



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH  
UNIVERSITY  
*Physician Assistant Program*

# **Student Handbook**

## **Class of 2025**

## **Welcome**

**Congratulations on your acceptance into a most demanding, yet exceptionally rewarding academic program. You should be especially proud of this accomplishment while overcoming the challenges of the past few years! We are confident that you will be pleased with both this program and the career decision you have made!**

**The Department of Physician Assistant (PA) Studies is located within the School of Health Sciences. The program is designed as a full time, 27-month graduate program leading to a Masters in Physician Assistant Studies.**

**The program is broken into three phases; the didactic phase, which is the initial academic component and is comprised of three semesters in campus classrooms. The clinical phase, comprised of four semesters, will provide you with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills you acquired in the first year to clinical practice. You will train with preceptors and their staff to improve your ability to provide comprehensive, competent healthcare across varied populations.**

**These rotations are your “real world” chance to practice what you have learned. Hard work, motivation, commitment, resilience and enthusiasm will be rewarded with newfound knowledge, skills and confidence! You gain personal satisfaction and self-respect in knowing that you are working to improve the health outcomes and quality of life for these patients.**

**The final component of the program is the Summative Phase, which typically occurs just prior to graduation. During this time, the faculty will assess the readiness of a senior student for graduation. This component of the program is designed to gauge medical knowledge, clinical skills, interpersonal communication skills, clinical decision making and professionalism. It will evaluate the student’s ability to apply these traits in clinically relevant scenarios and meet the program’s expectations of a graduate.**

**This student handbook was developed to provide you with information regarding program specific policies, which will assist students as they transition into the program. Students are referred to the University Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog, which are available on the student’s myMount page. Important information with links to the Mount Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog are included in many areas of this handbook and links to available resources are listed in Appendix B. These documents are available in their entirety on the myMount intranet.**

**On behalf of our excellent faculty and staff, congratulations on your accomplishment and welcome to the program. Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss issues, which may develop over the course of the program.**

**Sincerely,**

**Patrick Cafferty, MPAS, PA-C, DFAAPA  
Associate Professor and Program Director**

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## **Introduction**

While every student that is enrolled at Mount St. Joseph University will be covered by the policies and procedures as dictated by the University, including but not limited to the Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog, students of the Physician Assistant program face unique situations that may or may not be addressed in the general student handbooks. Hence, this student handbook is published every year to serve as an additional resource for the PA student to refer to during their time in the program.

Although every attempt has been made to make this handbook helpful, it is not comprehensive and may not address every possible situation. When confronted with a situation not covered in the student handbook, consult the University Student Handbook and/or the Graduate Catalog. You may also seek guidance from the Physician Assistant program's faculty and staff on how to proceed.

All policies and procedures contained within the Physician Assistant program have been reviewed by institutional administrators to assure that contents are consistent with federal and state statutes, rules and regulations prior to publication. This handbook is reviewed annually for its relevancy and application by the Program Planning Committee and faculty.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the application or meaning of any topic(s) covered in this handbook, contact your faculty advisor who will guide you to the correct answer.

## **Mission/Vision Statement**

The specific mission of the PA program is to educate outstanding, compassionate clinicians, fully prepared to deliver high quality, accessible health care demonstrating commitment to life-long learning and ethical practice.

The vision of the PA program states that graduates will be recognized for their leadership and for the quality of health care they provide, exemplifying professionalism, empathy and an attitude of service to others.

## **Program Goals**

1. To maintain accreditation with the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant.
2. To attract and graduate students who model the PA program mission by demonstrating compassion, empathy and cultural awareness.
3. To graduate students committed to life-long learning and ethical practice.
4. To prepare clinicians who exhibit excellent medical knowledge, interpersonal communication skills and professionalism.
5. To educate clinicians who demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

## **Accreditation Status**

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Mount St. Joseph University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Mount St. Joseph University**. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA *Standards*.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the *Standards*. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **March 2032**. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation *Standards* and ARC-PA policy.

Mount St. Joseph University's PA program has also been approved by the Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission.

