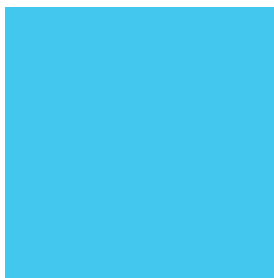


2026-2027 Student Handbook

Department of Clinical & Diagnostic Sciences

MS in Physician Associate Studies



UAB
The University of
Alabama at Birmingham.
School of Health Professions

UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC SCIENCES
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES
2026-2027 ACADEMIC HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

DEAN'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Health Professions where you are joining a legacy of excellence!

We are one of the six schools comprising the renowned UAB Academic Health Center. We offer more than 30 programs and 40 offerings at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. And we are home to nearly 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

You came here for an outstanding education, and we provide exactly that. However, **only you** can control whether you will become an excellent professional. To do so, you must challenge yourself every day and take advantage of all our vast resources, state-of-the-art facilities and research opportunities during your academic and clinical education. You also need to make the most of your access to the world-class faculty who are here to teach and support your journey. You didn't enroll here to be to be an amateur. You came to become a professional, and not an average one. I encourage you to become a "Pro" and an excellent one at that. Own it, live it, excel at what you do, and make both us and yourself proud.

I look forward to seeing you grow in your respective fields and watching you become the leader we know you can be.

Go Blazers!

Mark Merrick, Ph.D., AT, ATC, FNATA, FNAP, FASAHP
Dean, UAB School of Health Professions

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The UAB School of Health Professions (SHP) is one of the largest academic institutions of its type in the United States. What began in the 1950s as a collection of training programs in various para-professional disciplines has grown into an internationally recognized center of academic and research excellence.

Today, we have five academic departments – Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, Health Services Administration, Nutrition Sciences, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy – that are housed in four buildings: Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building (WEBB), Learning Resource Center (LRC), the School of Health Professions Building (SHPB), and the Center for Biophysical Sciences and Engineering (CBSE).

We are proud of many accomplishments including:

- *U.S. News & World Report* ranks all eligible SHP programs in the nation's top 25.
- Research funding is at an all-time high of \$26+ million and growing.
- Nearly 10 of our programs you will only find in Alabama at UAB.

- Our school has never been stronger or better positioned as a national leader in health professions education. And this status will only grow stronger as we continue to welcome students like you.

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook is an overview of general academic regulations specific to SOHP programs at UAB. Although UAB will make its best efforts to abide by this handbook, UAB reserves the right to interpret and apply its procedures and policies, and to deviate from these guidelines, as appropriate in the particular circumstances and in accordance with the mission and goals of the program. UAB also reserves the right to address issues not covered in this handbook and to make changes to the policy without advance notice. Changes become effective at the time the proper authorities determine so and the changes apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date version.

All students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the general University rules and regulations pertaining to studying at UAB and the specific academic requirements of their particular degree program. This Handbook is not intended to nor does it contain all policies or regulations applicable to students. Each student is responsible for familiarizing him/herself with the contents of this Handbook. Although the policies contained herein are intended to reflect current rules and policies of the University, users are cautioned that changes or additions may have become effective since the publication of this material. In the event of a conflict, current statements of Board policy contained in the Bylaws, Rules, official minutes, and other pronouncements of the Board or Chancellor, or superseding law, shall prevail.

This Handbook does not constitute a contract and may not be deemed or construed as part of any contract between UAB and any student or student representative.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW

Although UAB works hard to prepare students for future careers in their desired fields, employment and salaries are not guaranteed. Employment outcomes depend on a student's efforts and market conditions. Students are responsible for understanding their financial responsibilities. [Tuition costs can be found on this UAB website](#). Scholarships are competitive and not guaranteed. Admission to other graduate or professional programs is also not guaranteed. Advisors will provide students with guidance, but students are ultimately responsible for degree completion, and timelines for completion may vary based on individual circumstances.

SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

All dates related to registration, payments of tuition and fees, drop/add dates, other administrative requirements, and official school holidays are recorded on the [UAB Academic Calendar](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

The University established a new Academic Integrity Code effective August 23, 2021. This Code, which applies to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students as well as all academic activities, defines academic misconduct and outlines procedures for breaches of the code. The Academic Integrity Code process is managed by the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC). In the School of Health Professions, the AIC is the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, and the office is located in SHPB 660. [You can see the full text of the Academic Integrity Code online.](#)

ADVISING

Undergraduate student advising is provided through advisors assigned to each program as well as through the Office of Student Services. Advisor and recruiter contact information can be found on the [Office of Student Services Website](#). Graduate student advising is provided through the SHP graduate programs.

AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors help to spread awareness of the School of Health Professions and its multifaceted undergraduate and graduate programs, serve as liaisons between the department and university-wide student organizations, and serve as a student voice in school and university committees. The SHP Ambassadors help to support the programs within the school that will impact recruitment and retention initiatives. [You can learn more about the SHP Ambassadors on their webpage.](#)

AskIT

AskIT is the technology help desk for faculty, staff, and students. You will be asked to supply your BlazerID when you request assistance. Contact them by phone at 205-996-5555 or [via email](#) or [visit the AskIT service portal online](#).

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is expected in all SHP programs. Specific class, laboratory, or clinical site attendance requirements may be more stringent than university guidelines. Refer to the program requirements in this handbook and in course syllabi for policies. The UAB attendance policy is as follows:

The University of Alabama at Birmingham recognizes that the academic success of individual students is related to their class attendance and participation. Each course instructor is responsible for establishing policies concerning class attendance and make-up opportunities. Any such policies, including points for attendance and/or participation, penalties for absences, limits on excused absences, total allowable absences, etc., must be specified in the course syllabus provided to students at the beginning of the course term. Such policies are subject to departmental oversight and may not, by their specific prescriptions, negate or circumvent the accommodations provided below for excused absences.

The University regards certain absences as excused and in those instances requires that instructors provide a reasonable accommodation for the student who misses assignments, presentations, examinations, or other academic work of a substantive nature by virtue of these excused absences. Examples include the following:

- Absences due to jury or military duty, provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
- Absences for students who have approved disability-related absence accommodations through Disability Support Services may follow the reasonable number of absences outlined in their flex plan or as determined by the instructor. Students are responsible for notifying instructors of these and any other approved accommodations through their Notice of Accommodations letter.
- Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the University in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:
 - Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.
 - If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.
- Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students.
- Absences due to religious observances provided that students give faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.

In these instances, instructors must give students the opportunity to complete assignments in a way that corresponds as much as possible to the nature, scope, and format of the original. Options may include making up exams or other assignments, rescheduling student classroom presentations, or arranging for early or late submission of written assignments. The course make-up policy should be included in the syllabus.

BLAZERID / BLAZERNET / EMAIL

BLAZERID

All students receive a unique identifier, the BlazerID, established at [BlazerID Central](#). Your BlazerID is required for accessing BlazerNET and other campus resources. To activate one's BlazerID, select "Activate Accounts."

BLAZERNET

[BlazerNet](#) is the official portal of the UAB information network and is accessible from any Internet-accessible computer, on- or off-campus.

EMAIL

UAB student email is provided through Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based system. Students have 50 GB of email space and 25 GB of free file 1 TB storage. The UAB email is the official communication medium for courses, news, information, and announcements. Students should not forward their UAB account to a personal email account. UAB is not responsible for information not received by the student due to the 'redirecting' of a UAB account to another email server.

BLAZER EXPRESS

The UAB Blazer Express Transit System provides transportation throughout the UAB campus. With a valid UAB ID badge, students can enjoy fare-free bus transportation. All buses are ADA-accessible and can seat approximately 35 riders. For an updated schedule, route maps, and hours of operation please [visit the Blazer Express website](#).

BOOKSTORE

There is one bookstore located on the UAB campus in the Hill Student Center. It offers a wide variety of products and services to students, including online purchasing and shipping. The bookstore stocks UAB memorabilia and college wear in addition to all required textbooks and course material. Visit [the UAB Barnes and Noble Bookstore online](#) for more details.

CAMPUS ONECARD

The UAB OneCard is the official university identification card. It is used for personal identification, for entry to campus events and the recreation center, for library checkout, and for other UAB services. It also serves as a declining balance card for the UAB meal plans and for Blazer Bucks accounts. Additional information is available on the [UAB OneCard website](#).

CAMPUS MAP

[UAB's campus map can be found online](#).

CAMPUS SAFETY

[Campus safety procedures and resources can be accessed online](#).

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Canvas Learning Management System is the platform used for managing instructional materials online. Canvas course sites are accessed through BlazerNET or at the [UAB Center for Teaching and Learning website](#). Students should monitor their course sites routinely for communication from faculty and to manage course assignments.

CATALOG

The UAB Catalog is published annually and includes UAB's courses, policies, and curricula. Students can [find the Undergraduate or Graduate catalog online](#).

COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

[Community Standards and Accountability](#) is responsible for upholding the integrity and purpose of the University through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures to students' behavior to ensure a community that respects the dignity and right of all persons to reach their highest potential. UAB Student Advocacy, Rights & Conduct (SARC) delivers programs and services in order to promote student safety and success, the pursuit of knowledge, respect for self and others, global citizenship, personal accountability and integrity, and ethical development. More information can be found at the [UAB SARC website](#). [The UAB student conduct code may be accessed online](#).

COUNSELING SERVICES

Student Counseling Services offers no cost, confidential counseling for UAB students related to physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual concerns. Student Counseling Services is located on the 3rd floor of the Student Health and Wellness Center at 1714 9th Avenue South. For more information, call 205-934-5816 or [visit the Student Counseling Services website](#).

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

UAB is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and you require accommodations, please [contact Disability Support Services for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures](#).

Requests for reasonable accommodations involve an interactive process and consist of a collaborative effort among the student, DSS, faculty, and staff. If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please call 205-934-4205 or visit [the DSS website](#).

If you are a student registered with Disability Support Services, it is your responsibility to contact the course instructor to discuss the accommodations that may be necessary in each course. Students with disabilities must be registered with DSS and provide an accommodation request letter before receiving academic adjustments. Reasonable and timely notification of accommodations for the course is encouraged and provided to the course instructor so that the accommodations can be arranged.

EMERGENCIES

Report suspicious or threatening activity to the UAB Police Department immediately. Law enforcement officers are available 24 hours, seven days a week. Also, more than 300 emergency blue light telephones connected directly to the police dispatch are located throughout campus.

BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT (BTAM)

The UAB and UAB Medicine Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Team (BTAM) is an interdisciplinary team dedicated to maintaining a safe, secure, and healthy campus environment for all students, employees, and visitors. BTAM uses a structured, proactive process to identify, assess, and manage behavioral threats to campus safety and well-being. Concerning behaviors—such as a significant change in academic performance or conduct, aggressive or irrational behavior, expressions of severe distress, or inability to control anger—should be reported promptly. Non-emergency situations involving students may be reported through the Division of Student Affairs at (205) 975-9509 or via the online reporting form. For more information, visit the [UAB BTAM website](#).

UAB POLICE:

For an emergency, dial 911 *from a campus phone*. For non-emergencies call: 205-934-3535 or 205-934-HELP (4357) or 205-934-4434.

Emergencies affecting campus are communicated via the following:

- UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline 205-934-2165
- [UAB home webpage](#)
- [UAB Emergency Management webpage](#)
- Announcements on [BlazerNET](#)
- Cell phone messages and SMS text via B-ALERT. [Register for B-ALERT online](#).

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

UAB is an [Equal Employment/Equal Educational Opportunity Institution](#) dedicated to providing equal opportunities and equal access to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, age, disability, and veteran's status. As required by Title IX, UAB prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to UAB's Assistant Vice President and Senior Title IX Coordinator. [The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located online](#).

FERPA TRAINING

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 provides protection for all educational records related to students enrolled in an educational program. UAB has a dedicated [FERPA website](#) with information about your rights and protection of your records. You may [email any questions or concerns about FERPA issues](#) to FERPA@uab.edu. All SHP students are required to complete FERPA Training. The course can be accessed at [THIS WEBSITE](#).

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Counselors are available each day in the One Stop Student Services Office located in the Hill Student Center, [1400 University Blvd](#), Suite 103. If you have general

questions, you can contact the Office of Student Financial Aid at 205-934-8223 or [via email](#). For additional financial aid information [visit the UAB Cost & Aid website](#).

FOOD SERVICES

There are several dining facilities available on campus. The [campus dining map](#) can show you the closest to the SHP buildings. For additional information about meal plans and campus dining facilities [visit the Campus Dining website](#).

GRADUATE SCHOOL

The UAB Graduate School offers doctoral programs, post-master's specialist programs, and master's level programs. Graduate programs in SHP are coordinated through the Graduate School, and students must adhere to the Graduate School policies and procedures. Graduate School information for current students is available at [the UAB Graduate School website](#). Policies and Procedures for the Graduate School can be found in the [Graduate School Catalog](#).

GRADUATION

All students must complete an application for degree six months prior to graduating and no later than the deadline in the academic calendar. The University holds commencement every semester. Check the [UAB commencement website](#) for the most current information.

