

## Program Policies of Interest to Prospective Students

### Academic Standing, Program Progression, and Timeline of Completion (5e A3.15a,b / 6e A3.14a,b)

Academic standing reflects a student's progress toward completion of the MSPAS Program. To remain in good academic standing, a student must:

- Earn a final grade of 80% or higher in all courses.
- Maintain a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 3.00.
- Complete required remediation activities within the established timeframe when assigned.
- Must abide by the [Pepperdine College of Health Science \(PCHS\) Academic Integrity Policy](#), [PCHS Professionalism Policy](#), [PCHS Attire Policy](#), [Pepperdine Student Code of Conduct](#), [Pepperdine University Standards of Conduct](#), and PA Program policies.
- Maintain the PA Program health screening, immunization, background check, and drug screening requirements.
- Meet the [Technical Standards](#) of the PA Program.

Grades are calculated as follows:

| Grade Points per Unit |                 |    |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| A                     | 4.000 100-94%   | C  | 2.000 76.99-74% |
| A-                    | 3.700 93.99-90% | C- | 1.700 73.99-70% |
| B+                    | 3.300 89.99-87% | D+ | 1.300 69.99-67% |
| B                     | 3.000 86.99-84% | D  | 1.000 66.99-64% |
| B-                    | 2.700 83.99-80% | D- | 0.700 63.99-60% |
| C+                    | 2.300 79.99-77% | F  | 0 59.99-0%      |

### Academic Probation

Students who are unable to maintain the minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.00 will be placed on academic probation and may be subject to remediation. A student on academic probation who reaches the minimum overall cumulative grade point average would be removed from academic probation. If a student is unable to raise the overall cumulative grade point average in the subsequent term, their academic progress is subject to review by the Progress and Promotion Committee (PPC) for dismissal.

### Program Progression Requirements

To progress through the Program, students must:

- Earn a final course grade of 80% or higher in all courses.
- Maintain a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 3.00 (students may progress one trimester on academic probation as described in the Academic Probation Policy).

- Successfully complete required remediation within established timeframes.
- Abide by the [Pepperdine College of Health Science \(PCHS\) Academic Integrity Policy](#), PCHS Professionalism Policy, PCHS Attire Policy, Pepperdine Student [Code of Conduct](#), Pepperdine University [Standards of Conduct](#), and PA Program policies.
- Maintain the PA Program health screening, immunization, background check, and drug screening requirements.
- Meet the [Technical Standards](#) of the PA Program.

To graduate from the MSPAS Program, students must:

- Earn a final course grade of 80% or higher in all courses.
- Achieve a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 3.00.
- Successfully pass each component of the Summative Program Evaluation.
- Have no outstanding remediations.
- Have no current designation of Academic Probation.
- Be recommended for graduation by the PPC.

### **Timeline of Completion**

Students must complete all degree requirements within 150 percent of the Program's published length, as measured from the date of the student's matriculation to the date of Program completion.

### **Remediation & Deceleration** (5e A3.15c/ 6e A3.14c,d)

#### **Remediation**

Student progress is monitored and documented in a manner that allows for timely identification of deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation. Remediation is the Program-defined and applied process for addressing deficiencies in a student's knowledge and skills, such that the correction of these deficiencies is measurable and can be documented. Remediation provides students with opportunities to correct unsatisfactory performance and meet established learning outcomes.

Remediation, in the form of a formalized Individual Learning Plan (ILP), is required in the didactic phase for any failed (less than 77%) modular examination, skills assessment, or objective structured clinical exam. Remediation, in the form of a formalized Individual Learning Plan (ILP), is required for students in the clinical phase for failed (less than 77%) end of rotation exam, final preceptor evaluation, or inability to meet course learning outcomes. ILPs are established to provide the greatest opportunity to achieve success in meeting the learning outcomes of a course or program competencies when an initial attempt has been unsuccessful. The ILP is developed at the discretion of the Course Director and approved by the PPC before implementation. ILPs are customized to support each student's individual needs. Identified deficiencies are addressed through remediation plans developed and implemented in a timely and consistent manner. Each plan clearly documents the nature of the deficiency, the remediation plan, timeline for monitoring and completing the remediation (to include re-assessment), and expected outcomes.