Graduation from an accredited PA program is the **only** way to be eligible to sit for the National Certifying Exam (PANCE). For more information regarding the implications of accreditation please visit [www.arc-pa.org](http://www.arc-pa.org).

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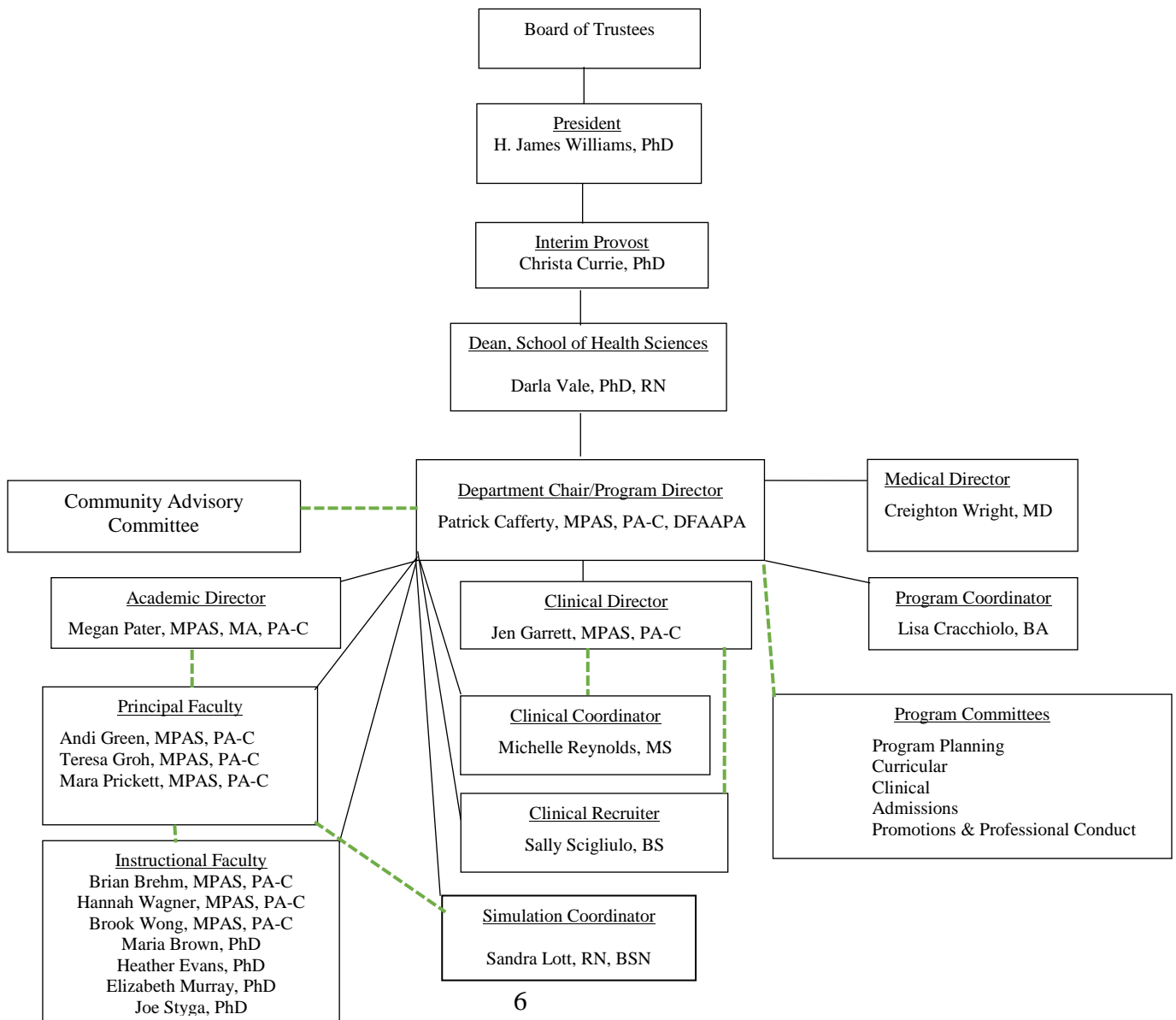
## Organizational Chart

The PA faculty and staff provide a full range of academic and administrative services. This is complemented by the additional expert part-time, instructional faculty and by the board certified physician who serves as Medical Director. Refer to the chart below to contact any program faculty or staff member.