HEALTH INSURANCE

To ensure that all students have adequate health care coverage, including ongoing primary and specialty care, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) requires all students to have major medical health insurance. Students can provide proof of their own private coverage or be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan. The plan is a 1-year commercial policy provided by United HealthCare and is re-negotiated annually. This policy is a comprehensive health insurance policy at an affordable cost that is specifically designed to meet the needs of UAB Students. If you are required to have insurance but have sufficient coverage on another plan and wish to opt out of the Student Health Insurance Plan, you are required to submit a waiver to Student Health Services at the beginning of every semester. More information including submitting a waiver can be found at the [UAB Student Health Insurance Waivers website](#).

HIPAA TRAINING

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) includes significant requirements for protecting individual privacy of health information. All students in the School of Health Professions must complete an online tutorial and be tested on HIPAA regulations at the time of program admission. A BlazerID is required to access the training site, located at [UAB Online Learning](#). Compliance with the training requirement is monitored by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs.

HONOR SOCIETIES

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for the Alpha Eta Honor Society. The UAB Chapter of this Society recognizes students registered in the final term

of a baccalaureate or graduate health professions program. Inductees must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (4.0 = A) and be in the upper 10% of their program. Nominations are made by program directors in spring and summer terms.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, faculty, and staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), first-time entering students, international students and scholars, and students in clinical & non-clinical programs, must provide proof of immunization against certain diseases, unless they have an approved medical or religious exemption. Full details can be found on the [UAB Immunizations webpage](#).

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN USE (IRB)

Student researchers must comply with all requirements for protection of human subjects. Detailed information is available on the [IRB website](#).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual property refers to an asset that originated conceptually, such as literary and artistic works, inventions, or other creative works. These assets should be protected and used only as the creator intends. Training materials defining inventor status, patent criteria, and other intellectual property issues, as well as University Policies on Patents, Copyright, and Intellectual Property are on [the Office of Compliance & Risk homepage](#).

LACTATION CENTERS

The University has provided several lactation centers for students, faculty, and staff across the campus. Visit [the UAB Lactation Resources webpage](#) for a resource guide and a location map. The School of Health Professions' lactation room is in the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building at [1675 University Blvd](#), Room 431. Lactating students enrolled in the School of Health Professions have access to the room via their student ID/OneCard. If you cannot access the room, contact the building administrator, Julia Tolbert-Jackson at 205-873-5666.

LIBRARIES AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

[UAB's libraries](#) house excellent collections of books, periodicals, microforms, and other media. Students have online remote access to catalogs and online collections. Computers are available for student use during regular hours of operation.

SHP LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (LRC)

The School of Health Professions Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides a unique set of enterprise solutions that promote an exciting, intriguing, and innovative learning environment. It provides audio/visual support, and information technology management of public, classroom, and testing labs. The building is at [1714 9th Avenue South](#), and the SHP student space is on the second floor. You can contact LRC staff [via email](#) or via phone at 205-934-5146.

LISTER HILL LIBRARY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

[Lister Hill Library](#) (LHL) is the largest biomedical library in Alabama and one of the largest in the south. It is located [across the crosswalk](#) from the School of Health Professions.

MERVYN H. STERNE LIBRARY

[Mervyn H. Sterne Library](#) has a collection of more than one million items supporting teaching and research in the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences. It is located at [917 13th Street South](#).

UAB STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The Student Conduct Code promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities expected of students consistent with the core missions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This Code describes the standards of behavior for all students, and it outlines students' rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations. Behavior that violates UAB standards of conduct listed within the Student Conduct Code and elsewhere will be subject to disciplinary action through the appropriate conduct process. Whether it is determined that an individual or group is responsible for the violation(s), either by direct involvement or by condoning, encouraging, or covering up the violation, appropriate response will occur with respect to the individual(s) and/or group involved.

[Undergraduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

[Graduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES

The mission of the One Stop is to provide a single point of professional integrated service to students. The One Stop serves students who need assistance with academic records, financial aid, registration, student accounting, OneCard, and other related topics. One Stop is located in the Hill Student Center, [1400 University Blvd.](#) Suite 103. You may contact the [One Stop](#) office by phone or email at 205-934-4300, 855-UAB-1STP (855-822-1787), [or via email](#).

PARKING

Student vehicles must be registered with [UAB Parking and Transportation Services](#), located at [608 8th Street South](#). Parking is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking fees are established by location, payable by semester or year, and are billed to the student's account.

PLAGIARISM AND TURNITIN

Plagiarism violates the Academic Integrity Code and will be addressed in accordance with it. All papers submitted for grading in any SHP program may be reviewed using the online plagiarism monitoring software. Please note that all documents submitted to [Turnitin](#) are added to their database of papers that is used to screen future assignments for plagiarism.

RECREATION CENTER

The [Campus Recreation Center](#) is located at [1501 University Blvd](#). A valid student identification card or membership card is required for access. Facilities include basketball courts, racquetball courts, weight rooms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, and indoor track.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AWARDS

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for [the SHP Student Awards Program](#), which includes the following awards:

- Alfred W. Sangster Award for Outstanding International Student – This award is presented annually to an international student in recognition of their academic and non-academic achievements.
- Cecile Clardy Satterfield Award for Humanism in Health Care – This award is made annually to recognize one outstanding student for humanitarianism, professionalism, and commitment to health care.
- Charles Brooks Award for Creativity – This award is made annually in recognition of creative accomplishments such as written publications or artistic contributions which complemented the student's academic activities.
- Dean's Leadership and Service Award – Presented to a maximum of three outstanding SHP students annually, this award recognizes leadership to the School, UAB, and the community.

A call for nominations will be sent to program directors each year. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for awards available to students in individual programs.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

SHP has several scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in SHP programs. The Scholarship Committee, comprised of faculty from each department, reviews and selects awardees. Please go to [the SHP Scholarship Application webpage](#) for a list of scholarships and instructions for application.

Application announcements are made by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. Many programs in SHP also have scholarships available to currently enrolled students in those programs. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for more information.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SHARED VALUES

- Collaboration
- Compassion & Caring
- Excellence & Achievement
- Integrity
- Respect
- Service
- Social Responsibility
- Stewardship

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can serve as useful communication tools. However, health professions students should use the forums judiciously. For more information visit [the UAB Social Media Guidelines webpage](#). The school's official sites are on the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Vimeo](#)
- [X/Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The University provides prevention, counseling, and treatment services to students through [Student Health Services](#) (SHS) located at [1714 9th Avenue South](#). Appointments may be scheduled via [their online portal](#).

TITLE IX

In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama at Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its programs or services. The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on sex and expects individuals who live, work, teach, and study within this community to contribute positively to the environment and to refrain from behaviors that threaten the freedom or respect that every member of our community deserves. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources, and supports, please visit [the UAB Title IX webpage](#).

TUITION AND FEES

[UAB tuition and fees are published online](#). They may be paid through BlazerNET. SHP programs have specific fees attached to programs, courses, and/ or laboratories. Payment deadlines for each semester are published on the official academic calendar. Please note that failure to meet payment deadlines can result in being administratively withdrawn from courses.

WEATHER

Severe weather situations that may affect the safety of students, faculty, and staff are communicated through the same channels as other emergencies. UAB has a dedicated [Preparedness webpage with Severe Weather Gathering Points and supply lists](#). Other information sources include the [B-ALERT System](#) (contact information must be setup and current) and the UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline 205-934-2165.

WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE / PROGRAM

Withdrawal from a course or from your program is an official process and should be discussed with your academic advisor and/or program director. Most programs in the School of Health Professions are full-time and the curricula specifically sequenced. Withdrawal from a course

may risk you having to wait to register for the class again. Withdrawals are made through the UAB registration system via the Student Resources tab in BlazerNET. Notice of program withdrawal should be given in writing to the program director. For more information [visit the UAB Add/Drop, Extended Drop and Withdrawal Policy webpage](#), which also includes a medical withdrawal policy.

SECTION 2 – SHP AND UAB POLICIES

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES

DISMISSAL OF STUDENT FOR FAILURE TO MAKE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[Dismissal of Student and Appeal Process](#)

EMERGENCY PLAN – SHPB/LRC/WEBB

[SHPB/LRC/WEBB Emergency Plan](#)

BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY

Students in SHP programs are required to undergo a background check and drug screen using the school's approved vendor, [Disa Healthcare Technology](#), at the time of program admission, and again, prior to placement in a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.). Additional checks/screens may be required by the individual sites therefore; students should work with the program to ensure compliance requirements are met. Instructions for requesting the background check and drug screens are provided to students by their programs. Students in SHP undergraduate programs must complete a module on drug screening and background checks during their first semester. The module will be located in Canvas, UAB's learning management system.

The [SHP Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs](#) is responsible for ensuring student compliance with the Background Check and Drug Screen Policy throughout the program. Students found to be non-compliant with this policy will not be allowed to matriculate in the program (orientation, attend class, fieldwork placement, etc.) until all requirements are met. Program Directors, Fieldwork Coordinators, and students will be notified of non-compliance and a hold will be placed on the students' account.

- Fees for these screenings will be the responsibility of the student.
- The rules and regulations governing individual fieldwork placement sites may include additional provisions and/or more stringent guidelines which supersede this policy. Fees for these screenings are the responsibility of the student.
- Should your criminal background check contain issues, or if you fail a drug screen that may prevent you from receiving or sitting for board certification/licensure, a representative from the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs will contact you. Depending upon the outcome, students will have a registration hold placed on their account until in compliance and this may result in being dismissed from the program. See your program's guidelines regarding specific consequences.

Programs requiring a criminal background check and drug screening by the end of the first semester of enrollment and again, prior to fieldwork placement (if applicable in the program requirements), are the following:

- Administration Health Services, PhD
- Biomedical Sciences to Biotechnology Fast Track
- Biomedical Sciences to Clinical Laboratory Science Fast Track

- Biomedical Sciences to Health Physics Fast Track
- Biomedical Sciences to Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences Fast Track
- Biomedical and Health Sciences, MS
- Biotechnology, MS
- Biotechnology, PhD
- Dietitian Education Program, Graduate Certificate
- Genetic Counseling, MS
- Health Administration (Residential), MSHA
- Health Care Management to Healthcare Quality and Safety Fast Track
- Health Care Management to Health Informatics Fast Track
- Health Care Management to Occupational Therapy Doctorate Fast Track
- Health Physics, MS
- Medical Laboratory Science, MS
- Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences, MS
- Nutrition Sciences, MS
 - Dietetic Internship Clinical Track
 - Dietitian Education Program
 - Research Track
- Nutrition Sciences, PhD
- Occupational Therapy, OTD – (entry level)
- Physical Therapy, DPT
- Physician Associate Studies, MSPAS
- Rehabilitation Science, PhD

The following students enrolled in SHP undergraduate programs will complete a learning module related to background checks and drug screens in Canvas, UAB's learning management system by the first semester of enrollment. If a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.) is required, students must complete criminal background checks and drug screens prior to the first day of the semester of a fieldwork placement:

- Health Care Management, BS
- Biomedical Sciences, BS
- Nutrition Sciences, BS
- Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science, BS

Programs waived from the Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening requirements are the following:

- Applied Mixed Methods Research, Graduate Certificate
- Biotechnology Regulatory Affairs, Graduate Certificate
- Clinical Informatics, Graduate Certificate
- Health Administration (International and Executive tracks), MSHA
- Health Informatics, MSHI
- Healthcare Finance Management, Graduate Certificate
- Healthcare Leadership, DSc

- Healthcare Leadership, Graduate Certificate
- Healthcare Quality and Safety, MS
- Healthcare Quality and Safety, Graduate Certificate
- Health Services Research, MS
- Healthcare Simulation, MS
- Healthcare Simulation, Graduate Certificate
- Nutrition for Community Health, Graduate Certificate
- Nutrition Sciences, MS
 - Clinical Track-Prior Learning
 - Lifestyle Management and Disease Prevention Track
- Low Vision Rehabilitation, Graduate Certificate
- Multi-Tiered Approach to Trauma, Graduate Certificate
- Occupational Therapy Doctorate (Post Professional)
- Physical Therapy Residencies (Neurologic, Orthopedic)
- Primary Care Physical Therapy for Underserved Populations, Graduate Certificate

Students enrolled in exempt programs who participate in a course(s) incorporating community, corporate or other high impact, out-of-classroom activities such as service learning, capstone projects or other hands-on learning experiences, may be required by placement sites to submit background check and drug screening results. Students are responsible for the fees associated with such screening.

DISA HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTIONS

[Disa Healthcare Technology](#) is a secure platform that allows you to order your background check & drug test online. Once you have placed your order, you may use your login to access additional features, including document storage, portfolio builders and reference tools. Disa Healthcare Technology also allows you to upload any additional documents required by your school.

Order Summary

- Required Personal Information
 - In addition to entering your full name and date of birth, you will be asked for your Social Security Number, current address, phone number, and email address.
- Drug Test (LabCorp)
 - Within 24-48 hours after you place your order, the electronic chain of custody form e-chain will be placed directly into your CastleBranch account. This e-chain will explain where you need to go to complete your drug test.
- Payment Information
 - At the end of the online process, you will be prompted to enter your Visa or MasterCard information. Money orders are also accepted, but will result in a \$10 fee and additional turn-around-time.

Place Your Order

[Visit the website](#), click “place order” and choose the Disa CB platform (see logo screenshot below).



