



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM
2024-2025

SOUTH UNIVERSITY, AUSTIN

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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ACCREDITATION STATUS

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the South University, Austin Physician Assistant Program sponsored by South University, Austin.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class. The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at [Accreditation-History-South-University-Austin.pdf \(arc-pa.org\)](#)

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 South University, Austin (the “University”) Master of Science in Physician Assistant program. Please read this handbook carefully as the contents will govern your enrollment in the South University, Austin, Physician Assistant Program. Additionally, this 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 to the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program’s policies and procedures. All changes or additions will be shared with you via e-mail as they become effective. We hope this handbook will be useful to you. Please feel free to contact the Program Director or your faculty advisor if you have any questions.

Other policies and procedures regarding enrollment in South University can be found in the [South University Student Handbook](#) and the [South University Catalog](#).

GENERAL INFORMATION

The South University, Austin PA Program was established in 2023. The educational goal of the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program is to provide a primary care-oriented training program for physician assistants. The educational objectives of the program are based upon the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education as established by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for Physician Assistants, Inc. (ARC-PA).

The program prepares graduates to meet competencies expected of clinically practicing physician assistants in the domains of medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the South University Master of Science in Physician Assistant (MSPA) program is to educate a diverse student population and prepare graduates to practice the art and science of medicine while providing high-quality, equitable, and inclusive patient-centered healthcare.

VISION STATEMENT

The South University Physician Assistant (MSPA) Program strives to provide an educational environment that empowers students to practice evidence-based, patient-centered medical care. With an emphasis on increasing access to care, reducing health disparities, and engaging in community outreach, we aim to provide inclusive educational experiences for students, faculty, and staff. As future clinical leaders, the program's focus is to graduate physician assistants who will promote cultural humility and patient advocacy.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

In order to ensure that patients receive the best medical care possible, the faculty of the South University Physician Assistant program has identified certain skills and professional behaviors that are essential for successful progression of physician assistant students in the program. A student must possess skills and behaviors at a level of capability to perform a variety of duties required of a physician assistant as a health care professional.

Students with disabilities who can perform these skills and successfully execute professional behavior either unassisted, with dependable use of assistive devices, or by employing other reasonable accommodations are eligible to apply for enrollment in the program. Minimum performance standards include critical thinking, communication skills, observation skills, motor skills, and interpersonal abilities. Interested parties may contact the Physician Assistant program office for additional information about South University performance standards. These skills and behaviors include, but are not limited to:

Critical Thinking: A student 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, requires the intellectual abilities of measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. Students must be able to perform demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences.

Communication Skills: A student should also be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and to perceive nonverbal communications. The student must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written forms.

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

Motor Skills: A student should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic techniques. A student should be able to execute movements reasonably required to move from area to area, maneuver in small spaces, calibrate and use large and small equipment, position and move patients, and provide patients with general care and emergency treatment.

Interpersonal Abilities: A student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities required for the diagnosis and care of patients and the development of professionalism through mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, families, and colleagues.

PROGRAM GOALS

The following are goals for the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program:

- The program aims to foster a culture of inclusivity and equity for students, faculty, and staff by means of education and resources.
- The program will strive to adequately prepare graduating students to achieve a first-time pass rate that exceeds the national average upon completion of the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE). (Note: Requirements for NCCPA Certification are determined by the NCCPA and are subject to change without notification to South University. Graduation from the South University, Campus Physician Assistant program does not guarantee certification or employment.)
- The program will provide opportunities for local community service and outreach that foster commitment to reducing health disparities.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LEARNING OUTCOMES (Graduate Competencies)

Students at the South University Physician Assistant program will be expected to demonstrate competency essential to PAs entering clinical practice. The South University Physician Assistant program expects achievement of the program learning outcomes (graduate competencies) by each student of the program. The program uses achievement of these learning outcomes as metrics for student competency and program effectiveness. Each course syllabi will guide the student through the assessment modalities utilized by the program to determine competency in the domains of medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

The following are the program learning outcomes (graduate competencies) for the South University Physician Assistant program. Prior to graduation from the program, students will:

PLO-1. Integrate behavioral, social, and **medical knowledge** established from the evolving biomedical and clinical sciences in recognizing, evaluating, and managing patient disease states across the lifespan during acute, chronic, preventative, and emergent encounters.

PLO-2. Demonstrate **the interpersonal and communication skills** required to sustain effective, multi-directional information exchange within a diverse population of patients, their caregivers, and members of the healthcare team.

PLO-3. Demonstrate the ability to elicit an accurate patient history, perform an appropriate physical examination, and perform appropriate clinical procedures using essential **clinical and technical skills** to provide quality patient care.

PLO-4. Collaborate effectively as part of an interdisciplinary healthcare team through **clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills** to formulate a logical differential diagnosis, select and interpret appropriate diagnostic studies, and synthesize a comprehensive, patient-centered management plan for the promotion of wellness and disease prevention.

PLO-5. Demonstrate the ability to interpret and integrate an evidence-based approach to clinical and professional practice through **clinical reasoning, problem-solving**, and decision-making processes to improve patient care practices.

PLO-6. Demonstrate **professionalism** through personal behaviors, sensitivity, and accountability essential to patients, society, and the profession.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

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

DIDACTIC PHASE (5 QUARTERS/15 MONTHS):

Winter (11 weeks) 1st Quarter

PAS5102	Medical Interviewing and Documentation	3 credits
PAS5100	Physical Diagnosis I	3 credits
PAS5125	Medical Anatomy and Physiology I	4 credits
PAS5135	Laboratory Diagnostics	3 credits
PAS5173	Professional Seminar I	2 credits
PAS5200	Physical Diagnosis Lab I	1 credit
PAS5225	Medical Anatomy and Physiology I Lab	1 credit

Total 17 credits

Spring (11 weeks) 2nd Quarter

PAS5115	Physical Diagnosis II	3 credits
PAS5126	Medical Anatomy and Physiology II	4 credits
PAS5370	Medical Ethics	2 credits
PAS5180	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics I	8 credits
PAS5215	Physical Diagnosis II Lab	1 credit
PAS5226	Medical Anatomy and Physiology II Lab	1 credit
PAS5225	Applied Learning Experience I	1 credit
PAS5480	Clinical Medicine & Pharmacotherapeutics I Lab	1 credit

Total 21 credits

Summer (11 weeks) 3rd Quarter

PAS5181	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics II	8 credits
PAS5296	Applied Learning Experience II	2 credits
PAS5481	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics II Lab	1 credit
PAS5130	Diagnostic Methods	4 credits
PAS5124	Essentials of Behavioral Medicine	3 credits

Total 18 credits

Fall (11 weeks) 4th Quarter

PAS5160	Public Health and Evidence Based Medicine	4 credits
PAS5365	Surgery and Procedures I	4 credits
PAS5182	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics III	8 credits
PAS5297	Applied Learning Experience III	1 credit
PAS5482	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics III Lab	1 credit
PAS5143	Special Populations in Primary Care I	3 credits

Total 21 credits

Winter (11 weeks) 5th Quarter

PAS5144	Special Populations in Primary Care II	4 credits
PAS5366	Surgery and Procedures II	2 credits
PAS5174	Professional Seminar II	3 credits
PAS5183	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics IV	8 credits
PAS5190	Essentials of Emergency Medicine	4 credits
PAS5298	Applied Learning Experience IV	1 credit
PAS5483	Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics IV Lab	1 credit

Total 23 credits

TOTAL DIDACTIC PHASE CREDITS: 100 credits

CLINICAL PHASE (4 QUARTERS/12 MONTHS):

PAS6200	Clinical Rotation I	8 credits
PAS6205	Clinical Rotation II	8 credits
PAS6320	Special Topics in Clinical Practice I	2 credits
PAS6210	Clinical Rotation III	8 credits
PAS6215	Clinical Rotation IV	8 credits
PAS6330	Special Topics in Clinical Practice II	2 credits
PAS6220	Clinical Rotation V	8 credits
PAS6225	Clinical Rotation VI	8 credits
PAS6340	Special Topics in Clinical Practice III	2 credits
PAS6230	Clinical Rotation VII	8 credits
PAS6235	Clinical Rotation VIII	8 credits
PAS6350	Physician Assistant Senior Seminar	4 credits

TOTAL CLINICAL PHASE CREDITS: 74 credits

Rotations must be completed in the following disciplines:

- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Emergency Medicine
- Surgery
- Women's Health
- Behavioral Medicine
- Clinical Elective

Total Didactic Phase Credits 100
Total Clinical Phase Credits 74
Total Program Credits 174

The courses below are offered on an as needed basis:

- PAS5499 Independent Study I 8 credits
- PAS5599 Independent Study II 8 credits

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

South University is committed to the development of knowledge and ethics that are consistent with responsible professional and social behavior. During orientation to the program, each student receives a copy of the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook (this document), the [South University Student Handbook](#), and the [South University Academic Catalog](#). These documents govern student activity while enrolled in the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program. Students are expected to meet academic requirements and demonstrate a sense of responsibility with an understanding of and respect for the rights of others. The atmosphere of the University reflects these goals; and, in turn, each student must be aware of his/her individual responsibility to act accordingly. By enrolling as a student at South University, Austin a student agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of South University. The rules concerning student behavior are outlined in the *Code of Conduct* section of the [South University Student Handbook](#). Specific conduct expectations of the South University, Austin Physician Assistant student can be found in the “Standards of Conduct” section of this handbook. Alleged violations of the program’s Standards of Professional Behavior will be referred to the program’s Student Progress and Promotions Committee. Alleged violations of the [University’s Code of Conduct](#) will be referred to the University’s Dean of Student Affairs.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Please refer to the [Student Handbook: Disability Services](#) for more information.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Non-Discrimination Policy](#) for the Non-Discrimination policy.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Academic regulations, including grievance procedures, are further outlined in the [South University Academic Catalog](#) and the [South University Student Handbook](#). Students enrolled at South University, Austin are expected to uphold, at all times, standards of integrity and behavior that will reflect credit upon themselves and South University. Registration at South University, Austin implies the student’s acceptance of the published academic regulations and all other rules found in any official publication or announcements. Conduct regulations are described in the [South University Academic Catalog](#) and the [South University Student Handbook](#).