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH  
UNIVERSITY

### Organizational Chart School of Health Sciences Department of Physician Assistant Studies



## **Faculty and Staff Contact Information**

### **Dean**

Darla Vale, PhD, RN (513) 244-4295 [Darla.Vale@msj.edu](mailto:Darla.Vale@msj.edu)

### **Program Director**

Patrick Cafferty, MPAS, PA-C (513) 244-4250 [Patrick.Cafferty@msj.edu](mailto:Patrick.Cafferty@msj.edu)

### **Medical Director**

Creighton B. Wright, MD, FACS (513) 244-4224 [Creighton.Wright@msj.edu](mailto:Creighton.Wright@msj.edu)

### **Academic Director**

Megan Pater, MPAS, MA, PA-C (513) 244-4224 [Megan.Pater@msj.edu](mailto:Megan.Pater@msj.edu)

### **Clinical Director**

Jen Garrett, MPAS, PA-C (513) 244-4385 [Jen.Garrett@msj.edu](mailto:Jen.Garrett@msj.edu)

### **Principal Faculty**

Andi Green, MPAS, PA-C (513) 244-4310 [Andi.Green@msj.edu](mailto:Andi.Green@msj.edu)

Teresa Groh, MPAS, PA-C (513) 244-4533 [Teresa.Groh@msj.edu](mailto:Teresa.Groh@msj.edu)

Mara Prickett, MPAS PA-C (513) 244-4488 [Mara.Prickett@msj.edu](mailto:Mara.Prickett@msj.edu)

### **Program Coordinator**

Lisa Cracchiolo, BA (513) 244-4375 [Lisa.Cracchiolo@msj.edu](mailto:Lisa.Cracchiolo@msj.edu)

### **Clinical Coordinator**

Michelle Reynolds, MS (513) 244-4433 [Michelle.Reynolds@msj.edu](mailto:Michelle.Reynolds@msj.edu)

### **Clinical Recruiter**

Sally Scigliulo, BS (513) 244-4436 [Sally.Scigliulo@msj.edu](mailto:Sally.Scigliulo@msj.edu)

### **Simulation Coordinator**

Sandi Lott, RN, BSN (513) 244-4235 [Sandra.Lott@msj.edu](mailto:Sandra.Lott@msj.edu)

### **Instructional Faculty**

Maria Brown, PhD [Maria.Brown@msj.edu](mailto:Maria.Brown@msj.edu)

Heather Evans, PhD [Heather.Evans@msj.edu](mailto:Heather.Evans@msj.edu)

Elizabeth Murray, PhD, D-ABFA [Elizabeth.Murray@msj.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Murray@msj.edu)

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## The Physician Assistant Profession

### **Definition of a PA**

Physician Assistants (PAs) are healthcare providers who are nationally certified and state licensed to practice medicine in every medical and surgical specialty and setting. PAs practice and prescribe in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and now in many countries around the world.

### **Description of the PA Profession**

Physician assistants are academically and clinically prepared to practice medicine in collaboration with a doctor of medicine or osteopathy. The physician-PA team relationship is fundamental to the PA profession and enhances the delivery of high quality health care. Within the physician-PA relationship, PAs make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive and health maintenance services. The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. PA practice is focused on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activities. The role of the PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills and the capacity to respond to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. Essential attributes of the graduate PA include an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients and a commitment to the patient's welfare.

PAs are employed in virtually all types of health care settings -- hospitals, clinics, private physician offices, schools, and other health care facilities. PAs can be found in communities of all sizes and in virtually every medical and surgical specialty. Although the majority of PAs work in primary care medicine -- family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics -- many work in specialties such as cardiothoracic surgery and orthopedics. PAs may also work in the areas of medical education, health administration and research. These services may be provided to individuals of any age in various settings when they are part of the collaborating physician's practice

### **Responsibilities of the Physician Assistant**

**Physician Assistant students are educated and trained to perform the following:**

#### **1. Obtain Patient History**

Objective focuses on skill in obtaining, documenting, and interpreting the patient's history, identifying pertinent factors, and interpreting risk factors.