Enter package code AHO1 – Background Check and Drug Test. You will be required to enter your program under “Student Information” classification. You will then be directed to set up your Disa/CastleBranch profile account. This package code is for the following majors:

- Health Care Management
- Biomedical Sciences
- Biotechnology
- Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Genetic Counseling
- Health Administration – Residential (MSHA)
- Health Care Quality and Safety (not employees of health care organizations)
- Health Informatics
- Health Physics
- Medical Laboratory Sciences
- Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Associate Studies
- Rehabilitation Sciences

View Your Results

Your results will be posted directly to your Disa/CastleBranch profile account. You will be notified if there is any missing information needed to process your order. Although 95% of background check results are completed within 3-5 business days, some results may take longer. Your order will show as “In Process” until it has been completed in its entirety. Your school’s administrator can also securely view your results online with their unique username and password. If you have any additional questions, you may contact the Service Desk at 888-723-4263 x 7196 or submit a question [using the online contact us form](#).

ACCIDENTS / INJURIES OCCURRING ON CAMPUS:

All accidents/injuries occurring while involved in a program associated with the School of Health Professions are to be promptly reported to the faculty member in charge of class. Incident reports for accidents and injuries must be filed with the Department Administrative Office within 48 hours of the incident. Failure to report accidents or injuries within 48 hours of the incident may impact UAB's ability to address the accident or injury.

ACCIDENT / INJURY REPORTING PROCEDURE

When a student, visitor, faculty, or staff is involved in an accident or sustains an injury while involved in a program associated with the School of Health Professions, an accident / injury report is required. The faculty member in charge of the class where the injury occurs, or who is the first point of contact following the injury should download and complete this [Incident Report Form](#).

NEEDLESTICK/ BLOOD OR BODY FLUID EXPOSURES

When a student, visitor, faculty, or staff is involved in a body fluid or needlestick exposure while involved in a program associated with the School of Health Professions, they should follow the procedures on [the UAB Human Resources website](#). The faculty member in charge of the class where the exposure occurs, or who is the first point of contact following the injury should download and complete this [Incident Report Form](#).

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE VOLUNTEER RESEARCH:

Undergraduate or graduate volunteer students wanting to conduct research in a School of Health Professions laboratory should contact [Dr. Samantha Giordano-Mooga via email](#) for requirements.

UAB POLICIES

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[UAB ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS](#)

[UAB ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS](#)

HEALTH

[UAB POLICY ON IMMUNIZATIONS](#)

[UAB POLICY ON NEEDLE STICKS AND EXPOSURES](#)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

[UAB POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT](#)

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

[UAB POLICY ON CAMPUS SAFETY](#)

[UAB POLICY ON FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, AND OTHER DANGEROUS WEAPONS](#)

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

[UAB POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE](#)

[UAB POLICY ON ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RESEARCH AND OTHER SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES](#)

[UAB POLICY ON PATENTS](#)

SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE

[UAB POLICY ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, USE AND CONSUMPTION](#)

[UAB POLICY AS A DRUG FREE CAMPUS](#)

[UAB POLICY ON NON-SMOKING](#)

TECHNOLOGY

[UAB POLICY ON TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES](#)

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

[UAB COMPLAINT POLICY](#)

SECTION 3: PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The UAB Physician Associate Studies Program is a 27-month, graduate-level program that is located within the Department of Clinical & Diagnostic Sciences (CDS), in the School of Health Professions (SHP). The program matriculates a new cohort of students each fall semester. Students complete a total of 115 credit hours, which includes 66 didactic credits hours and 49 clinical credit hours. Upon completion of the program, students are awarded a Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies (MSPAS) degree.

MISSION

The mission of the PA program is to attract and train individuals with the knowledge, skills, and judgement needed to provide competent and compassionate healthcare to all people. We are committed to cultivating a community where all students are valued and supported to ensure we are building a highly competent patient-centered medical workforce of individuals who are dedicated to the communities they serve.

PA PROGRAM PRINCIPAL FACULTY AND STAFF

Visit the [PA program website](#) for information regarding our faculty and staff.

ACCREDITATION

The UAB Physician Associate Studies Program is an entry-level Physician Assistant/Associate educational program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA).

OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

DIDACTIC YEAR LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the didactic year curriculum, students will be able to perform the following tasks:

- Demonstrate an understanding of human anatomy, physiology, and pathology of disease and their application in clinical practice.
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and manage common diseases encountered in general medicine, emergency medicine, surgery, pediatrics, women's health, and behavioral medicine.
- Demonstrate proficiency in performing a complete and problem-focused history and physical examination.

- Demonstrate competency in the technical skills needed to perform as a surgical and primary care PA.
- Demonstrate an ability to order and interpret laboratory tests, imaging, electrocardiograms, and other diagnostic studies utilized in primary care and surgery.
- Produce timely, accurate, and complete documentation of patient medical information.
- Demonstrate proficiency in CPR and ACLS management of acutely ill patients.
- Demonstrate knowledge of medical literature databases, literature review, clinical research designs, basic medical statistics, and interpretation of medical literature.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the PA profession, medical malpractice, medical practice guidelines, and medical ethics.
- Consider cultural and human rights issues, including religion, ethnicity/race, disability, special healthcare needs, socioeconomic level, social determinants of health, gender identity, and human sexuality, as students provide medical care to patients in clinical practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements in the PA profession.
- Develop clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

CLINICAL YEAR LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the clinical year curriculum, students will be able to perform the following tasks at the level of an entry-level PA in clinical practice:

- Demonstrate proficiency in obtaining and documenting patient encounters in various clinical settings, across the lifespan.
- Demonstrate proficiency in the technical and surgical skills required of an entry-level PA in clinical practice.
- Demonstrate an appropriate level of professional behavior, including a respectful and caring attitude toward patients and a willingness to function as a cooperative member of the healthcare team.
- Demonstrate the ability to utilize subjective and objective findings to formulate an appropriate differential diagnosis.
- Demonstrate the ability to select and interpret appropriate diagnostic studies to formulate a working diagnosis.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop a patient-centered treatment plan for common medical and surgical disorders, based on current guidelines and standards of care.
- Develop clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.
- Demonstrate an ability to interpret scientific literature and apply findings to the practice of evidence-based medicine.
- Adapt documentation, clinical decisions, and interventions to deliver timely, competent, and patient-centered care across varying practice settings and levels of disease acuity.
- Demonstrate efficient and adaptable practice across diverse healthcare delivery settings and systems relevant to the clinical specialty.

PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

- Medical Knowledge
 - Appropriately diagnose common medical and surgical disease states.
 - Appropriately manage common medical and surgical disease states.
 - Order and interpret diagnostic studies utilized in medicine and surgery.
 - Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
 - Effectively communicate information to patients and members of the healthcare team.
- Patient-Centered Care
 - Provide age-appropriate, patient-centered care, in a safe and effective manner.
 - Demonstrate mastery of knowledge and technical skills needed for an entry-level PA.
 - Appropriately apply medical literature to evidence-based decisions for patient care.
- Professionalism
 - Demonstrate a high level of professionalism, accountability, and integrity.

PA PROGRAM POLICIES

All policies included in this handbook apply to all students, principal/instructional faculty, and the Program Director, regardless of location or whether students are completing didactic or clinical-year courses.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

IMMUNIZATION AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

MSPAS students must comply with all SHP immunization and screening requirements, which includes background checks, drug screens, immunizations, and health clearance requirements described in Sections 1 and 2 of this handbook. In addition, MSPAS students must complete any required updates prior to the start of the clinical year. Students who do not complete these requirements by the deadline may be delayed from starting clinical rotations.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Fundamental tasks, behaviors, and abilities are necessary to successfully complete the academic and clinical requirements of the program, and to satisfy licensure/certification requirements. Students requesting disability accommodations must do so by submitting a disability accommodation request in writing to the [Office of Disability Support Services](#) (DSS). **Requests must be resubmitted each semester.**

MINIMAL TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The UAB PA program requires that all students demonstrate the technical skills needed to complete the entire program curriculum. These skills include the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, utilize computerized information technology, and possess the visual, auditory, and motor skills needed to evaluate and treat patients effectively.

Students must be able to meet the essential requirements of the MSPAS program outlined below, with or without reasonable accommodations. Students seeking accommodations should work through UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) as described in Section 1 of this handbook. The program will participate in the interactive accommodation process and will evaluate each request on an individualized basis while maintaining academic, technical, clinical, and patient-safety standards.

CRITICAL THINKING

Students must possess the intellectual capabilities required to complete the full curriculum and achieve the level of competence delineated by the faculty. Critical thinking requires the intellectual ability to measure, calculate, synthesize, and analyze a large and complex volume of medical and surgical information. Students in the program must also be able to perform applicable demonstrations and experiments in medical sciences.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Students must be able to utilize computerized information technology to access and manage on-line medical information, participate in computerized testing as required by the curriculum, conduct research, prepare multimedia presentations, and participate in the management of computerized patient records and assessments.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Students must be able to communicate clearly and effectively, to elicit and relay medical information.

OBSERVATION ABILITY

Students must be able to observe a patient during a physical exam and perform a wide range of technical skills while evaluating and managing patients.

AUDITORY AND TACTILE ABILITY

Students must have the ability to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, and percussion, as well as perform a wide range of technical procedures involved in the practice of medicine and surgery.

GROSS AND FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Students must be able to execute the physical movements required to maneuver in small places, calibrate and use equipment, position and move patients, and perform the technical procedures involved in the practice of medicine and surgery.

INTERPERSONAL ABILITY

Students must possess a wide range of interpersonal skills, including but not limited to: (1) the emotional health required for management of high stress situations while maintaining their full intellectual abilities; (2) the ability to exercise good judgment; (3) the ability to complete all assigned patient care responsibilities; (4) the ability to manage time (show up on time, begin and complete tasks on time); (5) the ability to develop a mature, sensitive, and effective relationship with medical colleagues, clinical and administrative staff, patients, and families; (6) the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and diffuse conflict; and (7) the ability to recognize their own emotional state and the emotional states of others, and engage with people in a professional manner.

PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (PAEA) COMPETENCIES FOR THE PA PROFESSION

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

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

Association of Physician Assistant Programs). The same four organizations updated and approved this document in 2012.

KNOWLEDGE FOR PRACTICE

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

- Demonstrate investigative and critical thinking in clinical situations.
- Access and interpret current and credible sources of medical information.
- Apply principles of epidemiology to identify health problems, risk factors, treatment strategies, resources, and disease prevention/health promotion efforts for individuals and populations.
- Discern among acute, chronic, and emergent disease states.
- Apply principles of clinical sciences to diagnose disease and utilize therapeutic decision-making, clinical problem-solving, and other evidence-based practice skills.
- Adhere to standards of care, and to relevant laws, policies, and regulations that govern the delivery of care in the United States.
- Consider cost-effectiveness when allocating resources for individual patient or population-based care.
- Work effectively and efficiently in various health care delivery settings and systems relevant to the PA's clinical specialty.
- Identify and address social determinants that affect access to care and deliver high-quality care in a value-based system.
- Participate in surveillance of community resources to determine if they are adequate to sustain and improve health.
- Utilize technological advancements that decrease costs, improve quality, and increase access to health care.

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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

- Establish meaningful therapeutic relationships with patients and families to ensure that patients' values and preferences are addressed, and that needs and goals are met to deliver person-centered care.
- Provide effective, equitable, understandable, respectful, quality, and culturally competent care that is responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.
- Communicate effectively to elicit and provide information.
- Accurately and adequately document medical information for clinical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.
- Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in all conversations, including challenging discussions about death, end of life, adverse events, bad news, disclosure of errors, and other sensitive topics.

- Demonstrate emotional resilience, stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.
- Understand the emotions, behaviors, and responses of others, which allows for effective interpersonal interactions.
- Recognize communication barriers and provide solutions.

PERSON-CENTERED CARE

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

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

INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

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

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

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS

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

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

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

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

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

- Advocate for administrative systems that capture the productivity and value of PA practice.

SOCIETY AND POPULATION HEALTH

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

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

ADMISSION WITH CONTINGENCIES

A student who has not completed either a Baccalaureate degree or the full complement of pre-requisite courses at the time of application and selection may be provisionally admitted to the program, contingent on successful completion of these courses by the first day of the fall semester of classes. Failure to do so will result in revoking the offer of admission to the student and/or dismissal from the PA program and the Graduate School.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT POLICY

Advanced placement is not permitted by the PA program. No student may omit or waive any of the required didactic year courses or clinical year rotations.

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The PA program does not grant advanced placement, nor is credit given for prior experiential learning or clinical experience. Additionally, credit is not offered for courses or prior experiential learning provided by another PA program.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

DIDACTIC CURRICULUM

The didactic phase of the curriculum consists of a total of 66 hours of required, in-person classes taught throughout the first 4 semesters of enrollment and includes both biological and clinical science courses which are outlined below. Please refer to [the course catalog for description of the courses](#).