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

For concerns regarding mistreatment, discrimination, sexual harassment, unprofessional relationships, abuse of authority, and abusive and/or intimidating behavior, please refer to the [South University Student Handbook: Grievances, Complaints, and Disputes](#).

STUDENT GENERAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE:

For concerns regarding general complaints, please refer to the [South University Student Handbook: General Complaint Procedures](#).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

For concerns regarding Sexual Misconduct & Relationship Violence, please refer to the [Procedures for Handling Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Complaints](#).

VETERANS BENEFITS:

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees are subject to change at the end of any term. The tuition cost for a full-time course load does not include expenses for such required items such as textbooks, medical equipment and supplies, laboratory fees, clinical tracking software fees, background check and drug screen fees, credentialing costs, and professional liability insurance. PA students are not eligible for part-time enrollment. In-state and out-of-state tuition are the same. For more information on tuition and fees please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

MEMBERSHIP

Students enrolling in the Physician Assistant program will incur a one-time fee for membership in the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). The fee covers membership for the entire duration of PA training. Membership includes a monthly subscription to the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (JAAPA), periodic newsletters, and discounted admission to AAPA's annual national continuing education meeting. The current fee of \$75 is subject to change. Students are also required to join their respective state chapter Physician Assistant Associations (FAPA, GAPA, TAPA, VAPA) for a nominal fee which may vary by location.

ADDITIONAL FEES

For all other estimated costs and associated fees which are subject to change for the MSPA Degree, please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) and the program's website: [Austin Master in Physician Assistant \(PA\) Degree | South University](#)

TRANSCRIPT FEES

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

REFUND POLICY

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Institutional Refund Policy](#)

FINANCIAL AID

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Financial Aid](#).

OFFICIAL WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Official Withdrawals from the Institution](#).

STUDENT RECORDS

Educational transcripts for each student enrolled in the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program will be maintained by the South University Registrar permanently following the student's graduation, withdrawal, or termination from the program. The program maintains a file on each student which includes documents pertinent to students' admission and progression through the program. Student files are maintained in locked file cabinets in program office suite locked offices, storage vaults, and/or digitally on a secure drive. Graduate files are maintained in the program's secure file vault for three (3) years following graduation then are sent to a secure off-site storage facility. Students are granted access to their own personal academic file only as requested by the student in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Please see the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for more information on FERPA.

Students do not have access to academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty and are not permitted in areas that house this material without permission and the accompaniment and supervision of a faculty or staff member.

STUDENT HEALTH

All students entering the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program must meet the following requirements submitted through the compliance company:

- Provide proof of personal health insurance throughout the entire program.
- Provide proof of a satisfactory physical examination.
- Provide proof of negative Tuberculin skin testing (positive results may require further evaluation).
- Provide proof of immunization as recommended by the [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Immunization Recommendations](#).

Students are not permitted to seek personal health care advice or care from any full time or part time faculty member, program staff member, the program director, the medical director, guest lecturers, or guests of the program. Students in violation of this rule will be referred to the Program's Student Progress and Promotions Committee.

At no time is a full-time or part-time faculty member, program staff member, the program director, or the medical director allowed or expected to participate in the provision of health care to a student enrolled in the South University Physician Assistant program. Violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action including termination.

In an emergency, faculty and/or staff may assist any student who may be in imminent danger in accordance with their scope of practice and current standards of care.

SOUTH UNIVERSITY COVID-19 RESPONSE

As part of the South University's commitment to keep students, faculty, staff, and the community safe, students are asked to adhere to the University's extensive safety protocols as well as the federal, state, and local COVID-19 guidelines when entering the campus area. Those students participating in the clinical setting must adhere to the aforementioned and any additional protocols set forth by the clinical site.

The most up to date information on South University's response to the coronavirus pandemic is available at the following website: <https://www.southuniversity.edu/about/coronavirus-info-resources>

Should a student have any concerns related to COVID-19, they are to contact their local campus leadership for guidance. Students are expected to thoroughly review all University communications that will be directed to their University email and Brightspace.

SOUTH UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SCREENING POLICY

Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for this policy.

IMMUNIZATIONS

The South University, CAMPUS Physician Assistant Program Immunization Policy is in compliance with the [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Immunization Recommendations](#).

After acceptance into the program, but before registration can be successfully completed, all students must complete immunizations, health screening, Basic Life Support (BLS) certification, background, and drug testing screening through the program's designated compliance company. Additional immunizations and drug testing screening may be required by some clinical training sites and are the students' responsibility. **If students choose not to be vaccinated**, they will not be allowed to rotate at clinical sites that require immunizations unless expressly permitted in writing to the program by the physician preceptor at that site. If any of the core (required) rotations cannot be completed because the student voluntarily chose not to be vaccinated as required by the clinical rotation site, the student will not be eligible for graduation from the Physician Assistant program. In addition, if the clinical sites available to students who have not been vaccinated does not meet graduation requirements, **those students will not be eligible for graduation** from the Physician Assistant program.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All PA students are required to carry adequate health insurance throughout their enrollment in the program. Evidence of health insurance coverage must be provided at the time of matriculation. Confirmation of coverage will be carried out prior to the inception of the clinical phase of the program. Lack of health insurance will suspend student participation in program activities until proof of insurance is provided.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

South University, Austin PA students will be clearly identified to distinguish themselves from physicians, residents, and other health professional students. In clinical settings, PA students will wear short white laboratory coats with an embroidered name or name tag attached. This will clearly state the student's name with an underlying title of Physician Assistant student. The South University patch must be affixed to the left sleeve of the lab coat. If a situation arises when the lab coat is not worn, the name tag must be worn. Name tags are to be worn on the left side of the chest. Additionally, many of the hospitals and clinics in which program students are affiliated require them to wear distinguishing name tags or security badges while working at those facilities. Students must wear the appropriate South University identification, as well as the institution's required badge.

Students are required to wear their name tags at all times while on the South University campus.

COMMUNICATION

Students are required to maintain active e-mail and telephone accounts at all times. Throughout the course of study at South University, Austin, a variety of events occur (some unexpected, some matters of routine business) making it necessary for students to be reached. Phone numbers, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses are required to be current and on file in the program office and in the clinical logging system and updated appropriately. All student email correspondence with the program must be through their South University student email account. **Students are required to check their South University student e-mail daily. The South University, Austin Physician Assistant program is not responsible for information missed by students who have not maintained up-to-date, reliable contact information with the University and have not checked their South University email daily.**

In addition, students will be requested to register for South University's **RAVE** system in order to be contacted in the event of a campus emergency.

RECORDING POLICY

Students are not permitted to tape or digitally record any class without receiving prior written permission from the instructor and the Program Director. Students must print the Recorded Lecture Policy Agreement (see Appendix F) and obtain both the instructor and program director's signatures.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Employment during a student's course of training is strongly discouraged. Any student who seeks part-time employment and is unable to maintain adequate academic standing as outlined in this document may be asked to terminate his/her employment.

At no time is a South University, Austin PA student allowed to or required to work for the program.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In addition to the general academic regulations and policies as stated in the [South University Catalog](#), the following policies and procedures pertain to all required courses taken by students enrolled in the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program. Program policies apply to all students, principal faculty and the program director regardless of location.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

South University maintains an institutional attendance policy to support the academic achievement of its students. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, laboratory, and examination periods each week. 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 all assignments and examinations on time, as required in the class.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled activities that are part of the class, including those activities scheduled during class time and those scheduled outside of class time. Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for further details on the University's policy.

ADDITIONAL SOUTH UNIVERSITY, AUSTIN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM POLICIES ON ATTENDANCE

Attendance policies for courses within the South University Physician Assistant Program are more stringent than the standard University Attendance Policy. All PA students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the program's attendance policy.

Due to the rigorous nature of the coursework and the accelerated pace of learning, attendance for classes and clinical experiences is mandatory for successful completion of the program. It is the expectation of the Student Progress and Promotions Committee that all students will attend all scheduled classes, conferences, seminars, laboratory experiences, and clinical practicums. Any student who is absent from a required scheduled course activity (didactic or clinical) must notify the Course Director, as well as the respective Director (Didactic or Clinical) of the absence. The student assumes full responsibility for obtaining all materials and making up all course work that is missed during an absence.

The course syllabus will further define how attendance is graded and/or monitored. All students are responsible for reviewing and abiding by the attendance policy for each course, which is located in the course-specific syllabus. Students who are absent due to a medical condition will be excused for as long as a healthcare provider states it is medically necessary for the student to be absent. The PA Program will not accept any healthcare provider documentation from the student that includes personal protected health information. This is done for the student's protection against any accusation of neglect or indifference, as well as to ensure that students have received appropriate medical attention.

Recurrent absences and tardiness will not be tolerated and may result in a disciplinary action to include a formal review by the Student Progress and Promotions Committee.

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 will be refused admission to the testing room.

Students are only allowed to take an examination prior to the regularly scheduled test administration if it is approved by the Director of Didactic Education or Director of Clinical Education. Students must remain in the proctored setting until the start of the regularly scheduled class examination.

Students who are excused from the regularly scheduled administration of a test will be required to set up a time with the Course Director to make up the missed test as soon as possible. Permission for any deviation from the regular test schedule must be requested through the Director of Didactic Education or Director of Clinical Education. For unexcused absences, it is at the discretion of the Directors of Didactic or Clinical Education if the student will be allowed to make up the examination for a maximum achievable grade of 70%. Additionally, any missed exam may be referred to the Student Progress and Progressions Committee for evaluation. **If the student would like to appeal the decision, then the Program Director should be contacted.**

Reporting of Absences: First-year students must report absences in advance via **email** whenever possible to the Course Director and/or Director of Didactic Education. If circumstances do not permit immediate access to email, the student must call the Director of Didactic Education, and ultimately submit an email notification.

Second year student absences must be reported to the Director of Clinical Education or the Clinical Coordinator. Students unable to meet as scheduled with individual clinical preceptors must notify the preceptor personally, as well as the Clinical Coordinator. When absence due to illness extends beyond 48 hours, a signed healthcare provider's note will be required. The PA Program will not accept any healthcare provider documentation from the student that includes personal protected health information. This is done primarily for the student's protection against any accusation of neglect or indifference, as well as to ensure that a proper health care provider has been sought by students in the case of illness.