Remediation activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Reading and study assignments
- Written self-reflection exercises
- Written response to selected exam items with reference citations
- Individual skills-training
- Tutoring
- Substituting an elective rotation for a rotation in a faculty-designated medical discipline
- Additional supervised clinical practice experience including repeating an entire rotation

Repeating an entire rotation may result in a delayed graduation and additional tuition/fee expenses. Students must sign the ILP acknowledging the steps and timeline for completing the plan. ILP documentation must detail the completed learning activities and faculty must document the student's ability to meet the learning outcome(s) within the designated time frame as outlined on the ILP.

- Each ILP is part of the student's academic record and is stored in the student's file.
- If a student has multiple ILPs in one course, one reassessment covering the combined deficiencies may occur.
- For any given remediation plan, it is reviewed by the Course Director and the PPC confirms successful/unsuccessful remediation.
- Failure to fulfill all terms of the ILP may result in adverse action including dismissal from the Program as determined by the PPC after holistic review of the student's PA Program academic record.
- Successful completion of an ILP does not alter course grades. Course grades are only altered for remediation activities relating to modular exams or the Summative Program Evaluation.
- To successfully remediate a modular exam, End-of-Rotation (EOR) exam, or the Summative Program Evaluation, a student must achieve a minimum score of 77%. The highest grade that will be recorded following successful remediation of a modular examination, EOR exam, or the Summative Program Evaluation is 77%, regardless of the actual score earned. See the corresponding sections below.

Most students are reassessed during the semester in which the ILP was developed. However, there may be instances, such as performance on an exam at the end of the semester, that necessitate initiation of a timely remediation plan with possible reassessment in the following semester, if the student is in good academic standing.

The Summative Program Evaluation is taken within the four-month period preceding graduation and is comprehensive in nature. A student may have ONE attempt to remediate the failed portion(s) of the Summative Program Evaluation. Students must pass all components of the Summative Program Evaluation to pass the Summative Seminar course. Timing of the Summative Program Evaluation remediation may delay graduation.

**Deceleration**

ARC-PA defines deceleration as “the loss of a student from the entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the physician assistant program.” The PA Program is designed for full-time students who are admitted as part of a cohort. Due to the nature of the curriculum and academic demands, the PA Program does not offer a part-time option to students. Similarly, it does not offer a reduced educational (course) load. All PA students must take the required course load in its entirety each trimester and they must take the courses as they are sequenced throughout the Program. The PA Program does not offer academic deceleration as a component of academic intervention or remediation. Students who have an extended Program length due to a leave of absence must meet the Program's timeline of completion policy and are considered part of the cohort they entered the Program with. A student who has previously enrolled but did not complete the PA Program must reapply through CASPA. The re-application will be treated in the same manner as all other applications. In this instance, the applicant will not be considered for advanced placement, regardless of the student’s previous time in the Program.

**Withdrawal** (5e A3.15d / 6e A3.14e)

Students who have made the decision to withdraw from the PA Program must first meet with their Advisor. To initiate the formal withdrawal process, the student must meet with the PA Dean. Students must withdraw from the entire Program and cannot withdraw from individual courses.

A student who leaves the University for any reason must officially withdraw from all classes through written notification from the student’s Pepperdine email account to the PA Dean and the Office of the Registrar. Information on registration changes of any students receiving veterans’ benefits will be forwarded to the Veterans Benefits Administration whenever such changes occur. The student must also check out from the appropriate campus offices, as designated by the Office of the Registrar. Students who stop attending but do not officially withdraw from their classes will be automatically assigned a grade of F by the instructor.

A student who withdraws from classes will be subject to the tuition refund policies, and financial aid may be adjusted. Students who withdraw from all courses in the term between the initial registration and the last day of the add/drop period will be charged a \$150 withdrawal fee.

**Tuition and Fee Refunds Policies and Procedures** (5e A1.02k / 6e 1.02h)

This policy applies to students who formally withdraw from the PA Program. Students who withdraw will receive tuition and fee credit based on the timing of their withdrawal. A student who withdraws from classes will be subject to the tuition refund policies, and financial aid may be adjusted. Students who withdraw from all courses in the term between the initial registration and the last day of the add/drop period will be charged a \$150 withdrawal fee.