FALL 1 – 18 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 601: Human Gross Anatomy (4 hours)
- PAS 602: Physiology (4 hours)

- PAS 605: Clinical Pathology (4 hours)
- PAS 610: Clinical Lab Medicine (3 hours)
- PAS 615: Introduction to the Profession (1 hour)
- CDS 505: Professional Skills Development (1 hour)
- GC 535: Medical Genetics Across the Lifespan (1 hour)

SPRING 1 – 16 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 603: Pharmacotherapeutics I (3 hours)
- PAS 606: Clinical Medicine I (6 hours)
- PAS 608: Surgical Disease I (3 hours)
- PAS 611: History and Physical Examination (3 hours)
- PAS 616: Electrocardiography (1 hour)

SUMMER 1 – 18 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 604: Pharmacotherapeutics II (3 hours)
- PAS 607: Clinical Medicine II (6 hours)
- PAS 609: Surgical Disease II (3 hours)
- PAS 613: Surgical Techniques (3 hours)
- PAS 618: Risk Management (1 hour)
- PAS 619: Fundamentals of Clinical Research (2 hours)

FALL 2 – 14 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 614: Applied Clinical and Technical Skills (2 hours)
- PAS 617: Applied Behavioral Medicine (3 hours)
- PAS 620: Analysis of Professional Literature (2 hours)
- PAS 633: Navigating Healthcare Delivery and Reimbursement Systems for Physician Associates (2 hours)
- PAS 634: Simulated Clinical Concepts (2 hours)
- PAS 635: Population-Based Approaches to Patient Care (2 hours)
- NTR 645: Advanced Nutrition for Healthcare Professionals (1 hour)

DIDACTIC COURSE PREREQUISITES

The PA program has a set (lock-step) course schedule for each semester. Enrollment in courses offered in each semester of the program requires successful completion of all courses offered in the preceding semester, with a final grade of “C” (70%) or better.

CLINICAL YEAR PREREQUISITES

To enter the clinical year, students must have successfully completed the didactic curriculum with a minimum final grade of a “C” (70%) in all PA didactic courses AND an overall 3.0 GPA in all PA program course work. No graduate school course work other than that obtained in the PA program will be considered and factored into the GPA. *Students will not be able to enter the clinical year on academic probation.*

Prior to starting the clinical curriculum, students must meet the following requirements:

- Maintain enrollment in a comprehensive health insurance program throughout the clinical year.
- Provide documentation that the following vaccines are current and up to date: MMR, Tdap, Hepatitis B, Varicella, meningococcal, and tuberculosis. [A complete list of immunization requirements can be found here.](#)
- Repeat the background check and drug screen. This MUST be completed by the end of the prior semester (fall term).
- Submit proof of a current BLS and ACLS Certification that does not expire until after graduation.
- Students will not be allowed to begin their clinical rotations until all of the above requirements have been met.

CLINICAL CURRICULUM

The clinical phase of the curriculum consists of a total of 49 hours of in-person clinical rotations and senior seminars taught throughout the final 3 semesters of enrollment. Below are required core and elective rotations, and an overview of the clinical curriculum.

REQUIRED CORE ROTATIONS

Seven, 4-week rotations are required in the following disciplines: Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Women's Health, Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and General Surgery.

REQUIRED ELECTIVE SURGICAL ROTATION

One, 4-week rotation is required in a surgical elective.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED ELECTIVE ROTATIONS

Three, 4-week rotations of the student's choice are allowed based on rotation availability. Possible elective rotations include but are not limited to an additional core rotation (at a different site or clinical setting), Orthopedics, Cardiovascular Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Neurosurgery, Trauma Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Urology, Inpatient Medicine, Dermatology, Oncology, Endocrinology, Neonatology, Cardiology, Palliative Medicine, or other approved specialty area. Of note, students who are enrolled in the dual degree MSPAS/MPH program will be required to complete their internship hours during their elective rotation.

SPRING 2 – 17 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 621: Clinical Service I (4 hours)
- PAS 622: Clinical Service II (4 hours)
- PAS 623: Clinical Service III (4 hours)
- PAS 624: Clinical Service IV (4 hours)
- PAS 643: Senior Seminar I (1 hour)

SUMMER 2 – 18 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 625: Clinical Service V (4 hours)
- PAS 626: Clinical Service VI (4 hours)

- PAS 627: Clinical Service VII (4 hours)
- PAS 628: Clinical Service VIII (4 hours)
- PAS 644: Senior Seminar II (1 hour)
- PAS 698: Presentation of Research Project (1 hour)

FALL 3 – 14 SEMESTER HOURS

- PAS 629: Clinical Service IX (4 hours)
- PAS 630: Clinical Service X (4 hours)
- PAS 631: Clinical Service XI (4 hours)
- PAS 645: Senior Seminar III (2 hours)

ADVISING AND MENTORING

The Director of Didactic Education (DDE) will assign a faculty advisor to all students upon matriculating into the program. Faculty advisors will serve in the role of advisor and mentor to students throughout the duration of the 27-months while enrolled in the program. If for any reason a faculty member is unable to continue to serve in this role, then students will be assigned a new advisor by the DDE.

The PA program follows the [UAB academic calendar](#). The final schedule for each class will be posted in the course syllabus, found in the course site in the learning management system (Canvas), on the first day of class for the semester.

STUDENT GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROGRAM

- To be an active participant in all learning activities and to seek out additional learning opportunities when appropriate.
- To assist fellow students, faculty, and preceptors by freely sharing personal knowledge and skills.
- To take responsibility for realizing your full potential as a student and medical professional.
- To develop a cooperative and constructive relationship with program faculty, students, clinical preceptors, and patients.
- To maintain the highest standards of personal behavior and ethical conduct.
- To follow all policies and procedures as outlined in syllabi, memos, and the student handbook.
- To follow all policies and procedures defined by the preceptor, the program, and the clinical site.
- To notify the program in a timely manner of any problem that has the potential of interfering with academic performance or functioning in didactic and clinical settings.
- To actively participate in rotational learning activities and seek out additional learning opportunities when appropriate.
- To schedule sufficient time to prepare for End-of-Rotation Exams (EOR) and the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE).

- To abide by the Physician Assistant Code of Ethics.
- To enhance and reinforce theoretical knowledge and practical medical skills through:
 - Utilization of appropriate reading and reference materials.
 - Attendance of Senior Seminars.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLINICAL PRECEPTORS DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

- Ensure attendance is timely.
- Attend clinical rotations as scheduled by the preceptor, in addition to grand rounds, lectures, and conferences, if made available to the student.
- Obtain detailed histories and physical exams, develop a differential diagnosis, formulate an assessment and plan through discussion with the preceptor, and present findings through oral presentations and document findings in the EMR.
- Contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the preceptor's clinical practice by performing all delegated tasks in a timely and competent manner.
- Display professional behavior that enhances the preceptor's practice and reflects positively on the PA profession.
- Inform preceptors in a timely manner of individual needs, concerns, or problems that have the potential of interfering with the delivery of patient care or the effectiveness of the preceptor's practice.
- Maintain an open line of communication and meaningful dialogue between fellow students, program faculty, preceptors, and members of the medical team.
- Be sensitive to the demands placed on clinical preceptors, including complicated aspects of patient care, continuing education, community service, research, and the training of a wide range of students.
- To refine history and physical examination skills, as specified by the clinical preceptor.
- To enter pertinent data for each assigned patient daily, in the patient logging system.
- To enhance and reinforce theoretical knowledge and practical medical skills through:
 - Utilization of appropriate reading and reference materials.
 - Attendance at grand rounds, medical conferences, and other related clinical seminars.

PROGRAM GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

- Orient preceptors and students to the policies and procedures of the clinical year.
- Develop and maintain clinical rotation sites that afford students a quality educational experience.
- Evaluate student rotations through regular site visits and open communication with clinical preceptors.
- Provide malpractice coverage for students during rotations.
- Attempt to anticipate student problems before they arise, and provide support, guidance, and encouragement to students throughout the clinical year.
- Provide seminars that augment clinical experiences and increase the student's medical and surgical knowledge and technical skills.

POLICIES AND STANDARDS

CLASSROOM AND LAB SUPPLIES

Students are required to purchase medical equipment for use during the curriculum. The program has a limited number of instruments, including stethoscopes, ophthalmoscopes, scissors, hemostats, and surgical instruments available for loan should a need arise. Students will be liable for the cost of replacing loaned instruments if they are lost or stolen.

COURSE SYLLABI

The PA program follows the UAB academic calendar. The final schedule for each class will be posted in the course syllabus, found in the learning management system (Canvas), on the first day of class for the semester.

DIDACTIC YEAR ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Students are expected to follow the SHP and UAB attendance policies described in Sections 1 and 2 of this handbook. Because the MSPAS curriculum includes required didactic, laboratory, simulation, and clinical experiences, the program has additional attendance expectations outlined below.

- Attendance is mandatory for all classes, lectures, labs, program-related seminars, clinical practice, internships, etc.
- For each unexcused absence, there will be a 1% overall grade reduction for that course or lab per absence.
- Two tardies will equal one unexcused absence. A tardy is considered to be more than 15 min late to class.
- In instances resulting in an unavoidable absence or unforeseen event (car accident or breakdown, injury), students are expected to inform the course instructor in advance of the absence or at the earliest possible time.
- The program does not provide a virtual attendance option for absences.

PERSONAL DAY POLICY FOR THE DIDACTIC YEAR

Each student will be allotted 1 personal day per didactic semester, totaling 4 personal days for the didactic curriculum. The following policies govern the use of didactic-year personal days:

- Student must [submit a Personal Day Form on or before the day of absence via Adobe Sign](#) and check all course instructors teaching on the day of absence.
- Students are required to submit the form by 5 p.m. the day prior to the day of absence, if possible.
- **No more than 1 day can be used during a single didactic semester.**
- Any request for a half-day will be counted as a full day.
- Students are free to utilize personal days at their discretion. However, personal days are not allowed when the following are scheduled:
 - First day in which the course is taught at the start of the semester.
 - Quiz, test, lab, case study, group discussion, TBL activity, simulation, SPE, OSCE.

- If a personal day is submitted when any of the above is scheduled, the request will be denied, and the student will receive a zero (0) for any assignments/assessments that are missed on the date of absence.
- Students are not expected to disclose the reason for which a personal day is being submitted.
- If a student chooses to use a personal day, no make-up days or make-up work will be required.
- If a student chooses to use a personal day, no accommodation will be made for students to access the lecture virtually.
- Once 4 personal days have been utilized, subsequent absences may be deemed an “unexcused absence.” Per the PA Program Attendance Policy, a students’ overall grade will be reduced by 1%, for each unexcused absence (see didactic course syllabi).
- Students are not required to utilize a personal day for any unexpected illnesses, or an excused absence identified in the syllabus (see PA Program Attendance Policy) and Student Handbook.
- Students found to be in violation of any policy listed above will forfeit the remainder of their personal days.

LEAVE POLICY

Didactic year students will be eligible for personal leave in the event of individual illness, death or severe illness in an immediate family member, jury duty, military duty, or a similar personal crisis resulting in more than three consecutive days of absence. Except for an unexpected personal illness, students must obtain prior written approval for personal leave from the Program Director and the course instructor. Students requesting a leave of absence must meet with the Program Director to discuss the leave. Students must complete a “Request for Personal Leave of Absence” form and when meeting with the Program Director, develop a leave plan to be signed by both parties. A copy of the signed form and the signed leave plan will become part of the student file.

The following rules apply to personal leave, remediation after personal leave, and withdrawal from the program:

- Students may be granted up to one week of personal leave.
- Absences greater than one week will require remediation and may require withdrawal from the term.
- Remediation should be completed within the same semester. If this is not possible, an “I” will be reported to indicate the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all course requirements. Students who receive an “I” for a course should note that in many instances, the student will not be allowed to register for the following semester’s courses because many courses in the curriculum have pre-requisites that require successful completion of the previous semester’s courses. Students should also note that because of the limited resources of the program, many courses cannot be repeated until the following year when they are normally scheduled. Students are referred to the “Didactic Course Pre-

requisites” section of the handbook for a listing of course pre-requisites. Students who return to the program after remediation will have to demonstrate continued proficiency.

- To be re-admitted after dismissal from the PA program, the student will be required to register as a new student and will be required to complete the entire curriculum from the beginning.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Students are discouraged from working during the didactic year and are PROHIBITED from working during the clinical year. Working clinically under a current medical license while completing clinical rotations as a PA student is deemed a conflict of interest.

Any student on academic probation will be advised to refrain from working during the didactic year to ensure academic success. Students are not required to work for the program. Additionally, students must not substitute for or function as instructional faculty or clinical and administrative staff.

STUDENT RECORDS POLICY

The PA program maintains electronic student records indefinitely.

STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES

Wellness promotion is an essential component of the UAB MSPAS Program, and students are encouraged to utilize Blazer Well, located within the Student Health and Wellness Center. The mission of wellness promotion is to provide students and the UAB campus with programs, education, and resources toward personal wellness. [Wellness Promotion](#) is committed to equipping and empowering students with the information and resources needed to achieve healthy and balanced lifestyles, through the following:

- Campus and community outreach engagement
- Peer education
- Prevention, awareness, education, and training for interpersonal violence and alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Promote student self-care
- Collect student health data and assess student needs
- Act as a referral source to other campus services

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC PROGRESS

GRADING OF ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS DURING THE DIDACTIC YEAR

Students must successfully complete all PA courses with a final grade of “C” (70%) or better AND must maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0. The PA program utilizes the following grading scale for all didactic courses:

A = 90 - 100%

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79%

F = ≤ 69%

The program does not award a grade of “D”

GRADING OF ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

All clinical-year courses (Clinical Services and Senior Seminar) utilize a “P/F” (pass/fail) grading scheme. The grading scheme assigned to all assignments scheduled during the clinical year is outlined in the Clinical Services Syllabi.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION, PROBATION, DISMISSAL, AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

The PA program requires students to maintain good academic standing to progress in the curriculum. Good academic standing is defined as the following:

- Achieving a final grade of “C” (70%) or better in all didactic coursework within the MSPAS program **AND**
- Maintaining an overall cumulative GPA of ≥ 3.0 in the MSPAS program **AND**
- Earn ≤ 4 final course grades of “C” during the didactic phase of the MSPAS program **AND**
- Earn a passing grade in all clinical-year courses

Students who do not meet the academic performance standards outlined above will be required to complete either of the following processes outlined below.