Tardiness: Students are expected to be in class/clinic and ready to participate on time. Students are recommended to arrive 10 minutes prior to course scheduled activities. Tardiness reflects unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated in either the didactic or clinical phases of the program.

Each didactic 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. The first offense will result in a verbal warning. Any subsequent offenses will require a meeting with their faculty advisor and may result in referral to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee.

Religious Observances: The South University, Austin Physician Assistant program recognizes that excellence in medical education cannot be dependent solely upon any calendar, since patient illness respects no calendar, be it secular or religious. The PA program is committed to providing an academic environment that is respectful of the religious beliefs of all students. As part of this commitment, the PA Program will make a good faith effort to avoid scheduling examinations during religious holidays and to provide reasonable accommodations to students who identify conflict with their academic requirements or schedule due to their religious beliefs and practices. Any student who is unable to participate in an examination or course requirement because of their religious observances will be given the opportunity to make up the missed examination(s) and/or course requirement(s). Students who anticipate conflicts with regularly scheduled classes, tests, examinations, and/or any clinical experiences have the opportunity to notify, in writing, the Directors of Didactic and Clinical Education during their PA program pre-matriculation orientation in January.

- Students are generally scheduled to be off during University designated holidays during the didactic year. Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog: Academic Calendars](#) for the official university calendar.

Due to the "non-scheduled" nature of clinical training, each student is expected to recognize their own personal responsibility for patient care and their 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.

- During the clinical phase, students are expected to be at the rotation site for any days surrounding holidays when the rotation site is in operation. If the clinic/office is closed the day prior to or the day of the holiday and the preceptor will not be available, you may be given the day off as well.

If a student is unable to resolve a schedule conflict concerning religious holidays with the appropriate Director of Didactic or Clinical Education, the student may appeal. Appeals should be made in writing first to the Physician

Assistant Program Director, followed by the PA Department Chair, and finally the Dean of the College of Health Professions if resolution is not achieved at the previous level.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

It is essential for professional development that students adopt and exhibit self-directed responsibility for their mastery of knowledge and skills. Students are required to pass all requisite didactic and clinical course work with a minimum grade of “C” for courses utilizing the letter grading system, or “Pass” for courses utilizing the Pass/Fail system. Students must complete class work in its entirety. No PA course credits from another institution may transfer into the didactic or clinical year.

During the program, any performance below “C” in any course utilizing the letter grade system or a grade of “Fail” in any course utilizing the Pass/Fail system is interpreted as significant deficiency in the subject.

Students performing poorly in the didactic phase of the program should contact the Director of Didactic Education and the course instructor as soon as possible to solicit their help and recommendations to remediate deficiencies. Students performing poorly in the clinical phase of the program should contact the Director of Clinical Education and the clinical preceptor as soon as possible to solicit their help and recommendations to remediate deficiencies.

Faculty members are expected to provide reasonable assistance and direction to aid in this remediation process. The methods and extent to which faculty assist students with review and remediation of deficient material is at the discretion of the individual faculty member. Please refer to the “Students at Academic Risk and Remediation” section below.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

To satisfactorily complete a course, the student must earn a grade of “C” or better in courses using the letter grading system or, a “Pass” in courses utilizing the Pass/Fail system. Additionally, **students must maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher throughout the duration of their enrollment in the PA program.** Each course grade may be based on multiple examinations, assignments, and a comprehensive final exam. Each exam may consist of multiple choice, matching, essay and clinical competency skills testing. Demonstration of clinical competency skills testing will be proctored by program faculty and/or their designee and must be completed as assigned by the course instructor or a designated faculty member. Material and assigned readings covered up to the lecture preceding the scheduled exam may be included on the exam. Any exceptions to examination content will be announced well in advance of the scheduled exam. Basic concepts covered earlier in the quarter may be asked on later exams.

DIDACTIC PHASE EVALUATION:

The Student Progress and Promotions Committee is responsible for monitoring and coordinating the evaluation of the progress of each student during the didactic phase of the South University, Physician Assistant program. Each student is assigned a Faculty Advisor for academic and professional advisement.

Evaluation of student performance during the didactic phase is conducted through traditional methods such as:

- 1) written quizzes and examinations,
- 2) practical examinations,
- 3) problem-based instruction and evaluation during objective structured clinical exams (OSCEs),
- 4) oral presentations, and projects/written submissions

Examinations are primarily objective multiple choice, laboratory practical, clinical skills practical, and objective structured clinical exams (OSCEs). However, other formats may be used at the discretion of an individual course instructor. Multiple methods of evaluation may be given in each course. A comprehensive final examination is administered at the end of most courses.

The course director will utilize statistical analysis to review the reliability of each multiple-choice exam/quiz. Please refer to the syllabus for further details regarding the statistical analysis utilized in the individual course.

CLINICAL PHASE EVALUATION:

The Student Progress and Promotions Committee is responsible for monitoring and coordinating the evaluation of the progress of each student in the clinical phase of the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program. Students receive clinical experiences in both primary care and specialized (medical, behavioral, and surgical) rotations to better prepare them for the wide range of patient problems which they may encounter after graduation. Students in the clinical phase of the program are evaluated in a variety of ways by their clinical preceptors and program faculty during their clinical rotations. Feedback is provided to the students daily by the preceptors while students are actively participating in the care of patients. During the clinical phase, evaluation is intended to address achievement of competency in knowledge, interpersonal, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for PA practice.

Clinical students must satisfactorily complete all clinical rotations as assigned. Grades in clinical course work reflect a student's cognitive, technical, attitudinal and behavioral performance and are based upon preparation, skill, attitude, and attendance, as well as patient management. Successful completion of a clinical rotation requires timely completion of credentialing documents and requirements, attainment of objectives and learning outcomes, compliance with rotation and program assignments within the rotation period, attendance at all scheduled activities of the clinical service, applicable key experience measures and competencies, and attainment of passing scores on preceptor evaluations, end-of-rotation examinations, and other faculty assessments which can include OSCEs (objective structured clinical examinations) and practical examinations.

The South University, Austin Physician Assistant Program's Director of Clinical Education will review the evaluations from the clinical preceptors/instructors and have final authority in assigning grades for all the clinical rotations and courses. Patient safety, proper professional conduct, and the progressive demonstration of achieving learning outcomes and independence of thought at all clinical sites is expected. The Director of Clinical Education in consultation with the Student Progress and Promotions Committee may recommend that a student either stay longer at a clinical site or repeat specific components of a clinical rotation and course as deemed

necessary to ensure patient safety and the student's expected level of professional development and mastery of learning outcomes. This will be reviewed by the Student Progress and Promotions Committee and a recommendation will be made to the Program Director for intervention.

An overall minimum grade of "C" is required for satisfactory completion of each clinical rotation course. The grade for each of the eight clinical rotations will be based on multiple components including the evaluation from the primary preceptor, faculty evaluations of the student, end-of-rotation exam (an assignment will replace an end-of-rotation exam for the elective rotation), and clinical logging requirements in the clinical tracking system. Please refer to the discipline-specific clinical rotation syllabus for further details regarding expectations of students for each rotation.

If a student does not earn a course grade of at least a "C" on any clinical rotation, he/she will be required to repeat that rotation. Failure to earn a grade of at least a "C" on the repeat rotation or any subsequent rotation will result in dismissal from the program.

Any other circumstance that causes a student not to successfully complete a rotation will require the student to meet with the Student Progress and Promotions Committee.

All evaluations not turned in and grades not calculated by the end of the rotation are reported as "I" (Incomplete) to the Registrar's office. Late grades will be turned in to the Registrar's office with a change of grade form once the necessary evaluation(s) have been received. All evaluations must be returned to the Clinical Coordinators' office prior to graduation.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS:

Completion of the didactic phase of the curriculum requires satisfactory completion of a formative evaluation administered at the end of the didactic training. The formative evaluation, consists of a written examination, clinical skills performance evaluation, and professionalism component. This evaluation is used to identify individual and collective weaknesses within the cohort that should be remediated and strengthened during the clinical phase of the program.

Successful completion of the program requires satisfactory completion of a comprehensive summative evaluation near the conclusion of the clinical training period. The summative evaluation consists of written examination, clinical performance, and professionalism components. This is administered near the conclusion of the clinical training period. The evaluation includes assessment of medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, clinical and technical skills, professionalism behaviors, clinical reasoning, and problem-solving abilities in patient care. This evaluation is designed to assess competency in the program's defined learning outcomes, as well as to determine eligibility for graduation from the program.

There are three (3) distinct components of the graduate candidate's summative evaluation. Each must be successfully completed in order to earn a passing grade. Minimum passing scores on the components of the summative examination are as follows:

- 1) Written Exam – Score must be greater than or equal to two (2) standard deviations below the cohort mean for the Exam (medical knowledge)
- 2) Clinical Performance – Scores must be greater than or equal to 70% in each area assessed on the clinical performance examination (medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, clinical

and technical skills, professionalism behaviors, clinical reasoning, and problem-solving abilities in patient care)

- 3) Final Professional Behavior Evaluation– Each student needs to be deemed “Competent” in each domain of professional behavior on the program’s final professionalism behavior evaluation

Students who do not receive a satisfactory grade on any part of the comprehensive summative examination will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee. Students will be required to remediate areas of deficiency and repeat the portion(s) of the summative evaluation in which they were not successful. In the event that significant areas of deficiency are noted, the student may be required to enroll in a self-directed independent learning seminar to remediate the deficiency/deficiencies. The Program Director will set guidelines for the remediation period if necessary. The student will not be eligible for program completion until they receive a satisfactory performance on each component of the summative evaluation. If the student fails the component a second time, they will again be referred to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee for further review.

GRADING SCALE:

Grades will not be changed with the exception of mathematical errors.

A: 90 – 100 B: 80 – 89 C: 70 – 79 D: 60 – 69 F: Below 60

Some courses are graded as Pass/Fail. In order to obtain a grade of “Pass,” the student must achieve a numerical average of 70% or greater.

Course Grade Rounding and Appeals Policy: Please refer to the [South University Academic Catalog](#) section on Grade Reporting and Challenges.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Students are required to follow the Satisfactory Academic Progress and Physician Assistant progressions policy that are found in the [South University Academic Catalog](#).