**Dismissal** (5e A3.15d / 6e A3.14f)

The Progress and Progression Committee (PPC) monitors student performance and reviews cases that may warrant dismissal. Students who are unable to meet Program standards and specific progression requirements may be reviewed for academic dismissal from the Program.

Specific progression requirements during the didactic phase that may warrant referral to the PPC and may result in dismissal include:

- Course grade less than 80%.
- Failure to raise the overall cumulative GPA to 3.00 or higher by the end of the subsequent trimester following academic probation.
- More than one (1) trimester on academic probation.
- Unsuccessful completion of a remediation plan within established timeframes.
- Failure to abide by the [Pepperdine College of Health Science \(PCHS\) Academic Integrity Policy](#), PCHS Professionalism Policy, PCHS Attire Policy, Pepperdine Student [Code of Conduct](#), Pepperdine University [Standards of Conduct](#), and PA Program policies.
- Failure to maintain the PA Program health screening, immunization, background check, and drug screening requirements.
- Failure to meet the [Technical Standards](#) of the PA Program.

Specific progression requirements during the clinical phase that may warrant referral to the PPC and may result in dismissal include:

- Course grade less than 80%.
- Failure to raise the overall cumulative GPA to 3.00 or higher by the end of the subsequent trimester following academic probation.
- Less than 3.00 overall cumulative GPA at the end of the clinical phase.
- More than one (1) trimester on academic probation.
- Unsuccessful completion of a remediation plan within established timeframes.
- Failure of more than one (1) Supervised Clinical Practical Experience (SCPE)/rotation remediation.
- Failure of one or more components of the Summative Program Evaluation remediation.
- Failure to maintain the PA Program health screening, immunization, background check, and drug screening requirements.
- Failure to meet the [Technical Standards](#) of the PA Program.

### **Allegation of Student Mistreatment Policy (5e A3.15f)**

The PA Program is dedicated to maintaining a positive environment in which students can pursue educational and professional activities in an inclusive, humane, and respectful culture.

Mistreatment is considered destructive of the principles that guide the mission, values, and goals of the Program. The PA Program defines mistreatment as a student being treated unfairly or used in a capacity that is not considered reasonable. When assessing behavior that might represent mistreatment, students are expected to consider the conditions, circumstances, and environment surrounding such behavior. Procedure: When mistreatment is believed to have occurred, the initial step is to follow the Non-Academic Student Grievance Policy outlined below.

### **Student Grievances and Appeals (5e A3.15g / 6e A3.14g,h)**

#### **Non-Academic Student Grievance Policy**

### *Purpose and Applicability*

The purpose of this Non-Academic Student Grievance Procedure is to provide for the resolution of student grievances, including allegations of discrimination and harassment pursuant to the University's "Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy." This procedure is applicable to non-academic student grievances filed by a student against faculty, staff, or any nonstudent third party. This policy is not applicable to grievances filed against another student. To file a grievance against another student, please see the [Reporting Misconduct](#) section of the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, this procedure does not apply to complaints made by a student regarding sexual misconduct and/or sexual harassment. Such complaints shall be governed according to the University's [Reporting Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

This procedure is designed to allow students to address complaints in a prompt, fair, consistent, and objective manner. Any act of reprisal by a University employee or by one acting on behalf of the University, including the intimidation of a grievant, respondent, or witness during the pendency of an investigation, will result in prompt disciplinary action. (This procedure shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints. If a complaint has been made in bad faith, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken against the person bringing the complaint.)

### *Informal Resolution*

Before initiating a formal grievance, a student has the option to—but is not required to—discuss the matter in dispute with the person against whom the student has a grievance and seek a mutual resolution of concerns. The student may be encouraged to return to this informal level of resolution at any time during this procedure. It is the University's belief that most grievances can and will be resolved at this level.