REMEDIATION POLICY FOR THE DIDACTIC YEAR

During the didactic year, failure to obtain at least a “C” (70%) on all coursework, including examinations or assignments, will necessitate the process of remediation. The goal of remediation is to assist students in identifying areas of weakness or deficiencies in knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors, and provide a structured process in which these deficiencies can be addressed, prior to reassessment of the remediated material. Upon failure of an examination or assignment, students are required to meet with the course director to review material that was missed. Once identified, various measures including exam review, counseling, review of additional resources, and tutoring will be utilized to support the student as they work diligently to overcome the noted deficiencies. Upon completion of the remediation assignment/activity, the student is expected to meet with the course director for a second time to reassess the subject matter, skills, or behaviors intervened. During this meeting, the student is expected to demonstrate competency of the material in written or oral format. The failed grade will be recorded in the grade book. The remediation assignment will be documented; however, it will not be graded.

REMEDIATION POLICY FOR THE CLINICAL YEAR

Failure of an end-of-rotation exam: A student who does not achieve a passing score on an initial end-of-rotation examination will be required to complete a repeat examination. If a student earns a passing score on the repeat examination, then the student will pass the clinical rotation and may progress in the program. If the student also fails the repeat end-of-rotation examination, the student will receive a failing grade for that clinical rotation and will be required to successfully repeat the rotation at a later date. If the student fails the initial and repeat end-of-

rotation examinations for another clinical rotation, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Failure of a clinical rotation: Students who fail a clinical rotation are required to repeat the rotation. Students are allowed to repeat one failed rotation in this manner. Failure of a second rotation will result in dismissal from the program.

If a student exhibits substantive clinical deficiencies during any rotation, the student will be withdrawn from the rotation and will be required to complete an additional course titled “Special Topics” to remediate the specific clinical deficiencies. The student must pass this intensive review course conducted by the PA faculty to return to their clinical rotations.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student who fails to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 during the didactic year will be placed on academic probation. The student must re-establish good academic standing by bringing their overall GPA to at least 3.0 within two consecutive semesters. Students who do not accomplish this level of performance will be dismissed from the program. Additionally, once a student returns to good academic standing, they must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 for the remainder of the didactic curriculum.

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required to progress to the clinical year. Students who do not accomplish this level of performance prior to starting the clinical year will be dismissed from the program.

COURSE FAILURE AND COMPETENCY EXAMS

Students who earn a final grade of < 60% in any didactic course will be dismissed from the program due to failure of a course. If a student receives more than one “F” at any time during the didactic curriculum or fails two rotations during the clinical curriculum, they will be dismissed from the program, regardless of the student’s overall GPA. The Program Director will send an official letter notifying the student and Graduate School of their dismissal, and a copy will become part of the student's file.

Students who earn **a final course grade** of 60 - 69% will be allowed to take a competency exam within 2 weeks after the course ends [this may necessitate an “I” (incomplete) in the course]. Content of the competency examination will be at the discretion of the course instructor. If a student receives a grade of 70% or higher on the competency exam, he/she will then receive the lowest possible passing grade for the course (70% = C). Students who do not pass the competency exam will be dismissed from the program. *Students will not be permitted to take more than 2 competency exams during the didactic curriculum, which includes the initial fall, spring, and summer semesters of the didactic year.*

DECELERATION

The MSPAS program does not provide academic deceleration as a component of academic intervention or remediation.

DISMISSAL

Students may be dismissed from the PA program for academic and/or nonacademic misconduct, or for failure to make satisfactory academic progress. The Program Director will send an official letter notifying the student and Graduate School of their dismissal, and a copy will become part of the student's file.

WITHDRAWAL

A student who wishes to withdraw from the program must notify the Program Director before the withdrawal is officially made. The student must submit a written statement in the form of an official business letter, which will be placed in the student's file. The statement must include the intent to withdraw from the program, including an effective date of withdrawal. Additionally, the student must follow the UAB withdrawal process and provide the necessary documentation required by the University and Graduate School. Lastly, the student must schedule a meeting with the Program Director to discuss their plan to withdraw and the possibility of re-enrollment. Once the student meets with the Program Director, the official UAB withdrawal is made by the student through [UAB One Stop Student Services](#).

RE-ENROLLMENT AFTER FULL-TERM OR MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL

Students **in good academic standing** who voluntarily withdraw from the program for any reason may be considered for re-enrollment. If a student in good academic standing is given the opportunity to re-enroll, *they will be required to restart the program with the next cohort the following year*. This will require students to register for courses taken during the previous year. In this case, both grades will be averaged on the student's transcript.

Students **on academic probation** who voluntarily withdraw from the program for any reason will not be considered for re-enrollment.

PROFESSIONALISM EXPECTATIONS

Professional skills and attitudes are essential components of the UAB MSPAS Program. In preparation for clinical practice, students are expected to meet the following professionalism standards set forth by the program:

- Attend class and be attentive, engaged, and respectful.
- Be on time for all commitments (class, clinics, appointments, etc.).
- Thoughtfully complete and submit all assignments by the due date.
- Use proper grammar in written and oral assignments.
- Use proper grammar and email etiquette in all emails to faculty, clinics, classmates, etc. Do not use "text speak."
- Present an appearance that reflects a professional image.
- Be courteous in the use of electronic devices: pagers, cell phones, and laptops. Your device should be in silent/vibration mode when in lecture, lab, and clinic.
- Treat individuals with respect, including while using social media. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated on social media or within the classroom.
- Comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

- Profanity is not allowed in any professional setting.
- Use confidential information responsibly and do not violate a patient's rights.
- Acknowledge and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.
- Conduct and present yourself in such a manner that reflects the high professional standard set-forth by the Department of Clinical & Diagnostic Sciences and the School of Health Professions.

Professional conduct will be assessed at the completion of each semester during the didactic year, utilizing the Professional Performance Evaluation Form below. Professionalism during the clinical year will be assessed utilizing the Preceptor Evaluation.

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM

Professional skills and attitudes are essential components of the UAB MSPAS Program. During the didactic curriculum, professionalism is evaluated upon completion of each term utilizing the Professionalism Performance Evaluation, which assesses the categories listed below:

- Maintains professionalism in dress and attire in all settings.
- Attends required activities and arrives on time.
- Demonstrates reliability, dependability and completes tasks fully and on time.
- Conducts self in an ethical manner; demonstrates honesty, consideration and respect towards faculty, staff, and peers.
- Displays a positive attitude, enthusiasm, and attentiveness in all academic settings.
- Displays positive behavior and maintains composure during adverse interactions or situations.
- Communicates effectively, and in a professional manner (including verbal and written forms).
- Demonstrates good interpersonal skills, cooperation, and engagement in team settings.
- Demonstrates self-awareness and accepts responsibility for educational challenges and self-learning.
- Demonstrates the ability to receive, integrate, and utilize feedback from faculty and instructors.
- Recognizes and maintains appropriate boundaries with faculty.
- Relates to peers, professors, and others in a manner consistent with stated professional standards outlined in the Student Handbook.
- Demonstrates cooperation and collaboration when working with faculty and those in positions of authority.
- Demonstrates appropriate self-control (such as anger control, impulse control) in interpersonal relationships with faculty, peers, and others.
- Respects cultural or personal differences when interacting with peers, including those related to age, sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.

Students are expected to "consistently" meet the above expectations. If a student receives an unsatisfactory response in any category, they will be required to complete an individualized remediation action plan that aligns with the particular concern.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Merriam-Webster defines social media as forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). Social media is commonly thought of as a group of internet-based applications that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Examples of social media networks include but are not limited to X, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, podcasts, and blogs.

Students enrolled in the UAB MSPAS Program are expected to adhere to the standards of conduct listed below, in both the didactic and clinical settings of their academic experience. Policies respecting conflict of interest, as well as applicable policies and guidelines for interacting with other students, faculty, patients, preceptors, etc., apply to online activities in the context of social media platforms, just as they do in personal face-to-face interactions. Students must take full responsibility for what they post to social media sites and are reminded that they must represent the UAB PA program in a respectful and ethical manner, whether on campus, in the community, or at clinical practice sites.

It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the following guidelines, and they are expected to adhere to these guidelines throughout the didactic and clinical year.

- When posting content to social media sites, students must use good judgment and respect privacy laws.
- Do not include confidential information about the University, including faculty, staff, other students, or patients, when posting content.
- Do not post content that is unlawful, including material that is discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, threatening, or in violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws.
- Representing your personal opinions as being endorsed by the University or any of its partners is strictly prohibited.
- UAB, nor the PA program logo or name, may be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.
 - Should the UAB or PA program logo be present in any social media content, the content should reflect the ethics and standards that are upheld by the program, the University, and the PA profession.
- Refrain from posting information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations.
 - If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, you should contact your faculty advisor or the Program Director for clarification.
- It is strongly advised to avoid participation in activities or special interest groups that may cause harm or have a negative impact on the reputation of UAB and the services it offers.
 - If you have questions regarding activities that may potentially violate this policy, please seek advisement from your faculty advisor or the Program Director.
- Students should refrain from perusing through social media sites during didactic instruction or while completing clinical rotation hours.

- Personal identifiable information that can be used to locate someone offline, including but not limited to photographs, specific locations, patient identifiers, job setting or ID badges, phone numbers, home or local addresses, birth dates, and e-mail addresses, should not be posted.
- To ensure student safety and protect their liability while rotating at clinical practice sites, it is recommended that students do not post information such as the following:
 - “I will be out of town ...” (Posts such as these notify others when your home will be vacant, leaving your residence vulnerable).
 - “I’m so tired I can’t keep my eyes open ...,” etc. (If a patient were to be injured during your care and the above post was discovered, serious legal ramifications may ensue, and you could also potentially be dismissed from the PA program secondary to non-academic misconduct).
- Students should refrain from initiating or accepting friend requests through social media for patients, preceptors, or caregivers, except under preexisting circumstances in which a friendship pre-dates the professional relationship. Either of these activities has the potential to negatively impact the student’s grade and can obscure the barrier between personal and professional boundaries.
- Students should refrain from sending text messages to patients. Texting is an abbreviated form of communication with great potential for miscommunication. Additionally, patient confidentiality may be compromised in this setting.
- Do not disclose confidential information about any clinical rotation site, its professionals, or patients. It is also unprofessional to discuss personal opinions about a clinical site and/or its patients and staff.
- Under current law, it is forbidden to disclose any personal health information, including images of patients, or discuss patient cases utilizing any social network or digital media.
 - Such conduct would be in direct violation of HIPAA guidelines.
 - All students receive HIPAA training while enrolled in the University and through their clinical practice sites as well.
- We recommend being respectful and professional in your relationships with the clinical practice sites in which you rotate. This includes employees, medical suppliers, other healthcare professionals, community health centers, community partners, alumni, patients, and their families.
- When using social media, conduct and present yourself in such a manner that reflects the high professional standards set forth by the PA Program.

Please be mindful that whatever you post as a student will define how the outside world “perceives” you to be in clinical practice. Employers and hospitals routinely use social media to research new candidates during the hiring and credentialing process. Professionalism is such an important aspect of one’s career, and it only takes one misguided post using bad judgement and a single action from a student to ruin their own reputation, and that of the PA program as well.

Students are expected to follow all guidelines listed above, while posting on social media. Violation of any of the guidelines noted above may result in a verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or dismissal from the program. Interpretation of the above guidelines is subjective

in nature. As such, the level of recourse will be at the discretion of the PA program faculty and Program Director. Remember, your posts are available for **EVERYONE** to see, **PERMANENTLY!**

DRESS CODE DURING THE DIDACTIC YEAR

Students will be required to dress in either business casual attire or scrubs, unless otherwise advised by the faculty.

DRESS CODE DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

Students will be required to dress in either business casual attire or scrubs, unless otherwise advised by the clinical preceptor.

PA PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Physician Associate Studies students must abide by the [UAB Academic Integrity Code](#) and the [UAB Student Conduct Code](#). Violations of either code will be reported and managed using standard University procedures.

Policies and procedures set forth by the Physician Associate Studies Program are intended to facilitate learning and provide a working relationship based on trust, self-discipline, and respect for the rights of others. The program utilizes a "progressive disciplinary" process to address students found to be in violation of our programmatic policies. However, the progressive nature of this process may be adjusted at the discretion of the program based on the severity and context of the infraction, the level of safety concerns, and repeated concerns. The goal of progressive discipline is to document efforts made by the program to address efforts made to improve student performance in areas of concern, while ensuring our processes are applied consistently with UAB, SHP, Graduate School, and program-defined policies. The following is a summary of our progressive disciplinary process:

Oral Warning

An oral warning is generally the first step in the Program's disciplinary process and may be issued by a Course Director, Director of Academic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Program Director, or clinical preceptor for a first occurrence of substandard performance, poor class attendance, or other violations of professional expectations.