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM PROGRESSION POLICY

Physician Assistant (PA) students are required to satisfactorily complete all didactic phase course and clinical education requirements in order to remain in good standing and to be eligible for graduation. Students, program faculty, and staff must comply with published programmatic policies, syllabi, course goals and objectives, as well as published University requirements to ensure satisfactory student progress through both the didactic and clinical phases. The policies described below either clarify, operationalize, or augment the South University Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies.

Good Standing Status - Students must meet all of the following criteria while enrolled in the PA program:

- Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. (Refer to Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy in the Academic Catalog for further details.)
- Students must demonstrate progression in program learning outcomes and competencies. An overall minimum grade of "C" in courses utilizing the letter grading system and a "Pass" in courses utilizing the Pass/Fail grading system is required for satisfactory completion of each course.

- Students must successfully pass comprehensive exams including the formative didactic evaluation necessary for clinical phase progression, and the summative evaluation (an exam that evaluates program learning outcomes and competencies necessary for graduation).
- Satisfactory professional behavior in accordance with all South University Physician Assistant program policies and procedures, the South University Physician Assistant Program Standards of Professional Behavior, and the South University Graduate Program Honor Code.
- Performance assessment during clinical education is based on student achievement of program learning outcomes and competencies and is evaluated by instructional faculty. Assessment of students is based on the minimal levels of competency for each discipline-specific rotation. Any violation of these standards will result in referral of the student to Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC).

STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PERFORMANCE:

- Clinical Competency
 - Quarterly analysis of preceptor evaluations
 - Areas of assessment include but are not limited to:
 - Medical knowledge
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Clinical and technical skills
 - Professional behaviors
 - Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities
 - Overall performance
- Preceptor Feedback
 - Feedback from preceptors from any source (e.g. in person, phone, email, written correspondence) should indicate that the student is meeting the minimum competencies.
- Clinical Experiences
 - Students must complete electronic submissions as outlined in the discipline-specific syllabus and the Clinical Policy Manual.

Discipline-specific learning outcome requirements and other clinical patient experiences for students to successfully complete the clinical education portion of the PA program are detailed in each rotation syllabus. Students are responsible for fulfilling the requirements prior to graduation and tracking their progress using the digital platforms provided.

UNSATISFACTORY PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM ACADEMIC, CLINICAL, AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR PERFORMANCE

A student's professionalism behavior performance may be reviewed at any time, based on information received by the PA program. The program shall take appropriate action based on the type and severity of the student's misconduct. If the infraction involves a student violation of the University Code of Conduct, the matter will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs. Violations of the Graduate Honor Code will be referred to the Graduate Honor Council. Students who breach the South University Physician Assistant Program Standards of Professional Behavior or who do not meet the requirements of Good Standing Status will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC). Please refer further below in detail for the SPPC policies and procedures.

The faculty advisor will inform the student of the program's receipt of an unsatisfactory evaluation or professional behavior performance violation. The SPPC, after applying programmatic policy and reviewing the violation of the standards for PA program academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior performance, will render the final decision. The Program Director will notify the student of the decision.

If a student is being considered for placement in a status other than advance in good standing, he/she will be afforded the opportunity to speak formally to the SPPC before a decision is rendered by the committee.

Failure to meet the minimum academic standard may result in a loss of financial aid. Please refer to the Minimum Standards for Graduate Academic/Financial Aid Progress and Consequences for Failing to Meet Minimum Standards Policy in the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for further information regarding financial aid warning.

STUDENT PROGRESS AND PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

STUDENT PROGRESS AND PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Committee is chaired by the Program Director who serves as a non-voting member of the committee. A quorum (defined as a simple majority of voting principal faculty members and the program's Clinical Coordinator) must be present to commence the Student Progress and Promotions Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

The Committee meets at least quarterly to review Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), professionalism evaluations, and other relevant information available to aid in evaluation of each student. In addition to quarterly meetings, the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC) may be convened on an ad hoc basis to address specific student issues. For procedures on students not meeting SAP standards, see above.

At the conclusion of each quarter, a student in the PA program who does not achieve the minimum standards for academic, clinical, and professional behavior performance for the PA program will be placed on PA program academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior performance warning for the duration of the following quarter. The Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC), after applying programmatic policy and reviewing the violation of the standards for PA program academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior performance, will render the action to be taken by the Program Director, the Chair of the SPPC.

Any one of the following may be applied based on student performance and their previous enrollment status (previous warning or probation):

- Advance in good standing
- Advance in good standing with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Advance on academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior performance warning with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
- Advance on academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior performance probation (following successful appeal of a PA program performance dismissal)

- Deceleration
- Dismissal

If a student is being considered for placement in a status other than advance in good standing, he/she will be afforded the opportunity to speak formally to the SPPC before a decision is rendered by the committee. Any student not recommended to advance in good standing will be notified within 72 hours by the Program Director. The Program Director will notify the Department Chair, Dean of the College of Health Professions, and the Campus Director/Dean of Academic Affairs and Operations on any recommendations of the SPPC other than “advance in good standing.”

Failure to meet the minimum academic standard may result in a loss of financial aid. Please refer to the Minimum Standards for Graduate Academic/Financial Aid Progress and Consequences for Failing to Meet Minimum Standards Policy in the [South University Academic Catalog](#) for further information regarding financial aid warning.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM ACADEMIC, CLINICAL, AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR PERFORMANCE WARNING

Students may be placed on professional behavior performance warning for any violation of the professional behavior performance standards of the Physician Assistant program. Acts that would garner a warning status for the student's enrollment include (but are not limited to):

A breach in the Physician Assistant program standards in the following areas:

- Professional behavior
- Attire
- Attendance
- Completion of clinical electronic submissions as outlined in the PA Program Student Handbook and Clinical Policy Manual
- Breach of patient confidentiality rules (HIPAA)
- Other serious violations of the Professionalism Standards for a Physician Assistant student

Physician Assistant (PA) program students who do not meet the requirements of Good Standing Status will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC).

For the duration of the programmatic performance warning, students must participate in a programmatic Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) if they wish to continue their enrollment in the PA program. At the end of the warning period, the student's academic, clinical, and professional behavior performance will be evaluated by the SPPC who will recommend to the Program Director what action to take based on the student's progress in meeting the PA Programmatic Performance Improvement Plan and other standards of the program.

Students who are already on programmatic performance warning of any type (academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior) who fail to achieve the minimum standards of performance in any of the three areas (academic, clinical, and professional behavior) will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program.

DISMISSAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Dismissal can occur after review of the student's academic, clinical, or professional deficiency. Students may be

dismissed from the Physician Assistant program for any of the following reasons (including, but not limited to):

- Failure to achieve and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to include consecutive quarters while on warning or probation for any performance cause (academic, clinical, and/or professional behavior) during the student's enrollment. (Please refer to the SAP policy in the [South University Academic Catalog](#))
- More than two cumulative quarters on warning or probation for any performance cause (academic, clinical, or professional behavior) during the student's enrollment
- Failure of any course including rotations (D or F/ "Fail") in any quarter
- Failing to successfully complete Performance Improvement Plans, remediation plans/outcomes
- Severe transgressions of ethical and moral conduct (including but not limited to: violation of the honor code, stealing, or providing false documentation intended to deceive faculty or administration)
- Violation of the CHP (College of Health Professions) Drug and Alcohol Screening policy
- Violation of the CHP Background policy
- Violation of the Honor Code

Any student who is dismissed from the SU PA program must complete the checkout procedure which includes the following:

- Complete an exit interview with financial aid
- Return their student ID badge, clinical facility badges, books, university supplies, and parking sticker to security

A student dismissed from the SU PA program is prohibited from any further attendance in class or participation in medical training. The student may choose to appeal the decision and will not be allowed to continue program related activities until resolution of the appeal. Any dismissed student from any SU PA program who elects to re-apply through CASPA will have their prior enrollment status considered and will not be guaranteed re-admission.

STUDENT APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR DISMISSAL

Students are not eligible to apply for an appeal if they have been dismissed for more than two cumulative quarters on warning or probation for any performance cause (academic, clinical, or professional behavior) during the student's enrollment. Students seeking to appeal any academic, clinical, or professional behavior dismissal (including academic /financial aid dismissal, Student Progress and Promotions Committee decisions, and/or Code of Conduct Violations) must do so in writing to the Department Chair within three business days of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Department Chair, the appeal can proceed to the Assistant Dean of the College of Health Professions within three business days of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they can appeal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions within three business days of receiving each decision. The decision of the Dean of the College of Health Professions is final.

If a final course grade challenge is denied by the instructor and subsequently results in the dismissal of a student, the student may submit a combined appeal of the course grade and academic dismissal following the procedures outlined above.

PA PROGRAM REINSTATEMENT AFTER ACADEMIC, CLINICAL, AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR PERFORMANCE DISMISSAL

If a student is reinstated following a successful appeal of a Physician Assistant program academic, clinical, and professional behavior performance dismissal, they will be placed on academic, clinical, or professional behavior performance probation at the start of the quarter in which coursework resumes. The student will be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) which will outline the expectations and performance requirements for

continued enrollment in the Physician Assistant program. Requirements may include comprehensive evaluation, skills testing, or any other form of assessment deemed necessary by the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC). The Program Director and the SPPC will continue to assess the student's progress under the plan during the quarter of probation. If a student successfully completes the probationary period plan as determined by the Program Director in consultation with the SPPC, the student will be recommended to continue in good standing. Students who do not successfully complete the requirements of the reinstatement/PIP plan during the probationary period will be dismissed.

APPEALS OF THE STUDENT PROGRESS AND PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

Students may appeal decisions of the Student Progress and Promotions Committee. Any student wishing to appeal a decision of the Student Progress and Promotions Committee must do so in writing to the to the Department Chair within three business days of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Department Chair, the appeal can proceed to the Assistant Dean of the College of Health Professions within three business days of receipt. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they can appeal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions within three business days of receiving each decision. The decision of the Dean of the College of Health Professions is final. Appeals submitted after this time will not be considered. Written appeals will only be considered for claims of the following:

- 1) Failure of the program or University to follow due process
- 2) New evidence pertinent to the student's case
- 3) Punishment not appropriate for the situation

The student may be asked to appear in person during the review process when deemed necessary by the reviewer. The designated reviewer will send formal notification of the decision to the student and appropriate academic offices.