### *Initiation of Complaint*

If an informal resolution does not result, the student must submit a complaint to the non-academic grievance officer (NAGO) to initiate a formal grievance. Initially, the student's concerns may be communicated orally; however, they must be in writing before any review or other action takes place. (Assistance will be provided to students with disabilities who are unable to write a complaint.) This written complaint should be submitted as soon as possible after the student knows of the subject problem. The complaint should specify the University policy, procedure, or norm violated and specifically set forth all relevant factual details (including any supporting documentation). A student may elect to withdraw a complaint at any time; however, the University reserves the right to investigate all complaints where necessary to protect the interests of the University community.

### *Review by Non-Academic Grievance Officer (NAGO)*

The PA Dean (or designee) shall serve as the NAGO concerning complaints against faculty, staff, or nonstudent third-parties. The College of Health Science Dean shall serve as the NAGO concerning complaints about the PA Dean, and in this instance, the University Provost will serve as the reviewing office if the case involves a request to appeal the NAGO's decision.

The NAGO shall read the complaint, all relevant records or other factual information, and all University policies and procedures as may be necessary to determine whether the complainant's allegations warrant implementing the remainder of the procedures outlined below. If, for

example, the allegations in the complaint, even if true, would not constitute a violation of a University policy, procedure, or norm, then the NAGO should inform the student in writing that the student's allegations are not subject to the grievance process.

If the NAGO determines that the allegations in the complaint do warrant further investigation and consideration, then the NAGO shall forward, via university email (@pepperdine.edu or other relevant email addresses for third-party respondents), notice of the complaint and its substantive allegations to the person against whom the complaint is made ("respondent") and, if discrimination or harassment is alleged, the University Equal Employment Officer. This shall be done as soon as possible, but in no event later than twenty-one (21) business days after the NAGO receives the student's written complaint. The respondent shall be given fourteen (14) calendar days from receipt of the complaint to return a written response to the NAGO. Necessary extensions may be granted at the discretion of the NAGO.

The NAGO will initiate a reasonable investigation into the matter. The scope of any investigation shall be in the sole discretion of the grievance officer. The investigation may include, but is not limited to, meeting with the parties, talking with witnesses, and reviewing any supporting documents.

If the NAGO desires, he or she may appoint an ad hoc committee to assist in the investigation of the complaint and/or for advice concerning the handling of this matter. In such instances, the ad hoc committee should have the necessary training or expertise necessary to investigate the complaint and offer advice on the handling of the matter.

Within twenty-one (21) business days of receipt of the respondent's written response, the NAGO shall make a decision by a preponderance of the evidence based on the written complaint, the response (if any), and any other information the NAGO determines is relevant. The decision shall be in writing and consist of factual findings, conclusions, and a remedy if one is appropriate. The NAGO will provide a copy of the decision to all parties. In instances where discrimination or harassment is alleged, the NAGO will provide a copy of the decision to the complainant and/or target of the alleged discrimination or harassment, and the University Equal Employment Officer.

The decision will explain the investigative process and contain a summary of the facts gathered, a determination as to whether discrimination or harassment occurred, the reasons for the decision and any appeal procedures. If discrimination or harassment is found to have occurred, the decision will also include any remedial or corrective actions that have been, or will be, taken to prevent any retaliation or recurrence (1) institutionally and (2) directly relating to the complainant, including notice of all sanctions against the respondent in order for the sanctions to be fully enforced.

#### *Request for Appeal of NAGO's Decision*

Any party may submit a written request for appeal to the PCHS Dean ("reviewing officer") within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of the decision. The request for appeal must specifically set forth all grounds for appeal. The non-appealing party must be given the

opportunity to respond in writing to the request for appeal. The reviewing officer shall be limited to addressing only the following questions:

- Did the NAGO consider all the important and appropriate facts in the investigation of this matter?
- Did the student prove by a "preponderance of the evidence" (that is, more likely than not) that the person against whom the student has a grievance in fact violated a University policy, procedure, or norm or otherwise engaged in any unlawful or illegal activity?
- Was the process carried out in a fair manner?
- Was the decision one that a reasonable person might have made?
- Was the NAGO biased?