An oral warning is intended to notify the student of the identified concern, reinforce applicable Program expectations, and provide the student with an opportunity to correct the performance, attendance, conduct, or professionalism issue before further disciplinary action is considered.

The individual issuing the oral warning will document the warning and the circumstances giving rise to it. Documentation of oral warnings will be maintained in the student's Program file. Such documentation constitutes an official record of the University of Alabama at Birmingham and may become part of the student's official UAB record when determined necessary or appropriate.

Depending on the nature or severity of the conduct, the Program may proceed directly to a written warning, suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary action without first issuing an oral warning, as provided elsewhere in this policy.

Written Warning

A written warning may be issued by a Course Director, Director of Academic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Program Director, or clinical preceptor for substandard performance, poor class attendance, or repeated violations of professional expectations that continue after an initial oral warning.

At the discretion of the Program Director, Associate Program Director, and PA principal faculty, a written warning may be issued without a preceding oral warning for first-time gross misconduct or a major offense deemed sufficiently serious to warrant immediate written disciplinary action.

All written warnings will be addressed to the student in memorandum format and will clearly identify the performance, attendance, conduct, or professionalism concern(s) giving rise to the warning. If the student previously received an oral warning related to the matter, the prior oral warning will be referenced in the written warning.

The student will be asked to sign the written warning to acknowledge receipt. The student's signature indicates acknowledgment of receipt and does not necessarily indicate agreement with the contents of the warning. A signed copy of the written warning will be placed in the student's official, permanent record. If the student refuses to sign the written warning, the refusal will be documented, and the unsigned warning will be placed in the student's official record.

A student who receives more than one written warning within a 24-month period may be subject to academic dismissal from the Program, regardless of whether a prior warning resulted in suspension. In such circumstances, the Program may proceed directly to consideration of academic dismissal without completing the remaining progressive steps of the disciplinary process.

Suspension

Continued substandard performance, poor class attendance, insubordination, or other violations of professional expectations may result in suspension from the Program.

Suspension may be imposed following the first written warning for a major offense. Suspension may also be imposed as the initial disciplinary action, without a preceding oral or written warning, when the infraction is deemed sufficiently serious to warrant immediate action, at the discretion of the Program Director, Associate Program Director, and PA principal faculty.

Serious infractions include, but are not limited to, conduct or circumstances that may negatively affect patient safety; compromise the safety of students, faculty, staff, patients, or others within a clinical or educational setting; violate established professional or clinical practice standards; or

result in the student's inability to meet the requirements or standards necessary for placement or continued participation at clinical rotation sites.

All disciplinary suspensions will be communicated to the student in writing by the Program. The written notice will identify the basis for the suspension and will be placed in the student's official record.

The Program may also place a student on **administrative suspension** when additional time is necessary to gather or review information related to an alleged violation, safety concern, or other circumstances before determining whether disciplinary action is warranted and, if so, the appropriate action. Administrative suspension is an interim measure and does not, by itself, constitute a determination of misconduct or disciplinary action. The student will be notified in writing of the administrative suspension and any applicable restrictions or requirements while the matter is under review.

Dismissal

Continued substandard performance, insubordination, misconduct, serious violations of professional expectations, or behavioral concerns that persist after prior disciplinary action may result in dismissal from the Physician Associate Studies Program.

Dismissal may also be considered when the nature or severity of a student's conduct warrants such action, regardless of whether all preceding steps in the disciplinary process have been completed. A student who receives more than one written warning within a 24-month period may be subject to dismissal from the Program without proceeding through the remaining progressive steps of the disciplinary process, including suspension.

A recommendation for dismissal will be made only after careful review of the circumstances, including the nature and severity of the concern, relevant documentation, prior disciplinary action when applicable, and other pertinent information. The Program Director and Department Chair must approve the recommendation for dismissal.

The student will be notified of the dismissal in writing, including the basis for the decision and information regarding the applicable appeal process. Documentation of the dismissal will be maintained in accordance with University and Program policies.

A student may appeal a dismissal in accordance with the [SHP Dismissal Appeals Process](#).

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Students are encouraged to resolve concerns at the most appropriate level when possible. Program-related concerns may be discussed with the course instructor, faculty advisor, Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Associate Program Director, or Program Director, depending on the nature of the concern. Students may also use the [UAB Complaint Policy](#) described in Section 2. Concerns involving harassment, discrimination, Title IX, safety, or student conduct should be reported through the appropriate UAB reporting process.

COMPLAINT POLICY

UAB is committed to reviewing and responding to student complaints appropriately. A complaint is an expression of discontent based on the result of behavior or circumstances that the student believes are unjust, unsafe, inequitable, or create an unnecessary hardship. Students who attempt to resolve issues directly with the appropriate parties and are not satisfied may [file formal written complaints here](#).

REPORTING HARASSMENT

The UAB Physician Associate Studies Program is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If a student believes they have experienced any form of harassment, the program encourages them to [complete the online reporting form](#). To ensure confidentiality and proper action without retaliation, forms will be directed to the UAB School of Health Profession's Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs.

SECTION 4 –PROGRAM INFORMATION REGARDING THE CLINICAL YEAR

GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION FOR CLINICAL PRECEPTORS

One of the most important components of the Physician Associate Studies Program is the education provided by volunteer clinical preceptors. Participation as a clinical preceptor is greatly appreciated and essential to the education and training of a PA student.

The purpose of the clinical year is to bring students into contact with knowledgeable practitioners who are willing to help them learn the art and science of surgery and medical care through a direct, “hands-on” approach. Preceptors are encouraged to review the following information and guidelines concerning aspects of clinical education and evaluation.

PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Orient students at the onset of the rotation with practice/facility policies and review your expectations of the student and rotation-specific objectives provided by the PA program.
- Supervise, demonstrate, teach, and observe clinical activities to aid in the development of clinical skills and ensure proper patient care.
- Provide students with an appropriate learning environment in which they will have a variety of patient encounters and learning experiences.
- Direct students toward patients with problems and illnesses common to the community and within the realm of PA practice.
- Delegate increasing levels of responsibility for clinical assessment and management as appropriate to the student’s experience and expertise.
- Participate in the evaluation of clinical skills and medical knowledge through the following:
 - Direct supervision, observation, and teaching in the clinical setting.
 - Evaluation of both oral presentations and written documentation.
 - Assignment of outside readings and research to promote further learning.
- Provide ongoing, constructive feedback to the student regarding their clinical performance.
- Complete a final evaluation of the student’s performance and promptly return the end-of-rotation evaluations to the program.
- Dialogue with faculty during site visits to evaluate student progress and promptly notify the PA program of any circumstances that might interfere with the accomplishment of the above goals or diminish the overall training experience.
- Avoid placing students in a position of authority or responsibility that exceeds their level of knowledge or skill.

CLINICAL YEAR SCHEDULE

The clinical year is comprised of 44 weeks of clinical rotations, including 28 weeks of required general medicine rotations, 8 weeks of required surgical rotations (4 weeks of general surgery and 4 weeks of a surgical elective), and 8 weeks of additional elective rotations. The clinical year schedules are outlined below.

Please note that rotation #8 (PA 628) is divided between the summer and fall semesters.

2026 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR – SPRING SEMESTER

- Rotation 1: PAS 621, January 12 – February 6
- Rotation 2: PAS 622, February 9 – March 6
- Rotation 3: PAS 623, March 9 – April 3
- Rotation 4: PAS 624, April 6 – May 1

2026 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR – SUMMER SEMESTER

- Rotation 5: PAS 625, May 11 – June 5
- Rotation 6: PAS 626, June 8 – July 3
- Rotation 7: PAS 627, July 6 – July 31
- Rotation 8: PAS 628, August 3 – August 28 (summer and fall semesters)

2026 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR – FALL SEMESTER

- Rotation 8: PAS 628, August 3 – August 28 (summer and fall semesters)
- Rotation 9: PAS 629, September 7 – October 2
- Rotation 10: PAS 630, October 5 – October 30
- Rotation 11: PAS 631, November 2 – November 27

2027 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR – SPRING SEMESTER

- Rotation 1: PAS 621, January 11 – February 5
- Rotation 2: PAS 622, February 8 – March 5
- Rotation 3: PAS 623, March 8 – April 2
- Rotation 4: PAS 624, April 5 – April 30

2027 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR – SUMMER SEMESTER

- Rotation 5: PAS 625, May 10 – June 4
- Rotation 6: PAS 626, June 7 – July 2
- Rotation 7: PAS 627, July 5 – July 30
- Rotation 8: PAS 628, August 2 – August 27 (summer and fall semesters)

2027 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR – FALL SEMESTER

- Rotation 8: PAS 628, August 2 – August 27 (summer and fall semesters)
- Rotation 9: PAS 629, September 6 – October 1
- Rotation 10: PAS 630, October 4 – October 29
- Rotation 11: PAS 631, November 1 – November 26

ASSIGNMENT OF CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Prior to beginning the clinical year, students will be given an opportunity to submit their preference for elective clinical rotations. The PA program reserves the right to approve or disapprove of any requested rotation. Once a tentative schedule has been established, students will be given an opportunity to request two changes prior to finalizing the rotation schedule. Requests for change will be granted or rejected based on preceptor availability, program needs, and rotation availability. *The program maintains the right to make rotation changes, when necessary, in response to unexpected situations.*

Although an effort will be made to solicit student volunteers for out-of-town or out-of-state rotations, students should be aware that they may be required to travel to distant rotation sites when the clinical schedule requires it. *In this instance, students may incur additional housing and travel expenses.*

Students are prohibited from completing a clinical rotation at a prior employment site. Per accreditation Standards, students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors.

REQUESTS FOR ROTATION CHANGES

Requests for rotations changes will be determined by the following policies:

- Students may make a request for up to two changes after the first draft is shared with the class.
- Approval of changes is ultimately at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education.
- Students will have three days to make changes. After the three-day period, clinical changes will be made by the Director of Clinical Education (if the change is available) and the final schedule will be published.
- No requested changes will occur after the final clinical schedule is published, unless approved by the Director of Clinical Education.

CLINICAL ROTATION REASSIGNMENT

The Director of Clinical Education and program faculty carefully screens all clinical preceptors utilized by the program. Unfortunately, this process cannot predict whether a student and preceptor will experience personality problems and an inability to work together. If a personality concern should arise (ex. personality differences, offensive interactions, or socio-cultural conflicts), a student may request reassignment to another rotation site. When this occurs, the Director of Clinical Education and the Program Director or Associate Program Director will evaluate the request and determine if the student should be reassigned or be required to complete the rotation at the current site.

If a student is granted reassignment to another site, but the rotation schedule does not allow for an alternate preceptor or site, *the student will be given a grade of incomplete ("I") and will be required to complete the rotation requirements at the end of the clinical year.* In this situation, the student will not be responsible for additional tuition costs. However, this may result in a delay in program completion and graduation.

USE OF OUTSIDE ROTATIONS

At the program's discretion, students may submit requests to complete an "outside elective rotation" with a preceptor who is not affiliated with the program. Under these circumstances, the following rules will apply:

- Students are only allowed to schedule **one** outside rotation during the clinical year.
- The program reserves the right to deny any request for an outside rotation.
- Outside rotations are **only** permitted in rotations 3-9 of the clinical year.
- Outside rotations are restricted to elective rotations only.

Once the outside rotation has been approved, the program will ensure that the preceptor is on-boarded utilizing our program-specific processes, and an affiliation agreement is completed for the preceptor and clinical practice site.

Students who elect to complete an "outside elective rotation" will be responsible for completing and submitting all required paperwork for that rotation, which includes:

- Hospital credentialing requirements.
- Verification of student immunizations.
- Verification of instruction in universal precautions and blood-borne pathogens.
- Verification of CPR/ACLS training.

All required paperwork must be completed at least **two full clinical rotations prior** to the scheduled outside rotation. Example: If the student's rotation is in rotation 7, the signed paperwork is due on the last day of rotation 4. Failure to complete this requirement will result in a denial of permission. If this occurs, another rotation will be assigned, or the student will have to "sit out" the month and complete the elective rotation in the month following graduation (the student will be responsible for additional tuition in this situation). *Students are responsible for finding their own housing and paying for additional expenses incurred while attending the "outside rotation."*

While attending an "outside rotation," students are responsible for completing all required coursework.

CLINICAL YEAR PRINCIPLES AND RULES

Students are guests of each rotation site and should create a positive impression of themselves, the program, and the PA profession. Discretion and professional behavior are required. Student interactions should be courteous and respectful to all. All student evaluation forms contain "Professional Manner" objectives that **must** be met to successfully complete the rotation. Included are objectives in truthfulness, punctuality, dependability, proper patient rapport, good professional relations, and awareness of professional limitations. *An unsatisfactory grade ("U") in any of these objectives will result in a failing grade for the rotation and possible dismissal from the program.*

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Release of student information to prospective employers or licensing agencies will require written authorization from the student, in accordance with applicable UAB policies and federal privacy requirements. Additionally, students are required to sign a "Release of Information Form" that will be placed in their file.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Liability insurance is provided to all clinical year students through the University of Alabama at Birmingham Professional Liability Trust Fund. Additional liability insurance may be obtained through the UAB Office of Risk Management and Insurance. For more information about the insurance policy call (205) 934-5382.