#### **2. Perform Physical Exam**

Objective focuses on physical exam skills such as recognizing, interpreting, and documenting pertinent findings and using required techniques.

#### **3. Using Laboratory and Diagnostic Studies**

Objective focuses on skill in selecting the appropriate studies, interpreting, and documenting the results.



**4. Formulating the Differential and Most Likely Diagnosis**

Objective focuses on skill in formulating and documenting the differential diagnosis and the most likely diagnosis in light of history, physical or diagnostic test findings.

**5. Evaluating Severity of Patient's Problems**

Objective focuses on skill in evaluating the severity of the condition and the need for further action.

**6. Management of Health Maintenance and Disease Prevention**

Objective focuses on skill in identifying risk factors and selecting appropriate preventive therapeutic agents or techniques.

**7. Clinical Intervention**

Objective focuses on skill in prioritizing management and selecting the appropriate medical and/or surgical treatment. Focus on determining the appropriate follow-up schedule or monitoring approach.

**8. Clinical Therapeutics**

Objective focuses on skill in selecting the appropriate pharmacotherapy, recognizing actions of drugs, and educating patients about the effects of drugs and drug-drug interactions.

**9. Legal/Ethical and Health Care Systems**

Objective focuses on issues such as patient autonomy, PA/patient relationships, PA/physician relationships, and use of unorthodox or experimental therapies, end-of-life considerations, and treatment of minors.

**10. Applying Scientific Concepts (Basic Clinical Sciences & Research Data)**

Objective focuses on skill in identifying the processes responsible for a given condition. Focus on basic interpretation of research data and sensitivity and specificity of selected tests.

**11. Work Related Behavioral Objectives**

There are many work-related behaviors important to successful employment in healthcare. The following are some of the behaviors to consider when evaluating the student: productivity, work quality, initiative, teamwork, attitude, communication skills, and overall performance as a potential employee.

## **Professionalism**

As members of the health care community, all health science students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the principles and obligations inherent in professional practice.

Professional maturity, integrity, and competence are expected of students in every aspect of their education, in the classroom and clinical setting; befitting the learned profession, they are entering. Because complete confidence in the honor and integrity of health care practitioners is essential, students are held to the highest standards of intellectual and academic integrity.

Health Science professionals, including students in training, are expected to adhere to a high standard of behavior. These individuals are expected to demonstrate the following characteristics of professional behavior, in clinical, academic, and related settings:

**Diligence** – A professional is expected to: perform his or her tasks promptly and completely, with appropriate level of attention to detail and accuracy, acknowledge mistakes, accept and utilize constructive feedback, take steps to correct errors and to be punctual.

**Presentation and Demeanor** – Professional appearance requires that personal hygiene and dress are appropriate. Your attire and grooming must indicate respect for colleagues and patients. Verbal and nonverbal communication is appropriate to the role and situation.

**Personal Interactions** – Professional behavior dictates that you treat others with positive regard, dignity, respect and compassion. You must maintain confidentiality and respect for personal privacy appropriate to the role and situation.

**Integrity** – A professional is forthright and displays honesty in all communication. The professional is completely honest in all documentation and acknowledges errors.

**Ethical Behavior** – A professional upholds ethical standards of the profession, and of society.

**Judgment** – A professional evaluates a situation and determines an appropriate course of action, recognizing his or her own limitations and seeking help when needed.

## **Professionalism Policy**

The PA community has defined the skills, knowledge, integrity, appearance and attitudes required for a Physician Assistant to demonstrate professional competency. It is imperative that our students graduate with a thorough understanding of the medical profession and can demonstrate their competency through program assessment. Our students have a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the profession and meet societal expectations.

It is the expectation that all students enrolled at Mount St. Joseph University will maintain high ethical and professional standards consistent with the Mission and Values of the institution.