A student who has been dismissed and whose appeal is granted may be reinstated and, if otherwise eligible, receive financial aid. However, the student will be placed on probation at the start of the academic term. The granting of appeals for decisions other than dismissal may stipulate certain conditions as deemed necessary by the party granting the appeal for a student to continue in the program.

STUDENTS AT ACADEMIC RISK AND REMEDIATION

The program expects each student to obtain a basic competency in each area of medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for PA practice. However, the program also recognizes that each student may progress at different rates in obtaining these basic competencies. The program has developed the small group structure for numerous purposes. One of the primary purposes of the small group advisor is to monitor student progress in developing basic competency in the domains of medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for entry into the PA profession.

Below, the program defines the process for the development of a Formal Remediation Plan, Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), and Deceleration or Dismissal from the program. These action plans are developed

when students are identified as deficient in individual performance/practical evaluations, learning outcomes, and standardized skills assessment performance, satisfactory academic progression, programmatic progression, and violation of professionalism and/or behavioral policies.

REMEDIATION PLANS

The program develops a formal remediation plan when a student is globally deficient in knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical skills, or professionalism. The development of a formal remediation plan may occur at the request of the Student Progress and Promotions Committee. The purpose of test remediation is for students to review the learning objectives, to identify items missed, to recognize knowledge or skill weaknesses, and to comprehend and correct these deficiencies in order to obtain basic mastery in the deficient area(s). The course director is responsible for collaborating to develop a formal remediation plan. When deemed appropriate or necessary, the course director may seek the assistance of a content expert, the Director of Didactic/Clinical Education, or the Student Progress and Promotions Committee, in order to develop an appropriate formal remediation plan. The formal remediation plan is documented on the Remediation Form (See Appendix G).

Successful completion of individual remediation can include but is not limited to: reading assignments, review of lecture materials or previous case studies, individual focused faculty led tutoring (especially when related to skills deficiencies), and breakout sessions. The course director will evaluate the student's proficiency once remediation is completed. This could be, but is not limited to, the following: oral question / answer session, written exam, written paper, and written responses to selected examination questions. The course director will provide a final re-assessment score related to the remediation process. All remediation must be completed as per the discretion of the course director and within the time frame as determined by the course director.

Remediation is required for all students with unsatisfactory performance, which is defined as a student scoring below:

- 1) 70% on all written and final exams during the didactic year;
- 2) 70% on an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), practical, or technical skills exam
- 3) The established passing score for an End-of-Rotation Exam, Preceptor Evaluation, clinical logging, self-assessment activities, or other assessment modalities as defined in the clinical syllabus of the rotation. *

*Programmatic progression during the clinical year is determined by the Student Progress and Promotions Committee. Students who are unsuccessful in meeting the established assessment criteria as defined in the clinical syllabus of the rotation will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee for further action regarding programmatic progression

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

If a student is observed to be at academic or professional performance risk, the student will be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Examples of situations that may prompt a student to be placed on a performance improvement plan include, but are not limited to: patterns of poor academic performance, poor progress on learning outcomes and clinical skills development, failure to meet standards for quarterly academic progress or failure to meet professional behavior standards.

If a student's overall cumulative GPA is less than 3.2, or there is a noted learning outcomes or competency skill deficit, the student will be placed on a PIP.

The PIP will be written on an official Performance Improvement Plan form (See Appendix H. The PIP is developed collaboratively by the student's faculty advisor with appropriate input from the PA program faculty and the Student Progress and Promotions Committee as needed. The plan will have definitive steps to achieve improvement and a timeline for completion. Students required to participate in tutoring as part of a PIP may be referred a content expert or other tutor as appropriate. Students who do not meet the requirements of a Performance Improvement Plan will be referred to the program's Student Progress and Promotions Committee for further review. Students are responsible for maintaining satisfactory academic standards while on a Performance Improvement Plan.

Programmatic progression during the clinical year is determined by the Student Progress and Promotions Committee. Students who are unsuccessful in meeting the established passing score for an End-of-Rotation Exam, Preceptor Evaluation, Clinical/Technical Skills testing, clinical logging, self-assessment activities, or other assessment modalities as defined in the clinical syllabus of the rotation will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee for further action regarding programmatic progression. At the discretion of the Student Progress and Promotions Committee, these actions include remediation, deceleration, or dismissal from the program.

Students are expected to obtain basic competency in professional behaviors. This includes following the program's Standards of Conduct (see "Standards of Conduct" below) and professionalism throughout the didactic and clinical curriculum phases of the program. Violations of the program's Standards of Conduct or Standards of professionalism will be referred to the appropriate University official (i.e. Dean of Student Affairs, Faculty Advisor, Student Progress and Promotions Committee). Depending upon the severity of the violation, the Student Progress and Promotions Committee will issue a professionalism warning or professionalism probation with a PIP.

DECELERATION POLICY

If for any reason a student in good standing elects to decelerate from the Physician Assistant Program, the student will be required to abide by the South University withdrawal policies and procedures in the **South University Academic Catalog, Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program Progression Policy, Deceleration Policy**. Deceleration may also occur at the recommendation of the SPPC when a student demonstrates deficiencies in achieving program learning outcomes and competencies.

To decelerate, the student must submit a formal request to the Program Director to re-enter the program at a later date. The decision to allow a student to re-enter the program is made by the program's Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC) and is approved by the campus Dean of Academic Affairs and Operations (DOAAO). If a student is allowed to re-enter the Physician Assistant program with the discretion of the SPPC at a later date, the program's SPPC will create a re-entry plan for that student. As part of the re-entry plan the student may be required to participate in course work or other educational activities to ensure retention of essential knowledge and skills required of a PA student. This plan must be approved by the campus DOAAO. The student will be required to review and sign the re-entry plan. The plan will be maintained in their permanent record.

Under no circumstances may a student re-enter the program if they have been withdrawn for more than four (4) consecutive academic quarters. A student not currently in good standing status will not be allowed to decelerate his/her progression. Regardless of the reason for withdrawal/deceleration, a student of the Physician Assistant

program must complete all curricular requirements within 45 months of their initial matriculation into the South University PA Program.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

All students will be required to abide by the South University withdrawal policies and procedures in the [South University Academic Catalog, Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program Progression Policy, Withdrawal Policy](#). The decision to allow a student to re-enter the program is made by the PA program's Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC) and is approved by the Campus Director & Dean of Academic Affairs and Operations (DOAAO). If a student is allowed to re-enter the Physician Assistant program with the discretion of the SPPC at a later date, the program's SPPC will create a re-entry plan for that student. This plan must be approved by the Campus Director & DOAAO. As part of the re-entry plan the student may be required to re-apply through CASPA, participate in course work, or other educational activities to ensure retention of essential knowledge and skills required of a PA student. The student will be required to review and sign the re-entry plan. The plan will be maintained in their permanent record.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To receive a Master of Science in Physician Assistant degree a student must satisfy the following requirements:

- The student must complete those course requirements described in the catalog in effect when the student enrolled. Students who leave South University for longer than 3 quarters will be required to meet the catalog requirements in effect at the time of their return.
- The student must receive a minimum grade of “C” or better in all courses.
- The student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for all course work taken while in the South University Physician Assistant program.
- The student must successfully complete the summative evaluation prior to graduation.

Note: It is the responsibility of each potential graduate to complete an application for graduation and pay the required graduation fee. The application should be submitted during pre-registration for the last quarter in which the student will be enrolled at South University, Austin.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The [South University Student Handbook](#) defines a Code of Conduct that must be followed by all students. South University publishes its Master of Science in Physician Assistant Code of Conduct in the [South University Academic Catalog; Master of Science in Physician Assistant Code of Conduct](#). All students enrolled in the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program are expected to abide by this code.

Failure to comply with general University policies may result in dismissal from the program and the University according to defined disciplinary procedures. All disciplinary actions will be reported to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee and will be considered relative to the student's suitability for continued participation in the program and /or entry into the PA profession. Each student shall be attired appropriately whenever he/she is in a clinical (patient care) environment. Failure to adhere to appropriate guidelines for attire can result in dismissal

from clinical activity with a resulting penalty applied for absence. One of South University Physician Assistant program's core tenets is that Physicians and PAs are called to the highest standards of honor and professional conduct. It is critical that our students understand this responsibility begins at the inception of medical education rather than upon receipt of degree; and they must uphold the following standards that serve as an embodiment of these beliefs. 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 South University, Austin Physician Assistant degree 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. Violations of these Standards of Professionalism may result in disciplinary proceedings.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONALISM

One of South University Physician Assistant Program's core tenets is that Physicians and PAs are called to the highest standards of honor and professional conduct. It is critical that our students understand this responsibility begins at the inception of medical education rather than upon receipt of degree, and they must uphold the following standards that serve as an embodiment of these beliefs. 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 South University, Austin 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. Violations of these Standards of Professionalism may result in referral to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee.

Honesty: Being truthful in communication with others.

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: Interacting with professional, staff, and peer members of the healthcare 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, gender identity, 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, or with a preceptor.

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 South University, Austin Physician Assistant program are participants in a professional training program whose graduates seek positions of high responsibility as providers of health care. Accordingly, students are evaluated not only on their academic and clinical skills but also on their interpersonal skills, reliability, appearance and professional conduct. Deficiencies in any of these areas are brought to the student's attention in the form of a written evaluation and may result in probation, suspension or dismissal from the program. Academic grades alone are not sufficient to warrant promotion to the next class, clinical phase, or graduation. The faculty reserves the right to dismiss any student when the student's behavior is not in line with the standards of the medical profession or when the student's presence in the Physician Assistant program is considered detrimental to the student in question, the other students in the school, or to society in general. The faculty will refer students whose professionalism has been questioned to the Student 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](#).

The primary purpose for upholding non-academic discipline in the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program is to protect and preserve the quality of the educational environment in the campus community. This is founded upon the following expectations:

- 1) The South University, Austin Physician Assistant program and the University at large requires high standards of courtesy, integrity, and responsibility in all of its members.
- 2) Each student is responsible for his/her own conduct.
- 3) Continuation as a student is conditional upon compliance with the requirements of student conduct expressed or implied in the Standards of Professionalism and Code of Conduct.