Within fifteen business days from the date of receipt of the written appeal, the reviewing officer shall make a final decision based on the written complaint, the written response, the NAGO's written decision, the written request for appeal, and any written response to the request for appeal. The decision of the reviewing officer shall be final. The reviewing officer will provide a copy of the decision to all parties and to the University Equal Employment Officer. All written decisions made and materials produced in connection with a grievance conducted under this procedure shall be retained by the NAGO for seven years after graduation.

#### *Complaint Processes*

Pepperdine University takes very seriously complaints and concerns regarding the institution. If a student has a complaint regarding a program or the University, the student may present a complaint or grievance according to the applicable policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

The PA Program at Pepperdine University expects students to follow the Non-Academic Student Grievance Policy. If concerns still exist and are related to the Program's compliance with accreditation standards, students should contact the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Further information may be found on the ARC-PA [website](#).

If the student believes that the complaint or grievance warrants further attention after exhausting the procedures set forth in this handbook, they may contact the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) if the complaint is about the institution's compliance with academic program quality and accreditation standards. WSCUC is the academic accrediting body for Pepperdine University.

If the student believes that the complaint or grievance continues to warrant further consideration after exhausting the processes of Pepperdine, ARC-PA, and WSCUC, the student may submit a complaint to the attorney general of the State of California by filing a complaint form with the Public Inquiry Unit of the California State Department of Justice at Public Inquiry Unit: (800) 952-5225 (phone) or (916) 323-5341 (fax) or [online](#).

The Attorney General's Office will review the process through which Pepperdine attempted to resolve the complaint. If the process complies with the University's written policies and

procedures, the Attorney General's Office will, for the purposes of state oversight, consider the matter closed. If the attorney general determines that the process through which the University attempted to resolve the complaint did not comply with the University's written policies and procedures, the attorney general may request reconsideration by the College of Health Science.

An individual may also contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint. The bureau may be contacted at: Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, P.O. Box 980818, West Sacramento, CA 95798-0818 [https://www.bppe.ca.gov/about\\_us/contact.shtml](https://www.bppe.ca.gov/about_us/contact.shtml). Phone: (888) 370-7589; fax: (916) 263-1897. Nothing in this disclosure limits any right that the student may have to seek civil or criminal legal action to resolve his or her complaints. Pepperdine University has provided this disclosure in compliance with the requirements of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, as regulated in 34 CFR §§ 600.9 and 668.43(b).

### **Student Academic Appeals Policy (5e A3.15g / 6e A3.14h)**

If a student feels their interests were not dealt with sufficiently, a written appeal must be submitted to the PA Dean. The PA Dean will review the request for appeal and, if additional review is warranted, sign the appeal and forward it to the Dean of the College of Health Science.

### **Grade Dispute Policy**

The College of Health Science reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to process disputes of course grades submitted pursuant to this procedure under other applicable University procedures (e.g., Student Code of Conduct, Academic Progress, Non-Academic Student Grievance Procedure, Disability Accommodation Complaint and Appeal Procedure, and Sexual Misconduct Policy), where it deems appropriate.

Grades measure student performance and serve as a means of determining graduation eligibility and honors. As such, the College of Health Science recognizes that a fair and rigorous assessment of student coursework is vital to the mission of the school and wishes to ensure that disagreements arising over assigned grades are handled promptly, fairly, and professionally.

Most grade issues can and should be resolved privately between the student and instructor. This is the starting point with all grade disputes. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved by these means, the following appeals procedure shall apply:

The student shall submit a written appeal to the PA Dean with a copy to the instructor, identifying the course, trimester/semester, grade received, and the reason for the appeal.

The student shall assemble all relevant class materials (syllabi, returned assignments, tests, papers, etc.) distributed or returned by the instructor to the student. These materials need to be compiled within two weeks of the date of the written appeal. If the student cannot assemble all such documents, the grade dispute is concluded with no grade change.

Concurrently, the instructor will assemble all relevant class materials retained for this student (final exams, midterms, etc.) within two weeks of the date of the written appeal. A copy of these

documents, along with the syllabus, grade book, and the instructor's written response to the student appeal, is to be forwarded by the instructor to the PA Dean.

The PA Dean will appoint a committee of faculty members within the Program who teach the course (or a similar one) in question. This committee will then evaluate the student's course materials.