You can [email University Risk Management to request verification of insurance coverage](#). Please note, we do not maintain claim history information on students.

ROTATION SCHEDULE

- Students are required to submit their rotation schedule to the Director of Clinical Education by the end of the first week of each rotation.
- Students should contact the preceptor prior to the start of every rotation. This should occur approximately 1 week prior to the start of the rotation.
- On the first day of the rotation, students should meet with the preceptor to determine the rotation schedule and duties. Rotation objectives should be reviewed at this time, and mutual expectations are discussed. This is the student's responsibility.
- Generally, students should adhere to the same schedule as the preceptor. **However, no less than 40 hours and no more than 70 hours of clinical work per week is allowed.** Exceptions may occur during the rotation. If this occurs, the student should contact the Director of Clinical Education.
- **For the Emergency Room rotation**, a minimum of 160 hours must be worked. The students' schedule **MUST** include a combination of weeknight shifts (11p-7a or 7p-7a), weekend night shifts (Fri, Sat, and Sun from 11p-7a or 7p-7a), and evening shifts (3-11p). To ensure each student has an adequate combination of the above-mentioned shifts, you **MUST** submit your rotation schedule to the Director of Clinical Education by the end of the first week of the rotation. If the student's schedule does not reflect an adequate combination of shifts, the Director of Clinical Education will contact the facility to request a change in the student's schedule.

EXPECTED CONDUCT

- Students should acquaint clinic staff and hospital officials of their schedule and expected duties. The preceptor will provide information about the degree to which this procedure is necessary.

- Students should be actively engaged in clinical duties by the second week of the rotation. Failure to become actively engaged by the second week should prompt a call to the Director of Clinical Education for advice.
- Students must work under the direct supervision of a licensed Physician, Physician Associate, Nurse Practitioner, or Nurse Mid-wife in all clinical settings.
- Students are not allowed to independently evaluate patients, establish a diagnosis, order laboratory or special studies, or carry-out treatment plans without the direct supervision or oversight of their preceptor. No patient should be discharged without consultation with the preceptor.
- Students are prohibited from receiving compensation for the services they provide during their rotations.
- Students are prohibited to represent themselves as employees of the facility during their clinical year.
- PA students do not work for the program in any capacity.
- Students cannot be used as a substitute for clinical or administrative staff in the program office or at clinical sites.
- Students cannot be used as medical scribes at any clinical site.
- *The program has a strict policy against students being employed during their clinical year; this is **PROHIBITED** per PA program policy.*
- *Students must wear their supplemental badge while rotating at clinical sites, to clearly distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners.*
- Students must always represent themselves as a Physician Associate student and must never represent themselves as a Certified Physician Associate.
- Off-duty socializing with preceptors and office staff is discouraged. It is considered unethical to develop a romantic or sexual relationship with a patient, preceptor, or office staff member, and sexual misconduct may result in dismissal from the program.
- Students must immediately report all needle sticks and accidental exposures. See Body Fluid Exposure Guidelines on page 42.
- Students have the right to refuse an order if they believe that it will jeopardize patient care. If an order is refused; however, the Director of Clinical Education should be immediately notified.
- If a class is scheduled on campus during your rotation, attendance is mandatory. If the student is absent from class, this will count as a full personal day. All absences must be approved by the Director of Clinical Education.
- Acceptance of gifts, trips, hospitality, or other items from any hospital or office personnel (including your preceptor) is prohibited.
- No alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs are to be consumed during working hours or while on call. If a student is found intoxicated during working or call hours, they may be dismissed from the program. Students are reminded that the use of illicit drugs is a violation of university policy and will be addressed by university officials.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students should complete the rotation objectives to the maximum extent possible, while recognizing that all stated objectives and technical procedures may not be completed given the variability of student capabilities, preceptor schedules, and patient loads.
- Generally, students should devote approximately 2 hours per day to completing the reading objectives. This is the student's responsibility.
- Patient tracking is a requirement for accreditation. Therefore, students must maintain and update their clinical tracking logging system and submit it at the conclusion of each rotation. As a rule, students should have 75 patient contacts logged for each rotation.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

- Students should schedule a mid-rotation conference with the preceptor to review their progress and discuss potential concerns.
- Students should schedule an end-of-rotation meeting with the preceptor to review their performance and fill out the Student Performance Evaluation. Although the preceptor may prefer to complete the form in private, students should attempt to determine if a major problem exists prior to leaving the rotation site. This is the student's responsibility.
- Completed Student Performance Evaluation forms should be electronically submitted via eValue. Evaluations can also be emailed to Heather Neighbors, PA-C, Director of Clinical Education or faxed to (205) 975-3005.

OFF-ROTATION CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Under no circumstances should a student leave an assigned rotation in preference for a clinical experience that is not under the supervision of their assigned preceptor. If a student is given the opportunity to participate in a clinical experience that is not under the supervision of the assigned preceptor, the student must notify the Director of Clinical Education and the assigned preceptor. Permission to participate in off-rotation clinical experience must be obtained from the Director of Clinical Education and the preceptor. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.

LOCKERS

Approximately 10-12 full-size lockers are available for student use during the clinical year at UAB Hospital. Lockers are located in the Senior Student Lounge on the 16th floor of Jefferson Towers, University Hospital.

LOUNGE (UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL)

A lounge is available to clinical year PA students in room 1647, on the 16th floor of Jefferson Towers, University Hospital, phone number (205) 934-3605. A code is required to enter the lounge, which may be obtained from Canvas or from the Director of Clinical Education. For security purposes, do not inform others of the code.

Note that textbooks, journals, and other forms of program property should remain in the lounge. Program property that is lost, stolen, or defaced will be the responsibility of the entire class. It is also the student's responsibility to maintain cleanliness of the lounge.

MEALS

Some clinical sites provide free meals to students, which the program neither requires nor requests. Note that refreshments within physician lounges are off-limits to students, unless specifically offered by physician preceptors.

ANTI-NEPOTISM POLICY

Students will not be allowed to request that a family member (mother, father, sibling, grandparent, or significant other) or prior employment site serve as their preceptor. If requested by the student, the site will not be approved by the Director of Clinical Education. The potential that a personal relationship will interfere with the educational process is too great.

FRATERNIZATION

It is considered unethical and unprofessional to develop a romantic or sexual relationship with a patient, preceptor, or office staff member. Students are discouraged from engaging in romantic relationships with patients, staff members, preceptors, or other persons in a position to supervise, grade, evaluate, or influence the academic progress or employment of a student. If a student does engage in a romantic relationship with any of these noted individuals, they may be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal from the program. Off-duty socializing with preceptors and office staff is discouraged.

ATTENDANCE DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

Student hours will often include night shifts, weekends, and participation in medical rounds. Generally, students should keep the same hours as their assigned preceptor and should work between 40 and 70 hours per week. If this is not possible, students should contact the Director of Clinical Education.

Absences must be approved by the Director of Clinical Education AND by the preceptor. Additionally, students must notify the Director of Clinical Education and preceptor of all absences during the rotation. This includes both the student's absence and preceptor's scheduled time off. UAB and the Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences recognizes the following as excused absences:

- Jury or military duty provided official documentation has been given to the instructor in a timely manner.
- Students registered with DSS for disabilities eligible for "a reasonable number of disability-related absences," provided instructors are given notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.
- Religious observations provided faculty are given written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.

INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS

Clinical-year students are expected to make every effort to attend clinical rotations regardless of the weather. If inclement weather prevents a student from completing their rotation responsibilities, students are required to notify both their rotation service and the Director of Clinical Education of their absence.

PERSONAL DAYS DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

- Each student is allowed 5 personal days during the clinical year. The following policies govern the use of personal days:
- No more than 2 days can be used on any one rotation without having to make up the time.
- Any request for a half-day will be counted as a full day.
- If a student chooses to use a personal day, no make-up days will be required, if the absence does not exceed the allotted number of personal days.
- Absences that exceed the allotted number of personal days will require make-up days at the rate of one day for each missed day.
- The Director of Clinical Education and the preceptor must be informed prior to the date of the expected absence.
- It is the student's responsibility to submit a signed "Personal Leave of Absence" form. All forms must be approved by the preceptor and Director of Clinical Education, prior to the scheduled absence.
- Students must use a personal day for any unexpected illnesses.
- Personal days can be used for any personal reason including but not limited to death of a loved one, family trips, weddings, interviews, review courses, medical appointments, etc.
- Personal days may not be taken on scheduled test days (end of rotation test days).
- Once five personal days have been taken, all subsequent absences will be deemed an "unexcused absence" and students will be required to submit documentation regarding the circumstances of their absence. Please note, this may result in remediation or dismissal from the program. (Please see the Excused Absence Policy).

EXCUSED ABSENCES

For absences to qualify as an excused absence, students must obtain explicit written permission from the Director of Clinical Education and the preceptor **PRIOR** to the absence. The only exceptions to this policy are critical personal illness and unforeseen, unavoidable incidents (i.e., car accidents or breakdowns). In these cases, students will have to use a personal day for the absence.

Specific policies pertaining to excused absences include:

- Students must notify both the Director of Clinical Education and the preceptor once the decision not to attend the clinical site has been made.

- Leaving a voicemail with the Director of Clinical Education's office is acceptable; however, an email should be sent as well.
- Documentation regarding the absence will be required.
- Absences due to religious holidays recognized by the University will be excused, provided students give faculty advanced notice.
- Excused absences that are less than 2 days will not require any make-up time or make-up assignments.
- Excused absences may not exceed five consecutive days. Absences that exceed a total of five consecutive days will be considered a "personal leave" (see Personal Leave of Absence Policy).
- Absences of 2-4 days on any given rotation will result in the student receiving a grade of "I" (Incomplete) and the student will be required to make-up this time at a rate of one day per number of days absent. The missed time will be made up the following semester after the last clinical rotation of the clinical year.
- In the above-mentioned case, a site will be chosen at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education. Once the missed time is completed, the student will be assigned a final grade without deduction. If this deficiency is not completed or the rotation is unsuccessfully completed, a grade of "F" (Fail) will be earned, which may result in dismissal from the program.
- Failure to follow the rules stated above will result in an unexcused absence.
- *Students must obtain written permission from the Program Director prior to any absence from the program for more than five days.*

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An unexcused absence is any absence during the clinical year that does not have prior approval of both the preceptor and Director of Clinical Education. This also includes failure to inform the Director of Clinical Education or the clinical site of the absence. An unexcused absence will result in a time deficiency or disciplinary action as described below:

- Deficiency of the missed time will result in forfeiting two personal days for each missed clinical day. Example: If you have one unexcused absence resulting in missing one clinical day, you will be docked for a total of 3 personal days. One day for the absence and 2 penalty days in which you forfeit.
- Personal counseling by program faculty and a letter of reprimand will be placed in the student file.
- Depending on the nature of the absence and availability of clinical sites, the student will be assigned to complete the deficiency within the same specialty service as the absence.
- In the event that a clinical site is not able to accommodate this time, the student may be assigned to another clinical site at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education.
- The student will receive a grade of "I" for the rotation. Once the preceptor has documented successful completion of the rotation, the grade will be changed to reflect the earned grade on the rotation. If this deficiency is not completed or the rotation is

unsuccessfully completed, a grade of “F” will be earned, which may result in dismissal from the program.

- Deficiencies may be completed on weekends (if the clinical preceptor agrees, and there is sufficient work to be done during the weekends). Otherwise, this time will be completed during the next semester following the last scheduled rotation of the clinical year.
- In special circumstances, the program may arrange for completion of a deficiency during university breaks, with the approval of the Associate Dean.
- The second occurrence of an unexcused absence of any length will result in a faculty review of the student, and either rescheduling clinical rotation days for the unexcused absence, repeating the clinical rotation, or dismissal from the program.

PRECEPTOR VACATIONS / ILLNESS

If a preceptor takes a vacation or becomes ill during a clinical rotation, the student is required to *immediately* notify the Director of Clinical Education. When possible, arrangements will be made for the student to complete the rotation at another clinical site. If this is not possible, the student will be given an “I” and will be required to complete the rotation the following semester. *Under no circumstances should a student attempt to make their own arrangements for completion of the rotation.*

Failure to notify the Director of Clinical Education of a preceptor's absence may result in the student receiving disciplinary action, as described in the Unexcused Absence Policy.

JURY DUTY / MILITARY DUTY

Clinical time lost due to jury duty or military duty must be made up at a rate of one day for each missed day. Make-up days will occur as soon as possible, but days may be deferred until the last rotation of the clinical year or will be required to be completed during the following semester. Students may utilize up to 5 personal days to fulfill completion of clinical rotation requirements. Note that the two weeks of annual training required for Reserve Forces and National Guard may be waived during the clinical year. Students are encouraged to seek this waiver. If this does not occur, the two weeks must be made up.

FACULTY SITE VISITS

Site visits will be conducted by the Director of Clinical Education (or any faculty member of the PA program) on an annual basis during the clinical year. A site visit may consist of a face-to-face, electronic (Zoom, etc.), or telephone meeting with the preceptor and/or with the student. After each visit, a Site Visit Report will be filed in the program's office.

ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER CHANGES

The Physician Associate Studies Program requires that each student provide the program with a copy of their current address and telephone number. Changes or corrections to a student's name, address, or telephone number must also be made through [One Stop Student Services](#).