The South University, Austin Physician Assistant program reserves the right to take necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and well-being of the campus community. The Dean of Student Affairs is charged with the welfare of all students. Accordingly, in emergency situations, this individual has full authority to deal with student conduct according to the exigencies of the emergency and for its duration. The program is not designed or equipped to rehabilitate students who do not abide by this Honor 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 Honor Code. The Dean of Student Affairs is delegated responsibility pertaining to all student organizations and student government and has both the responsibility and authority to discipline such organizations whose members are students within the program.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CERTIFICATION FOR THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (NCCPA) CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CERTIFIED AND CERTIFYING PAS AND PAS WITH THE PA-C EMERITUS DESIGNATION

The South University, Austin Physician Assistant program expects students to abide by the **Code of Conduct** set forth by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. Breaches in this Code of Conduct while a student is enrolled in the program will be grounds for referral of that student to the program's Student Progress and Promotions Committee.

South University does not guarantee third-party certification/licensure. Outside agencies control the requirements for taking and passing certification/licensing exams and are subject to change without notice to South University.

PREAMBLE

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) endeavors to assure the public that board certified physician assistants (PAs) meet professional standards of knowledge and skills. Additionally, NCCPA attempts to ensure that the PAs it certifies are upholding appropriate standards of professionalism and ethics in practice. The *NCCPA's Code of Conduct for Board Certified and Certifying PAs and PAs with the PA-C Emeritus Designation* (the "Code of Conduct") outlines principles that all board certified or certifying PAs and PAs holding the PA-C Emeritus designation 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 a letter of concern, formal censure, revocation of board certification and/or eligibility for board certification, or revocation of PA-C Emeritus designation or eligibility for the designation, and/or other actions deemed appropriate by NCCPA, such as administrative suspension. Disciplinary actions may be reported to the Federation of State Medical Boards, any state licensing authority, the federal government, the PA's employer, and other interested parties, including individuals seeking information about the PA's board certification or PA-C Emeritus designation, as solely determined by the NCCPA and in compliance with NCCPA's Information Disclosure policy. This *Code of Conduct* represents some, though not necessarily all, of the behaviors that may trigger review under NCCPA's *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*. NCCPA retains the right to impose discipline under its *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters* even if the PA's board certification expires or the PA retires from practice, provided that the violation triggering the disciplinary proceeding occurred when the PA was board certified, seeking board certification, or applying for or holding the PA-C Emeritus designation.

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

Board Certified or certifying PAs shall protect the integrity of NCCPA-issued credentials and of the processes by which those credentials are earned and awarded. Board Certified or certifying PAs and PAs with the PA-C Emeritus designation:

- 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.
- Shall not engage in irregular behavior, as defined in NCCPA's *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*.

- Shall not employ deceptive means, including submitting to the NCCPA any document or testimony that contains a misstatement of fact or omits a fact to obtain, attempt to obtain or assist others in obtaining or maintaining an NCCPA credential.
- Shall not manufacture, modify, reproduce, distribute, or use a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized NCCPA certificate.
- Shall not falsely represent themselves in any way to be a Physician Assistant-Certified (PA-C) designee, a Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ) recipient, or a PA-C Emeritus or otherwise use or assist others in using fraudulent credentials, as set forth in the NCCPA's Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters.
- Shall not use the term "board certified" to convey or describe specialty certification or acquiesce in that use by others; however, it is consistent with NCCPA's Code of Conduct to use the term "board certified" to convey or describe board certification by NCCPA as a generalist qualification.
- Shall promptly inform NCCPA when possessing knowledge or evidence that raises a 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 board certification status by a physician assistant or any other individual.
- Shall promptly inform NCCPA when possessing knowledge of irregular behavior, including in connection with PANRE-LA, as set forth in the NCCPA's Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters.

Board Certified or certifying PAs and PAs with the PA-C Emeritus designation shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and standards related to their professional role, including but not limited to those governing clinical practice. Board Certified or certifying PAs and PAs with the PA-C Emeritus designation:

- Shall respect appropriate professional boundaries in their interactions with patients and others.
- Shall avoid behavior that would pose a threat or potential threat to the health, well-being or safety of patients apart from reasonable risks taken in the patient's interest during the delivery of health care.
- Shall not disclose patient confidential information, publicly disclose information about a patient that the PA learned as part of the PA's practice or professional role, nor disparage any patient in a public setting, (including through social media) based on information observed or learned in the PA's practice or professional role.
- Shall recognize and understand their professional and personal limitations.
- Shall practice without impairment from substance abuse and shall practice without impairment from cognitive deficiency or mental illness that, even with appropriate reasonable accommodation, adversely affects their practice.
- Shall, unless no longer board certified or certifying, maintain and demonstrate the ability to engage in the practice of medicine within their chosen areas of practice safely and competently.
- Shall behave in a manner that is lawful and ethical, during and outside the practice of medicine, that upholds accepted standards of professional practice and conduct.
- Must report to the NCCPA any adverse regulatory, legal or credentialing action within 30 days of issuance, including, but not limited to, revocation, suspension, surrender, loss or denial of, or any restrictions, conditions or fines imposed on any license, authorization, or credential to practice as a health care provider (including authorization to practice as an employee of the federal government or in a jurisdiction not requiring licensure), whether such adverse action is by decision, consent order, stipulation, or agreement.

- Must report to NCCPA within 30 days convictions, guilty pleas or no contest pleas to felonies and certain misdemeanors, as described more fully in the *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*.
- Must cooperate with and respond to inquiries from NCCPA related to their own or another's compliance with NCCPA's policies and this Code of Conduct, in connection with NCCPA board certification-related matters or disciplinary proceedings.
- Must comply with conditions set forth by NCCPA, unless due to circumstances beyond the PA's control.

PA's with the PA-C Emeritus designation shall not use the PA-C Emeritus designation in any clinical setting or in the context of any clinically-related interaction, including clinical volunteer service.

Adopted: November 2005

Last Revised: August 2022

VIOLATIONS OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT OR PROFESSIONALISM

Violations of the program's Standards of Conduct or Professionalism, or University policy will be referred to the to the appropriate University official (i.e. Faculty Advisor, Dean of Student Affairs, Student Progress and Promotions Committee).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Please refer to the [South University Catalog: South University Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Violations of the South University Academic Integrity Policy will be referred to the Physician Assistant Program's Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC) for review. If the SPPC determines that there is adequate evidence of an Academic Integrity Policy violation, an Academic Integrity Violation Report will be referred for disciplinary action and submitted to the Campus Director & Dean of Academic Affairs and Operations, Dean of the College of Health Professions, and the PA Department Chair. Please refer to the South University Academic Catalog, Academic Integrity Policy to review the full policy and procedures related to academic integrity. Above and beyond the penalties imposed according to the Academic Integrity Policy, the Progress and Promotions Committee has the authority to add additional sanctions and/or remediation.

APPEARANCE AND DRESS

Students, faculty, and staff of the South University Austin Physician Assistant program are required to place a high value on personal behavior and appearance, including attire. The highest standards for personal behavior and professional appearance is necessary to convey professionalism, facilitate trust and good communication with patients and colleagues, and show 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 health care worker. Patient trust and confidence in the health care provider are essential to excellent care. The message communicated by the healthcare provider through his/her attire and appearance plays a fundamental role in establishing this trust and confidence. Students should consider the cultural sensitivities of

their most socially conservative patients and families. PA students should present themselves in a manner that will demonstrate respect, inspire trust, and ensure patient comfort. Recent trends in clothing, body art, and body piercing, which may be personally attractive in some social situations, may not be accepted by some patients and should not be worn or displayed by PA students in the professional setting. Each student's name tag must be worn during all clinical education experiences. It is required that students wear name tags at all times when on campus during their first didactic quarter.

Students must realize from the outset that the public views them as representatives of the PA profession. Therefore, when contact with the public is anticipated, students must dress appropriately. In cases where inappropriate attire is worn, students may be dismissed until professional attire is displayed. The following standards of dress and appearance are to be observed while on campus, within clinical settings, and small group activities as outlined below.

Classroom Setting: Expected dress code for the PA Program is business casual.

- Clothing must be clean and in good repair, allowing for freedom of movement without inappropriate exposure.
- Acceptable dress for women includes blouses/sweaters and slacks or knee-length skirts/dresses.
- Acceptable dress for men includes dress shirt, slacks or collared shirt and khaki pants.
- Dress length must be appropriate for a dignified and professional appearance, allowing room for modest movement without indecent exposure.
- Shoes must be clean and professionally appropriate. Open-toed shoes and sandals may be worn during the didactic year when not in the laboratory or clinical setting. No flip-flops are permitted during the didactic or clinical phase.
- Hair must be kept well-groomed, clean, and neat, of a natural human color and must be in a professional, conservative hairstyle.
- Fingernails should not extend beyond the end of the fingertip.
- Makeup and jewelry must be kept to a minimum and must be of a conservative nature.
- No visible tattoos or body piercing other than those mentioned above will be allowed.
- Good personal hygiene is to always be maintained. 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.

Labs: Students are allowed to wear South University scrubs on campus on the designated lab days. Sneakers are allowed. At various times, students will be required to wear clothing that will easily allow physical examination by another student. Examples of modestly appropriate attire include sports bras, exercise wear, and shorts. For any questions or concerns with this requirement, please contact the course director.