At the conclusion of the committee's evaluation, it will submit a written recommendation and explanation to the PA Dean. The recommendation must be one of the following:

- Uphold the grade given by the instructor, or
- require that the instructor re-grade one or more assignments, followed by a recalculation of the student's grade, or
- require that the instructor formulate a repeat of one or more class assignments or assessments, followed by a recalculation of the student's grade, or
- recommend a specified grade change.

Based on the committee's findings, it shall be the decision of the PA Dean as to whether the grade shall be changed. This decision will be final. No further appeal is possible.

## **Student Employment Policies**

### **Working for the PA Program**

Students cannot be required to work for the PA Program. (5e A3.04/ 6e A3.02)

PA students may have extensive prior clinical backgrounds, but are never allowed to substitute for or function as instructional faculty or clinical or administrative staff. Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences, and skills may share their knowledge and skills in didactic and hands-on learning sessions with direct faculty oversight; however, such students are not to be the primary instructor or instructor of record for any component of the curriculum. During the supervised clinical practical experiences, students will not substitute for clinical or administrative staff. Any student who is required to primarily fulfill the job duties of a clinical or administrative staff person must notify the appropriate Director of Clinical Education. (5e A3.05 a,b / 6e A3.03 a,b)

### **Employment While Enrolled as a PA Student**

Because of the pace and rigor of the MSPAS Program, students are strongly discouraged from working while in the Program. Employment is not considered an excuse for tardiness, absence(s), poor performance, or course/clinical rotation attendance and scheduling requirements.

Employment during PA school is highly discouraged, and students must inform their academic advisor if they are working. (5e A3.15e / 6e A3.14i)

### **Student Soliciting Clinical Rotations**

PA students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Students may make suggestions to the Clinical Phase Committee for sites and preceptors utilizing the Program-required process. Student suggested sites and preceptors will be reviewed and evaluated for educational suitability by the Clinical Phase Committee. It is at the PA Program's sole

discretion to approve clinical sites and preceptors for use as supervised clinical practice experiences for individual students. (5e A3.03 / 6e A3.08)

### **Student Travel to Required Rotations**

Reliable transportation is required throughout a student's time in the Program. While many of the Program's clinical rotations are within the nearby communities, students should expect to commute up to 90 minutes to and from clinical rotations and may complete rotations outside of a commutable distance. All travel expenses related to a student's education while enrolled in the PA Program are the responsibility of the student. When clinical rotations occur outside of commutable distances, there may or may not be PA Program-identified housing options and housing expenses are the responsibility of the student. These expenses are factored into the expected cost of attendance figures. (6e 3.14j)

### **Faculty as Health Care Providers to Students**

The MSPAS principal faculty, the Medical Director, and/or the Program Director may not participate in the health care of any PA student except in emergencies. (5e A3.09/ 6e A3.06)

### **Advanced Placement**

The MSPAS Program curriculum is administered in a sequential fashion with each subsequent semester of coursework building upon the previous one. Consequently, the Program does not consider applicants for advanced placement. (5e A3.13c/ 6e A3.12c)

### **Minimum Technical Standards for Admissions, Continuation, and Graduation** (5e A3.13e / 6e A3.12e)

Technical standards are defined as the attributes considered necessary for students to complete their education and training and subsequently enter clinical practice. These standards are prerequisites for entrance to, continuation within, and graduation from the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) Program. They may also be prerequisites to licensure by state professional boards. Reasonable accommodation will be offered for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The Program has the ethical responsibility for the safety of patients with whom students and graduates will come in contact, and to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent PAs.

Students must verify that they meet these Technical Standards prior to or at the time of matriculation to the MSPAS Program and maintain these standards during their PA training. Students are obligated to alert the MSPAS Program in a timely fashion of any change in their ability to meet the Technical Standards. Students may be subject to dismissal if they do not possess the minimum physical, cognitive, and mental technical standards necessary to complete the entire course of study or fully participate in all aspects of PA training.

Students must possess aptitude, ability, and skills in the following six (6) areas: Observation, Communication, Motor and Sensory Function, Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities, Behavioral and Social Attributes, and Ethical and Legal Standards.