The PA Program expects all students to:

- Demonstrate behavior with faculty, staff, student colleagues, and patients that is respectful, mature and empathetic including adherence to the program's Communication and Social Media Policy.
- Demonstrate a Growth Mindset exhibiting “dedication and hard work to create a love of learning and resilience that is essential for great accomplishment”. (Dweck; 2015)
- Demonstrate tolerance for uncertainty, and the ability to give and receive constructive feedback from faculty, staff, and student colleagues.
- Exhibit honesty and integrity by abiding by the Mount St Joseph University Academic Honesty policy in all exams, quizzes, and graded assignments. See the Graduate Catalog at: <https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/student-rights-policies/academic-policies/index.html>
- Perform responsibly and with accountability by arriving promptly to all scheduled classes and clinical sites ready to work efficiently and effectively as a team member when assigned, adhering to the program's Attendance and Work Policies.
- Maintain an appropriate personal appearance by adhering to the program's Dress Code Policy.

Some behaviors or patterns may raise concerns as to the student's suitability to continue in this program of study. Inappropriate behaviors for a health profession student may include, **but are not limited to**, breaching patient confidentiality; using illegal or synthetic drugs or abusing controlled substances; “dating” or becoming sexually involved with a patient, preceptor, faculty or staff; undertaking a procedure or scope of practice beyond that of a student; disobeying or showing disrespect for faculty, staff or peers; showing a judgmental attitude toward patients; or revealing a lack of concern or compassion in practice.

If a faculty or staff member identifies serious deficits in any area of the student's performance, including professionalism, the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee will be notified in writing. The committee will conduct an investigation, and after completion may recommend actions ranging from counseling and non-academic probation to dismissal from the program.

### **Attendance Policy**

Physician Assistant students are **required** to attend all scheduled classes (virtual or face-to-face), laboratory sessions and clinical practice experiences except for emergencies, personal illness or injury. Only in cases of true family emergency, illness, or injury, will you be excused.

- Absence due to illness of two consecutive days or longer will require medical clearance to excuse the absence and return to the program.
- Medical clearance must be completed by a licensed physician, PA or NP and submitted to the Program Coordinator. This cannot be issued by a family/faculty member.
- The final determination of “true emergency” will be at the discretion of the Program Director and/or the Medical Director.

- Being absent on the day of a test is an unexcused absence and you will receive a grade of zero unless you can provide documentation that explains why the absence should be excused (e.g., a physician's note).
- The Student **MUST** notify the Program Coordinator by 7:45 am on the day of the absence by emailing the program ([PAprogram@msj.edu](mailto:PAprogram@msj.edu)) and copying the appropriate faculty/preceptor for the scheduled class(es) and/or rotation for the day of the absence.
- The student must do this for every day that he/she is absent. Sending a message through a classmate or other faculty member is NOT acceptable. The consequences for excessive absences will be determined by the Program Director and the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.
- The responsibility for notifying the program of anticipated absences, reasons for emergency absences, and how all assignments will be completed, rests entirely on the student.
- PA program faculty are not expected to give make-up exams for unauthorized absences.
- Unexcused absences will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action and a failing grade.
- Business appointments, routine dental and medical appointments, weddings, graduations, and other social events should be scheduled outside of scheduled class hours. Accommodations will not be made for unexcused absences.

A decision to cancel class due to inclement weather or other reasons will be made by the University or Program Director. Announcement of cancellation will be sent to faculty and students via email and other forms of communication. All cancelled classes will be made up during the remaining weeks of the semester.

Additional detailed information related to the University policies on **Emergency Medical Leave and Temporary Illness, Injury, Pregnancy or Related Condition Modification Policy** is available to students on the myMount page:

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Learning\\_Center/Disability\\_Services.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Learning_Center/Disability_Services.jnz) or in the Graduate Catalog at <https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/student-rights-policies/academic-policies/academic-standards.html>

## **Communication and Social Media Policy**

The program needs to know how to reach you at all times. Please report any changes to your name, address, telephone number and/or emergency contact numbers to the PA Program Coordinator during normal business hours. The official method of communication between students and the PA program is through the Mount St. Joseph University email system. Students are provided a university email address prior to the program orientation and **are required to check and respond to e-mails on a daily basis**. The use of other email domains (i.e., Hotmail or Gmail) for official communication is unacceptable.