Clinical Settings: An even higher standard of dress is expected when in the clinical setting. This includes clinical rotations, standardized patient exams, and Applied Learning Experiences during the didactic year. In the event a clinical site has certain dress/attire requirements of personnel including students, students are expected to abide by all requirements of the clinical site. In addition to the classroom guidelines above, the following should also be observed:

- A clean waist-length clinical jacket with name tag will be issued at the beginning of the second quarter. The lab coat is to be worn at all times in clinical and hospital settings.
- Clothing must be clean and in good repair, allowing for freedom of movement without inappropriate exposure. No tank tops or spaghetti straps are permitted.
- Acceptable dress for women includes blouses/sweaters and slacks or knee-length skirts/dresses.
- Acceptable dress for men includes dress shirt, slacks or collared shirt and khaki pants with a tie (unless ties are specifically prohibited by the clinical site).
- Dress length must be appropriate for a dignified and professional appearance, allowing room for modest movement without indecent exposure.
- Clothing with “shed” potential (e.g. sequins, fur, glitter) is not allowed.
- All shoes worn in a clinical setting must be closed-toe, clean, and polished. Tennis shoes are only allowed when wearing scrubs. Excessively high heels are discouraged.
- Hospital scrubs are worn when in the operating room and only when specified otherwise.
- Hair must be kept well-groomed, clean, and neat, of a natural human color and must be in a professional, conservative hairstyle.
- Fingernails should not extend beyond the end of the fingertip.
- Makeup and jewelry must be kept to a minimum and must be of a conservative nature.
- No visible tattoos or body piercing other than those mentioned above will be allowed.
- Good personal hygiene is to always be maintained. 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.

After Hours: Students are permitted to dress comfortably (scrubs or casual clothes) while studying in the South University Library on weekends and during the week after classes are completed for the day or 6:00 p.m. Students are expected to maintain professionalism in their dress at these times. These statements apply to all clinical and classroom settings unless otherwise allowed by the Directors of Didactic and/or Clinical Education. If a student is improperly dressed, he or she will not be permitted to attend class, use laboratory or library facilities, or continue at the worksite until appropriately attired.

Failure to comply with the above policies may result in disciplinary procedures secondary to non-compliance with standards of professionalism.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

GUIDANCE

Each student is assigned a small group advisor who serves as their faculty advisor soon after matriculation. Students are required to meet with their faculty advisor for advisement each quarter. Specific academic problems should first be discussed with the individual instructor who is directly involved in the concern. Career and job concerns can be addressed to the Director of Career Services. Additional counseling for personal issues is available through the office of the Dean of Student Affairs and through South University's *Student Assistance Program*. Students who are experiencing academic, personal, or career problems are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Dean of Student Affairs. Students are strongly encouraged to seek help early when experiencing difficulties because academic deficiencies, personal problems, or other issues can be detrimental to a student's successful completion of the program. Faculty are encouraged to urge students to seek help for personal issues early through the Dean of Student Affairs and to provide information on the Student Assistance Program to students.

Students of South University have access to our student assistance program, Be Well at South University, for counseling needs 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. You can access the service by calling 833-434-1217 or via application, Telehealth, or in-person counseling sessions with a local provider. These are available to you regardless of location, and no insurance is necessary.

The Wellness Hub includes articles and videos on mental health and wellness topics, including mental and emotional health, fitness and nutrition, academic performance, stress management, healthy relationships, and more. To access the Wellness Hub, go to bewellatsouth.com or download the CampusWell app at campuswell.com/get-the-app; the program is easy and confidential.

Be Well at South University Program licensed counselors are available to assist you with balancing school with work and other responsibilities, short-term counseling services, life, and career coaching, medical advocacy, and personal concierge services. Please contact the Dean of Student Affairs with any questions about this service.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Dean of Student Affairs is responsible for all aspects of student life outside of the classroom. This includes but is not limited to: campus security, career services, counseling, disability services, graduation, financial aid information, fire evacuation, medical procedures, orientation, tutoring, parking, student activities and clubs, student lounge and other common areas, veterans' affairs, weather announcements, approval for advertisement and on-site fundraising activities, alcohol and drug information, and student discipline. Please see the [South University Academic Catalog: Student Affairs](#) for detailed information on each of the above topics.

CAREER SERVICES

Students should seek the assistance of the Director of Career Services during or prior to their last quarter of enrollment. Information is available regarding resume/CV writing and job search strategies and techniques. The Director of Career services provides individualized job search assistance. Career workshops as well as theme weeks based on academic majors are held throughout the school year to aid students in their professional development. All programs are open to any student at no charge. Please see the [South University Academic Catalog: Career Services](#) or the [South University Student Handbook: Career Services](#).

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Students in the program are covered by a malpractice policy that insures all employees and students at South University. This policy covers any liability risks that may be incurred by a student or instructor of the program. This also covers liability risks incurred by clinical preceptors or their employing institutions. For most PA students, this coverage meets their needs. Those wishing to extend their coverage may purchase a personal liability insurance policy through the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

LIBRARY SERVICES

The South University Austin campus Library/Learning Resource Center (LRC) is located on the ground floor near the student entrance of the building. The Library/Learning Resource Center (LRC) encompasses a spacious open area dedicated to individual and communal study tables with ample seating and collection areas. The Library/Learning Resource Center (LRC) circulation desk is staffed and stocked with a comprehensive selection of office supplies for student use. Serials, publications, print volumes, and reference books are housed within the main room.

The Library/Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides seating, study tables, carrels, computer workstations with abundant electrical outlets, and a small lounge area. There is a supplemental private study room with a large table, chairs, and whiteboard to offer a quiet environment for students needing a separate space to focus. The adjoining computer lab furnished with ten computer workstations gives students access to campus computers and printing at no additional cost. There are several other computer labs with printers on campus as well. The South University Digital Library houses over 300,000 electronic books and 98 other databases, consisting of medical, business, and IT journals, 3 million full-text dissertations and specialized medical resources. All online resources are available to students, faculty, and clinical preceptors on campus and via remote internet access. Personal laptops can be used anywhere on the premises, since the campus is wireless-capable. All campus computers provide access to the Internet and Microsoft Office Suite which is also available through all student and faculty school accounts.

To assist students in retrieving the latest information, the library subscribes to over sixty periodicals in print format and several thousand full-text sources on-line. Duplicating services, interlibrary loan and tutorial services are also available in the library. The library provides access to the Internet, Microsoft Office Suite, and both general and subject-specific on-line databases.

ID/Library cards are made available within the first week of class. Valid cards are required to check out materials. If a card is lost, the student should report the loss to the bookstore as soon as possible. Most materials may be checked out for a two-week period. Students will be fined for overdue reserves or audiovisuals and charged a replacement fee for all materials that are not returned. Reference materials, pamphlets, vertical files, and periodicals are available for use in the library only. All items must be properly checked out at the circulation desk. Failure to comply is an infringement of library policy and the "Code of Conduct." Students will be held responsible for the loss or damage of materials while in their possession and are subject to the library rules and regulations as outlined in the Library Policy and Procedure Manual. Please see the [South University Student Handbook: Library Services](#) for more information.

COMPUTER LABS

South University, Austin makes available computer and network resources which may be used by the students, faculty and staff. These resources are intended to be used for educational purposes. The privilege of using computer and network resources is extended by the University to specific individuals and organizations and is not transferable. This privilege may be permanently revoked by the University if this policy is violated. The South University, Austin Physician Assistant program makes available computer and networking resources, which periodically may be used during lecture and classroom experiences. Unless directly related to class material, students are prohibited from the use of internet during class time. All modes of internet access must be disconnected. Computers are only to be used to take notes. Internet access may be used prior to lectures to download or transfer files and during class breaks. Individuals should be aware that any information, files, or software which they store or transfer on the University's computers or networks remains subject to the University's control, and thus can be examined, confiscated, or deleted in the same manner as any school property. Users may not attach or load any school's system with personal equipment or software. Individuals who make use of the network and computer resources must abide by this computer policy and by the policies, regulations, and guidelines of South University as specified in the [South University Catalog: Conduct and Behavior Policies](#). Please see the [South University Student Handbook: Computer Labs](#) for more information.

APPENDIX A: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM INFECTION CONTROL

POLICY:

The objective of the following guidelines is to prevent the spread of infection and avoid exposure to blood and body fluid pathogens.

GENERAL:

It is the policy of the South University, Austin, Physician Assistant program to follow the guidelines and recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regarding STANDARD PRECAUTIONS. Before beginning any clinical education experience through the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program, students must receive training regarding CDC STANDARD PRECAUTIONS.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Standard Precautions are the minimum infection prevention practices that apply to all patient care, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status of the patient, in any setting where healthcare is delivered. Standard Precautions combine the major features of Universal Precautions and Body Substance Isolation and are based on the principle that all blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes may contain transmissible infectious agents.

These practices include:

- 1) Hand hygiene
- 2) The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., gloves, gowns, masks) for mouth, nose, eye protection
- 3) Safe injection practices
- 4) Safe handling of potentially contaminated equipment or surfaces in the patient environment, and
- 5) Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette

In addition to Standard Precautions, students will receive training in the three categories of Transmission-Based Precautions:

- 1) Contact Precautions
- 2) Droplet Precautions
- 3) Airborne Precautions

Transmission-Based Precautions are used when the route(s) of transmission is (are) not completely interrupted using Standard Precautions alone.

Students may access details of this information at any time at the following website:

[Isolation Precautions | Guidelines Library | Infection Control | CDC](#)

EXPOSURE TO BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS

Strict adherence to STANDARD PRECAUTIONS and other infection control measures should prevent a student's exposure to blood borne pathogens. Should a student sustain a possible exposure (including a needle stick injury) to blood borne pathogens during a clinical training experience, the student is responsible for immediately notifying their supervisor, instructor, preceptor, or department manager. The student should then follow the steps outlined in the section titled "Post-Exposure Procedure" and "Student Injuries or Exposures". Exposure is defined as a demonstrated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE SHOULD BE INITIATED AND FOLLOWED AFTER AN EXPOSURE:

POST-EXPOSURE PROCEDURE:

- 1) **Aggressive local wound care** to the site of exposure should be initiated immediately. Percutaneous wounds should be expressed to promote bleeding. The site should be cleansed thoroughly with soap and water using a surgical hand brush when possible. It may be beneficial to use an antiseptic such as chlorhexidine gluconate (Foam Carer CHG), an iodophor (EZ Scrub, Betadine), or Dakins solution (dilute 1:9 buffered sodium hypochlorite). Difficult to scrub areas should be soaked in chlorhexidine gluconate (Foam Carer CHG) or other antiseptic. Non-intact skin should be cleansed with soap and water. It may be beneficial to use an antiseptic as described above. Mucous membrane exposures (e.g., eye splashes) should be irrigated thoroughly with tap water using the nearest eye washing station (or faucet if none available).
- 2) **The incident should be reported immediately** to the student's supervisor, instructor, preceptor, or department manager.
- 3) **Post Exposure Prophylaxis protocol should be initiated**. The student may access the post exposure hotline by the following methods:

<https://nccc.ucsf.edu/clinical-resources/pep-resources/pep-quick-guide-for-occupational-exposures/>

OR

The National Clinicians' Consultation Center:

For the Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Hotline

Phone: 1-888-448-4911

Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET (Monday-Friday)

11:00 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Weekends & Holidays)

Hepatitis C

Phone: (844) 437-4636 or (844) HEP-INFO

9 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET, Monday – Friday

HIV/AIDS Management

Phone: (800) 933-3413

9 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET, Monday – Friday

Perinatal HIV/AIDS

Phone: (888) 448-8765

24 hours, Seven days a week

- 4) **Access to emergency health care is recommended**, and the student is urged to become informed about current PEP guidelines in order to receive most effective treatment within the recommended time frame.
- 5) Finally, the student must notify the Director of Clinical Education or if unavailable, the Clinical Coordinator or Program Director. In addition, the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program incident form must be completed and sent to the program.

