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

**Mississippi College Department of Physician Assistant Studies
Speaker Copyright Release Form**

It is the MC Physician Assistant Department's policy to disseminate and preserve presentations at events sponsored by the school and affiliated organizations. This form is intended to streamline the process by which the MC PA Department faculty, staff, and guest lecturers give their permission to be recorded for such events throughout an academic year. Faculty, staff, and guest lecturers who sign this release can still refuse their permission in writing on a case-by-case basis.

Events are usually recorded; some events may be broadcast live via the Internet ("webcast") or by other means. Recordings of events will normally be catalogued, made available for viewing through Blackboard and/or Moodle, and indexed in the department's public catalog. The recordings, or excerpts from them, including derivative works, may also be used for other purposes, including but not limited to the development of education or other video products. The recordings may be reproduced in copies or in derivative works, and may be distributed, performed or displayed as required or necessary for such purposes.

Statement of Release

This speaking commitment and copyright release applies to the participation of

_____ as a contributor to all events at the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Department for the academic year 2022-2023.

Contributor's presentation may be a contribution to a collective work. As such the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Department has the right to reproduce and distribute your contribution as part of the collective work.

Contributor grants to the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Department a perpetual, non-exclusive license to:

- a. Transfer or grant sub-licenses to others so that the presentation may be broadcast, edited, reproduced on audio tape, video tape, or other media.
- b. Reproduce or distribute such contributions or presentations for sale, archival or other purposes.

Subject to right granted to the Mississippi College Physician Assistant Department in this release, contributor retains all other rights to his or her work and presentation. Should contributor publish or give permission to publish this presentation at a later date, however, he or she shall indicate that the work was produced as part of that specific event in which it was presented.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Mississippi College Department of Physician Assistant Studies
Photo Release Form**

It is the MC Physician Assistant Department's policy to disseminate and preserve photographs at events sponsored by the school and affiliated organizations. This form is intended to streamline the process by which the MC PA Department faculty, staff, and students give their permission to be photographed for such events throughout an academic year. Faculty, staff, and students who sign this release can still refuse their permission in writing on a case-by-case basis.

Statement of Release

I, _____, understand that photographs taken at MC Physician Assistant Department events, classes, and location may be used for any and all publications, including website entries, without payment or any other consideration. I understand and agree that these materials will become the property of the MC Physician Assistant Department and will not be returned. I hereby irrevocably authorize the MC PA Department to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute these photographs for purposes of publicizing the Program or for any other lawful purpose. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photographs. I hereby hold harmless and release and forever discharge the MC PA Department from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization.

I have read this release before signing below and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release. I understand that, unless a written request is filed on a case-by-case basis, this release will be in effect for the academic Program beginning May 2022 and ending December 2024.

Signature: _____ Date: _____