**Observation**

Students must possess sufficient sensory and perceptual abilities to accurately observe demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and patient care activities. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination in order to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan.

The student must possess the ability to accurately perceive information through sensory input in the educational and patient care settings. Visual (near and distance), auditory, tactile, and olfactory senses are used to assess the patient and disease processes. Additionally, the ability to observe non-verbal cues such as posture and body language is needed for diagnostic information and healthy patient-provider interactions. Multiple instructional methods are used throughout the Program and the student must be able to learn from all of the following: auditory instruction, written materials and visual aids, hands-on kinesthetic learning and demonstrations, microscopic and diagnostic images, and physical examination.

**Communication**

Accurate, timely, and professional communication is essential in all aspects of health care. The student must be able to speak clearly, effectively, and compassionately in all interactions. The student must be able to hear and understand the spoken English language and listen for more subtle sounds on physical examination. The student must be able to use hand-written and electronic methods to complete assignments in a timely manner, accurately and sensitively document patient encounters, and communicate with the health care team and any other relevant parties. Students must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional cues, such as sadness and agitation.

**Motor**

Intact gross and fine motor functions, sensation, and equilibrium are necessary for PA curriculum completion and for patient care. Students must possess sufficient sensory and motor function to perform physical examinations using palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. This requires sufficient exteroceptive sense (visual, auditory, touch, and temperature), coordination to examine patients, and adequate motor skills to use diagnostic instruments. Students must be able to accurately discern normal and abnormal findings, using instruments including, but not limited to, tuning forks, stethoscopes, and sphygmomanometers.

Students should be able to execute physical movements needed to provide general care and emergency treatments to patients. The student, therefore, must be able to respond promptly to emergencies within the hospital or practice setting and must not hinder the ability of his/her co-workers to provide prompt care. This includes, but is not limited to, assisting in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), administering intravenous medications, applying pressure to arrest bleeding, maintaining an airway, and suturing wounds.

### **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities**

The intellectual ability to assimilate large amounts of complex information is necessary for the successful completion of the MSPAS Program. A PA must be able to extract and synthesize significant information from the medical history, physical exam, and diagnostic testing to formulate diagnoses and care plans. Problem-solving skills within time constraints, without additional time given for written, verbal, and visual information, are essential for Program success. Additionally, one must be able to comprehend and retain information learned from the educational process, medical literature, clinical experience, and continuing medical education to deliver quality patient care. Critical thinking by combining knowledge and reasoning to complete tasks, as well as to analyze, implement, assess, and reassess patient information and care plans, is also required. It is essential the student is able to incorporate new information from many sources toward the formulation of a diagnosis and plan. Good judgment in patient assessment and diagnostic/therapeutic planning is also essential. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the extent of their knowledge to others.

### **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

Students must conduct themselves in a professional, compassionate, and emotionally mature manner. Professional dress, language, and actions are expected of the PA student. The student must be respectful to others, including but not limited to other classmates, instructors, staff, health care team members, patients, and family members. Students must have the emotional maturity to accept criticism and respond by modifying behaviors. Students must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly, without warning, and/or in unpredictable ways. The student will also be able to engage in appropriate physical contact with the patient during the physical examination and exhibit sensitivity to the personal nature of these interactions by using a caring bedside manner. The successful practice of medicine requires one to be adaptable, flexible, and compassionate towards people from all backgrounds and belief systems. The student will develop appropriate interpersonal relationships with others and strive to engage, motivate, and educate patients as part of the comprehensive treatment plan.

### **Ethical and Legal Standards**

Students must understand the basis and content of both general and medical ethics. Students must possess attributes such as compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility, and inclusivity. Students must recognize limitations in their knowledge, skills, and abilities and seek appropriate assistance with their identified limitations. Students whose performance is impaired by a substance use disorder are not suitable candidates for admission, promotion, or graduation. In addition, should a student be charged or convicted of any misdemeanor or felony offense while in the Program, they must immediately notify the Program of the charge or conviction. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal. To be licensed as a PA, students must meet the legal standards in the state where they plan to practice.