STUDENT INJURIES

Incidents involving an injury to a student (such as a fall, or other accidental injury) during a clinical education experience will follow a similar protocol.

- 1) The injury should be reported to the student's supervisor, instructor, preceptor, or department manager.
- 2) Students should report to the nearest Emergency Room for treatment.
- 3) The program should be notified as soon as it is possible to do so. The student must notify the Program Director or if unavailable, the Director of Clinical Education or if unavailable, the Clinical Coordinator. In addition, the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program incident form must be completed and sent to the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program.

If a potentially infectious exposure occurs, do not allow feelings of embarrassment, a large workload, or misplaced peer pressures to prevent you from reporting the event immediately. Needle sticks and other exposures can be life-threatening. Responsible health care providers recognize that unintentional injuries and occupational exposures may occur and must be evaluated by competent, objective, and experienced medical professionals.

IMPORTANT:

All charges incurred by PA students for physician visits, labs or x-ray studies, and prescribed medications related to an injury, needle stick; blood or body fluid exposures are the student's responsibility. **Students must maintain health insurance throughout their educational experience at the South University, Austin Physician Assistant program. All medical or health care services (emergency or otherwise) that the student receives or requires are the student's responsibility and are at the student's expense.**

APPENDIX B: PROGRAM INCIDENT FORM

Student Name: _____

Incident Date: _____ Time: _____ AM/PM

Location of Incident: _____

Nature of Incident: _____

Incident Cause: _____

Give brief description of incident, including predominating and contributing causes as well as actions taken following the incident:

State corrective action taken to prevent recurrence. Indicate if further investigation is warranted.

Did you seek medical care? Yes No

Date/Time/Method Program was notified: _____

Date/Time of Report to preceptor/clinical department manager: _____

Name of Faculty/Advisor reviewing the report: _____

Signature of Injured Student: _____

APPENDIX C: Records Release Form

CONSENT FOR RELEASE AND EXCHANGE OF STUDENT RECORDS

Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

Students in the College of Health Professions participate in clinical rotations which are part of the requisite course work for the _____ degree offered by South University.

To enable South University and the clinical rotation sites to evaluate a student's eligibility to participate in clinical rotations and to evaluate a student's performance on clinical rotations, it is necessary for South University and the clinical rotation sites to exchange educational records and information about that student. The educational records and information subject to release and exchange include grade reports, transcripts, evaluations, attendance records, examination results, background check results, and records of conduct and disciplinary investigations and proceedings. Release and exchange of educational records and information is between and among faculty members, administrators, and other designees of South University and the facilities which have an agreement with South University to provide clinical rotations.

I hereby consent to the release and exchange of my educational records and information as described above.

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this signed form.

Student's Signature Date

Student's Printed Name Date

APPENDIX D: Consent for Drug and Alcohol Screening

Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

I, _____, hereby voluntarily agree to provide urine, blood, or hair as required for testing for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol. I authorize that the results of my drug screen be released to South University and the _____ [Program]. I understand that the results of the drug screen will be used to determine: 1) eligibility for clinical placement, 2) fitness for duty, 3) violation of substance abuse policy, or 4) disciplinary action against me, up to and including dismissal from programs within the College of Health Professions. I understand that the results of the drug and alcohol test will be shared with clinical placement sites as required. I understand that my willingness to submit to the requested screening is completely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse. I am aware that my refusal to submit to the drug and alcohol screening is grounds for disciplinary action and further actions as outlined in the Substance Abuse Policies of the College of Health Professions and South University. I have read and agreed to the terms of the Substance Abuse Policy for the South University College of Health Professions.

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this signed form.

Student's Signature Date

Student's Printed Name Date

APPENDIX E: Participation of Students as Human Subjects Form

There are multiple physical examination and skill activities taught during the program. In addition to educating students in their roles as practitioners, having students fill the role of patients during these activities helps them become more sensitive to the patient perspective. Furthermore, active participation and repetition reinforce learning. Therefore, the South University CAMPUS PA program:

- Requires the participant of students as human subjects during selected courses.
- Expects its students to willingly participate in all aspects of physical exam and technical skills training in a professional and cooperative manner.

At various times, students will be required to wear clothing that will easily allow physical examination by another student. Examples of modestly appropriate attire include sports bras, exercise wear, and shorts.

It is possible that during a learner's course of study, incidental medical findings may be noted. These incidental findings may include previously unknown pathological findings or normal variants. These discoveries may occur during physical examination, point of care ultrasound, or laboratory sessions, among other educational settings. When an incidental finding is noted, faculty will maintain confidentiality and instruct the student to follow up with their primary care provider, or emergency services, as indicated for consideration of diagnosis and management. Any student privy to a peer's incidental finding due to engagement in the curricular activity that led to its finding must also maintain confidentiality.

For any questions or concerns with this policy, please contact the course director.

I hereby signify that I have read and understand this policy and am willing to participate as a human subject as described.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Legibly Student's Full Name

APPENDIX F: RECORDED POLICY AGREEMENT

You have been permitted to tape or digitally record class lectures for your personal study only. Lectures taped for this purpose may not be shared with other people without the consent of the lecturer. Information contained in the recorded lecture is protected under federal copyright laws and may not be published or quoted without the express consent of the lecturer and without giving proper identity and credit to that person.

In order to maintain the integrity of the services offered and to honor copyright law, I certify and agree as follows:

I agree to abide by the following rules for obtaining and using recorded course materials:

- I will not copy or reproduce the educational material (recordings) being provided nor allow anyone else to do so.
- I will not allow anyone else to use the educational material (recordings).
- Violation of this Agreement may be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in penalties including suspension and expulsion. Violations may also constitute a violation of federal and/or state laws and may result in civil or criminal prosecution, payment of fines or other moneys to the copyright holder, and/or incarceration.

I, the undersigned student, understand the rules listed above and will comply.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Signature _____

Program Director Signature _____

APPENDIX G: Remediation Forms

Student Name: _____ Course Title: _____

Date: _____ Course Director: _____ Grade: _____

Remediation Content: _____

1. Areas of difficulty/student comments after reviewing missed concepts:

2. Plan of Action (Objectives):

- Academic Success Center Referral Other:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Course Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. Remediation Improvement Contract Objectives Achieved:

- Remediation completed
 Remediation not completed

Reassessment Format:

- Oral question answer session Written exam Written assignment
 Written responses to selected examination questions OSCE/clinical or technical skills examination
 Other: _____

Reassessment Date: _____

Comments:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX H: Performance Improvement Plan

Student Name: _____ **Cohort:** _____

Form Completed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Rationale for Entering Student in Performance Improvement Plan:

Description of the Performance Improvement Plan (Must include timeline):

Acknowledgement of Performance Improvement Plan:

I acknowledge understanding of and agree to the Performance Improvement Plan as set forth above.

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

SPPC Chair: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Performance Review (Mid-Term):

SPPC Chair: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Performance Improvement Plan Disposition (End of Term):

SPPC Chair: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX I: Professionalism Evaluation

South University Austin Physician Assistant: Summative Professionalism Evaluation

Performance Category	Performance Criteria	Competent	Not Competent
Upholding the Physician Assistant Student Standards of Conduct	Respects the diversity of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, and socioeconomic status of all individuals.		
Upholding the Physician Assistant Student Standards of Conduct	Maintains professional integrity and academic honesty including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, or HIPAA violations.		
Upholding the Physician Assistant Standards of Conduct	Consistently exhibits behaviors, attitudes, and language consistent with the PA Student Standard of Conduct.		
Relationship with Students, Faculty, and Staff	Student promotes a positive and proactive learning environment.		
Relationship with Students, Faculty, and Staff	Establishes and maintains appropriate boundaries in learning situations with faculty, staff, preceptors, patients, and fellow students.		
Self-improvement and Adaptability	Student invites constructive feedback by accepting corrections or feedback in a gracious manner. Demonstrates a willingness to correct shortcomings.		
Self-improvement and Adaptability	Student exhibits flexibility by being willing to accept change in the academic, clinical, and group setting.		
Reliability and Responsibility	Contributes to an atmosphere conducive to learning by being careful not to distract others by socializing, sleeping, looking at unrelated material, and/or doing a class assignment for another course.		
Reliability and Responsibility	Regularly attends class, which includes arriving on time and staying for the entire class.		
Reliability and Responsibility	Completes group assignment task in a timely and reliable manner.		
Reliability and Responsibility	Works well in a group setting. Makes sufficient contributions for effective teamwork to take place without dominating the group or being overly reliant on others. Makes a genuine effort to work effectively with others.		

Student Score /11
Passing = 11/11

APPENDIX J: Student Handbook Acknowledgement

SOUTH UNIVERSITY PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____, have read the information contained within the South University, Austin Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook. I understand my obligation to successfully complete all didactic requirements in the outlined time frame.

I fully understand this information and hereby agree to abide by the Physician Assistant Program policies and procedures contained within the South University Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook. Additionally, I agree to abide by all rules and regulations as set forth in the South University Academic Catalog, South University Student Handbook, and in the South University Physician Assistant Program Clinical Policy Manual.

I understand the outlined requirements including clinical learning outcomes for graduation from the South University Master of Science in Physician Assistant program. The South University 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.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

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