UAB STUDENT / VISITING SCHOLAR CLINICAL ROTATION BLOOD / BODY FLUID EXPOSURE GUIDELINES

(Updated 8/22/2017)

This guideline outlines recommended actions following any blood/body fluid exposure to UAB enrolled students or visiting scholars during a clinical rotation.

Students and scholars may be exposed to blood/body fluids in the course of their clinical duties at a UAB facility or at a non-UAB facility where a student is involved in a practical experience for credit at UAB. As all blood and body fluids are considered infectious, regardless of the perceived status of the source individual, all students and scholars must follow OSHA guidelines for universal precautions to prevent contact with blood or body fluids at clinical rotation sites. This includes use of gloves, eyewear, and protective clothing, as well as proper care of sharp objects and other precautionary measures. These guidelines are printed on UAB Medicine safety cards; students should keep a safety card with them and consult it in the event of exposure.

DEFINITIONS:

For purposes of this guideline, which aligns with current CDC guidelines,

- A “student” is defined as any student enrolled at UAB in a clinical (non-research) setting.
- A “visiting scholar” is any student, graduate student, post-doctoral student, instructor, or practitioner participating in UAB clinical (non-research) activities for a short-term period.
- An “exposure” is generally defined as a percutaneous injury (e.g., a needle stick or cut with a sharp object) or contact of mucous membrane or non-intact skin with blood, tissue, or body fluids, whether or not there is visible blood.

PRECAUTIONS:

An overview of infection, including how infections are spread, ways to prevent the spread of infections, and [more detailed recommendations regarding precautions can be found on the CDC website](#).

PROCEDURE:

In the case of any needle stick injury or other accidental blood/body fluid exposure, students and scholars should immediately take appropriate measures as follows:

- Remove and properly dispose of all contaminated personal protective equipment. Wash the exposed area thoroughly with soap and running water. Use antibacterial soap if possible. If blood/body fluid was splashed in the eye(s) or mucous membrane, flush the affected area with running water for 15 minutes. Remove and dispose of contacts if worn.
- **It is mandatory for students to report all exposures to the host institution and UAB Employee Health as soon as they occur.**

- Contact UAB Employee Health, Monday-Friday 7am-4:30pm (closed 12pm-1pm) at 205-934-3675.
- After hours, between 12pm-1pm on weekdays, on weekends, holidays and in case the department is closed due to inclement weather, call Hospital Paging at 205-934-4311 and ask for the Needle stick Team Member on call.
- **It is mandatory for students to report all exposures to your preceptor, clinical supervisor, and UAB program faculty member (Director of Clinical Education) as soon as they occur.**
- It is mandatory that an incident report be filed at the host institution (if applicable) and at UAB by the student's program faculty member [Reporting Incidents - One \(oneuabmedicine.org\)](http://oneuabmedicine.org). Please note, links will only be accessible onsite in the medical center. UAB Employee Health can assist the student with questions or concerns.
- It is mandatory that the student or visiting scholar gather the following information:
 - Identify the HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C status of the source patient. If a source patient's serological status is unknown, the student, scholar, or preceptor/clinical supervisor should contact the source patient's attending physician and request that the physician obtain a specimen for STAT serologic testing. Recommended testing of the source-patient includes a rapid HIV, HBsAg, and HCV antibody. It is critical to ensure that the hosting institution draws labs from the source patient in a timely manner (within 2-4hours). The student should report the results of the serology testing to UAB Employee Health immediately.
 - If serologic testing cannot be obtained on the source-patient, seek guidance from the host institution and call UAB Employee Health for further instructions. (See Employee Health contact number and after-hours information noted below).
 - If the source-patient's rapid HIV, HBs Ag, and HCV antibody is negative, it is not recommended (per CDC guidelines) for the student or scholar to have baseline or follow-up serology drawn. **Do Not** go to the ER unless immediate medical attention due to injury from the exposure is necessary.
 - If the exposure warrants blood work from the student or scholar due to positive serology results from the source patient, baseline serologic and vaccination evaluation of the student or scholar should include the following:
 - HIV Antibody, HCV Antibody, and any additional labs, as determined by the healthcare provider of the host institution or after consultation with UAB Employee Health, should be drawn.
 - Hepatitis B vaccination and Hepatitis B titer status. If unknown, an HBsAb and HBsAg should be drawn.
 - Tetanus vaccination status.

After taking appropriate immediate measures as outlined above, students or scholars should seek further evaluation and care based on where the incident occurred:

- **For exposures occurring on the UAB campus (UAB Hospital, Kirklin Clinic, UAB outpatient clinics, non-research labs) or at any institution within a 60-mile radius of the UAB campus. It is mandatory that the student or visiting scholar:**
 - Report to UAB Employee Health Monday-Friday (7:00 am- 4:00 pm), located on the 1st floor, UAB Spain Wallace S123 (205-934-3675). The department is closed from 12pm-1pm for lunch.
 - After 4:00 pm, between 12pm-1pm, on weekends, holidays, and in case the Employee Health Department is closed due to inclement weather, call Hospital Paging (205-934-3411), and ask the operator to page the Needle stick Team Member on call. Report to UAB Employee Health on the next business day.
 - Continue to communicate with Employee Health regarding all follow-up care.
- For exposures occurring at a non-UAB hospital or clinic greater than a 60-mile radius from UAB campus it is mandatory to:
 - Inquire about the institution's exposure policy. If the host institution or physician's office offers medical care and recommended testing, have an initial evaluation and follow-up performed there in accordance with the host institution's policy. Continue to communicate with Employee Health regarding all follow-up care.
 - If the host institution refuses to provide medical care and recommended testing, notify UAB Employee Health at (205-934-3675) immediately for further instructions and contact your program faculty member to complete a trend tracker incident report at [Reporting Incidents - One \(oneuabmedicine.org\)](https://oneuabmedicine.org). *Please note, links will only be accessible onsite in the medical center.* You may be required to report to a local emergency room for initial treatment and/or medical treatment in case of injury.
 - If the hosting facility provides initial treatment, but refuses to provide long-term follow-up care, gather all completed documentation, serologic results from post-exposure, including the patient's lab work, and notify UAB Employee Health. UAB Employee Health will provide long-term follow-up care at no charge.

It is very important for blood/body fluid exposures to be reported according to the current guidelines. All students or scholars in a clinical (non-research) placement will be covered for costs incurred in assessing and/or treating potential or actual exposures providing they adhere to this procedure as outlined. This includes costs incurred for any appropriate services rendered (e.g., ER evaluation, including but not limited to lab work, post-exposure prophylactic therapy, immunizations provided onsite or during follow-up at UAB Employee Health), whether on campus or at a non-UAB hospital or clinic.

For treatment costs incurred at or outside of a UAB facility, please forward all invoices/bills (must be detailed/itemized), documentation of exposure/incident report as soon as they are received to UAB Hospital Employee Health, Suite SW123, 619 19th Street South, Birmingham, AL, 35249. For questions, UAB Employee Health may be reached by phone at 205-934-3675, by fax at 205-975-6900, or [via email](#).

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Summative evaluations will be given during the final semester of the clinical year and will consist of a summative OSCE, PAEA End of Curriculum (EOC) examination, and a summative skills assessment. To be cleared for graduation, students will be required to pass all summative evaluations. Failure to pass any of the summative evaluations will require remediation until the student is able to successfully complete the assessment(s).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from the Physician Associate Studies Program requires the following:

- Maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 for the Graduate School.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 for all didactic coursework in the UAB PA program.
- Completion of all didactic courses and clinical rotations within the UAB PA program with a grade of “C” (70%) or better.
- Continued demonstration of appropriate professional behavior while matriculating through the didactic and clinical year.
- Completion of PA Master’s Project (PA 698).
- Successful completion of the program’s summative evaluation, including passing the summative exam with a grade of 70% or better, and passing the summative OSCE with a grade of 80% or better.
- Completion of all financial and administrative obligations to The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

General financial aid and graduation application information is provided in Section 1 of this handbook. Licensure and certification requirements, and MSPAS-specific scholarship opportunities are listed below.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE

INITIAL CERTIFICATION

At the time of degree conferral, students are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE). Upon successfully passing the PANCE, graduates will become certified through the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), which is identified by the PA-C designation (Physician Assistant-Certified).

The PANCE is a multiple-choice exam that is comprised of 360 questions that assess basic medical knowledge. Preregistration is required, and students are responsible for scheduling the exam. The program encourages students to take the PANCE immediately after graduation, and students may choose from over 300 Sylvan Technology Center testing sites located throughout the country. Please note that there are several blackout dates for testing that are scheduled at

the end of each year. Therefore, students are encouraged to check for available testing dates at the sites of their choosing.

For additional information, please [visit the NCCPA website](#). You may also [contact NCCPA via email](#) or via mail at 12000 Findley Road, Suite 100, Johns Creek, GA, 30097-1409. They can also be reached via phone at (678) 417-8100.

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

The initial certification marks the beginning of a ten-year certification cycle. To maintain the (PA-C) certification at the conclusion of this ten-year cycle, Physician Associates must follow a three-part process that involves documentation of continuing medical education (CME), submission of re-registration materials, and successful completion of the national Physician Assistant Re-certification Exam (PANRE). During each two-year period of the ten-year cycle, PAs must complete a minimum of 100 hours of CME and submit evidence of this to NCCPA. PAs must also pay a re-registration fee to NCCPA.

STATE LICENSURE / REGISTRATION

The state of Alabama requires continuing education hours (CME) to maintain certification. If students plan to practice in another state, they need to contact that state board of medical licensure for recertification specifics.

FEDERAL AND NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS

All students enrolled at UAB are eligible to apply for financial aid. To be considered, a completed application must be on file at least 45 days before the beginning of the term in which financial assistance is requested. Because many financial aid programs have limited funding, students are advised to contact the UAB Financial Aid Office and complete the application process by May 1st for fall semester aid. More information is available by contacting UAB Office of Financial Aid Office, Lister Hill Library, Room G40, 1700 University Boulevard, at (205) 934-8223.

Students should note that scholarships and loans do not change the total amount of money students are eligible to receive. Loan and scholarship money simply exchanges unsubsidized money (loans) for subsidized money (scholarship or free money), thus reducing how much money students must pay back following completion of their education.

FEDERAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS

[Educational loans and grants available from the federal government can be found here.](#)

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS (NHSC)

[Information can be found on the NHSC website.](#)

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS)

[Information can be found on the IHS website.](#)

MILITARY

Check appropriate military websites for more information on their scholarship programs.

PA PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS

MR. & MRS. ELBERT H. PURSER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 1979 and subsequently endowed in 1983 through a gift from the Elbert H. Purser Trust. Applicants must be admitted to or enrolled in the UAB Physician Associate Studies Program and must be native or permanent residents of the state of Alabama. Selection is made by a committee of PA program faculty, and annual awards are determined based on the availability of funds.

BILL PARKER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 2018. Mr. Parker is a 1972 graduate of the Physician Assistant Studies program who worked as an orthopaedic PA for over 40 years. Applicants must be admitted to or enrolled in the UAB Physician Associate Studies Program and will be chosen by the faculty.

COMER FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 2021. Applicants must be permanent Alabama residents who are admitted to or enrolled in the UAB Physician Associate Studies Program and must demonstrate the following: financial need as determined by the Office of financial aid, good academic standing, and plans to live in and practice within Alabama upon completion of their studies.

WILLIAM JOHN GILL PA-C SPONSORED SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 2021. Applicants must be admitted to or enrolled in the UAB Physician Associate Studies Program and must demonstrate an interest in practicing in a rural/underserved or health professional shortage area upon completion of their studies.

PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES (AAPA)

AAPA is the national organization that represents Physician Associates in all specialties and employment settings. Founded in 1968, the Academy has a federated structure of 58 chartered chapters representing PAs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, US territories, and the uniformed services. Membership also includes PA students and supporters of the profession. For more information [contact the AAPA via their website](#), (703) 836-2272, or 2318 Mill Road, Suite 1300, Alexandria, VA, 22314.

THE ALABAMA SOCIETY OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS (ASPA)

ASPA was founded in 1975. Student and professional members are located throughout the state, and membership includes access to the ASPA newsletter/journal, special rates for ASPA CME conferences, invitations to CME dinner meetings, as well as other networking opportunities. For more information [contact ASPA via their website](#), (334) 954-2575, or P.O. Box 550274, Birmingham, AL, 35255-0274.

THE PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (PAEA)

PAEA was founded in 1972 and is the only national organization representing PA educational programs in the United States. Currently, all accredited programs in the country are members of the Association. PAEA provides services for faculty at its member programs, as well as to applicants, students, and other stakeholders. For more information [contact PAEA via their website](#), (703) 548-5538, or 300 N. Washington Street, Suite 710, Alexandria, VA, 22314-2544.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CERTIFICATION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS (NCCPA)

NCCPA was founded in 1974 and is the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States. NCCPA provides certification programs that reflect standards for clinical knowledge, clinical reasoning, and other medical skills and professional behaviors required upon entry into practice and throughout the careers of PAs. For more information [contact NCCPA via their website](#), (678) 417-8100, or 12000 Findley Road, Suite 1000, Johns Creek, GA, 30097-1409.

EVENT OF CLOSURE OR LOSS OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

In the event of program closure and/or loss of accreditation, the UAB Physician Associate Studies Program will teach-out all current matriculated students, in accordance with current program curricular requirements.