## **Immunizations and Health Screenings** (5e A3.07a,b / 6e A3.09 a,b)

The PA Program follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s current immunization guidelines for health care workers in establishing its requirements for students to participate in supervised patient care activities. It is the sole responsibility of the student to complete and submit all of the correct requirements/documentation to the Program's third-party compliance reviewer before the due date(s) and to never let any of those requirements/documentation expire while enrolled.

Student health records are confidential and not accessible to or reviewed by the Program, principal or instructional faculty, or staff, except for immunization and health screening results, which may be maintained and released with written permission from the students. Student noncompliance with immunizations at any time while enrolled in the Program may result in ineligibility for clinical placement and/or continuation in SCPEs. This may lead to delayed graduation. If the student is unable to complete the required clinical education requirements as a result of noncompliance, this will result in dismissal from the Program. (5e A3.19 / 6e A3.18)

Please note that clinical sites may require additional vaccinations and documentation of titers for certain infectious diseases, such as hepatitis C. Vaccines not specifically listed in this policy are not required by the Program (e.g., polio, meningococcal); however, individual clinical sites may require them. The Program will communicate additional requirements to students in advance. Students are encouraged to discuss immunizations not addressed in this policy with their personal health care provider for individualized recommendations. Students who do not meet the above criteria may not be able to meet the requirements to complete clinical rotations and progress through the Program.

Student documentation must include the following:

- Student's name and date of birth
- Applicable dates
- Name and address of facility or provider of services (e.g., labs, exam)
- Exams with the printed name of the provider with credentials and signature
- Documentation uploaded as a PDF

### **Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)**

- Two doses of MMR vaccine at least 28 days apart **or** positive quantitative laboratory titer for all three components
- Students without documentation must undergo serologic testing; negative titers require a two-dose series

### **Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (Tdap/Td)**

- One documented Tdap vaccination
- Tdap/Td booster every 10 years thereafter

### **Varicella (Chickenpox)**

- Two doses of varicella vaccine at least 28 days apart **or** positive quantitative laboratory titer
- Negative titer requires two-dose series, four weeks apart

### **Hepatitis B**

- Completion of a 3-dose series (Recombivax HB or Engerix-B) **or** 2-dose Heplisav-B series **and** quantitative antibody titer
- Negative titer requires series repeat and follow-up titer one month after final dose
- “In-progress” designation allowed if series started before matriculation
- Students non-responsive after two series are considered non-responders

### **Tuberculosis (TB) Screening**

- Baseline two-step PPD skin test (TST) **or** IGRA test (QuantiFERON Gold or T-Spot) prior to matriculation
- Students with prior BCG vaccination or born outside the U.S. must complete IGRA testing
- Positive TB test requires symptom evaluation and chest X-ray
- Annual TB testing **not required** unless there is known exposure or clinical site requirement

### **Influenza**

- Annual vaccination by Program deadline (first fall and before clinical phase)
- Signed declinations allowed, but may affect clinical placement and on-time graduation

### **COVID-19**

- Strongly encouraged vaccination (one dose or two-dose approved)
- Signed declinations allowed, but may affect clinical placement and on-time graduation

### **Additional Requirements**

- Clinical sites may require extra vaccines, titers, or screenings (e.g., Hepatitis C, TB screening)
- The Program does not offer international curricular components

### **Health Screening**

- Include physical/statement of fitness
- Must be completed in accordance with acceptance materials in order to matriculate into the Program; may need to be completed again prior to the start of the clinical year
- Provider must confirm the student can meet technical standards as a PA student

### **Background Checks**

Due to growing nationwide concerns regarding the suitability of today's health care professionals, many hospitals, health care systems, clinics, and physician offices require disclosure of an individual's criminal history. In addition, many state statutes also require disclosure of an individual's criminal history in order to apply for certain health professional certificates, registrations, and licenses. See PCHS [Background Check Protocol](#).

### **Drug Screening**

All admitted students who declare their intent to enroll by submitting the required tuition deposit will be required to complete a drug screening. See PCHS [Drug Screening Protocol](#).

*Pepperdine University reserves the right to modify or amend policies, procedures, or related materials periodically to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, accreditation standards, and institutional requirements.*