The use of social media has become a very common means of communication in today's society however, as stated above, it is not to be used for official communication or program related messages.

The PA Program expects that all faculty, staff and students will maintain a professional relationship consistent with ethical best practices and precludes students and faculty from being "friends" on social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, etc.) while attending the academic program.

Further, the program strictly prohibits the "posting" of inappropriate pictures, videos or comments to internet sites or social media pages for public viewing. This includes pictures or statements related to patient care, which may breach patient privacy laws. Violation of this policy will result in the removal of a student from the classroom or clinical practice experience, and subsequent dismissal from the program. Examples of inappropriate material includes, but is not limited to, breaches of patient privacy, foul language, pornography, discrimination, harassment, as well as threatening, inflammatory or defamatory comments.

If students choose to disregard this policy they will be referred to the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee. The committee will conduct an investigation, and after completion may recommend actions ranging from counseling and non-academic probation to dismissal from the program.

Students are afforded the privilege of access to the campus computer network on the assumption that they will use them responsibly. The institutional guidelines on Responsible Use can be found in the University Student Handbook accessible at:

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Technology/Technology\\_Policies.jnz?portlet=Responsible\\_Use\\_Policy](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Technology/Technology_Policies.jnz?portlet=Responsible_Use_Policy)

## **Work Policy**

Successful completion of the PA Program requires a full time, year-round commitment. The following policy will provide students with important information to enhance your success.

- Students are ***discouraged*** from working in any form of employment while enrolled in the didactic phase of the PA program.
- Outside activities and working are not considered to be valid excuses for poor academic performance or lack of attendance at required PA program activities.

- PA students cannot ever work for the Program and may never substitute for or function as instructional faculty.
- Students are ***prohibited*** from working in any capacity while enrolled in the clinical phase of the PA program. It is especially important during the clinical rotations phase of the program that students be available to their preceptors on short notice for special learning opportunities outside of regular office hours. Failure to fully participate in all clinical related activities is considered abandonment and will result in failure of the rotation unless it is an excused absence per program guidelines.
- Students enrolled in the PA program cannot substitute for practicing Physician Assistants or provide unsupervised services common to a certified PA while at any learning site while enrolled in the program.
- PA students must never work as a substitute for clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical practice experiences.

If students choose to disregard this work policy, they will be referred to the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee. The committee will conduct an investigation, and after completion may recommend actions ranging from counseling and non-academic probation to dismissal from the program.

### **Dress Code Policy**

Appropriate personal appearance is a requirement in all phases of the program to include proper attire, grooming and personal hygiene. Classroom (virtual or face-to-face) attire should be comfortable but modest. Avoid extremes in attire or grooming which may be offensive to peers, faculty or patients. Short skirts, short shorts, hats, sleeveless t-shirts and open toe shoes are not permissible. Strapless, bra-less, backless, low cut tops, halter tops, bare midriffs, spaghetti/thin straps, and any attire that shows excessive cleavage are not permissible. Trousers should remain at the waist and not “drooping” to reveal undergarments or bare skin.

If you question wearing certain attire, the more conservative is probably the safest bet. You may see others wearing **“less than professional”** attire, however, that does not justify you wearing the same.

- Dental and personal hygiene is to be managed well, including the use of deodorants or antiperspirants.
- Long hair should be restrained while engaged in clinical activity. Hair should be clean, of a color natural to the human species and appropriately combed or styled. Facial hair should be neatly trimmed and conform to professional appearance standards.
- Avoid wearing strong perfumes or colognes, as they may cause untoward reactions with peers and patients.
- Jewelry should be kept to a minimum. No body piercing should be visible with the exception of pierced ears.
- Culturally significant piercings or attire will be considered on an individual basis.
- Artificial/Acrylic nails are not allowed in medical institutions.
- Tattoos should not be visible at any time for the duration of the PA Program.

In classrooms during the didactic phase, the suggested attire will be “business casual”, which typically includes clean jeans without rips or tears, slacks or khakis, collared shirt or blouse, knee length dress, knee length skirt, or knee length shorts, and loafers or dress shoes that cover all or most of the foot. Mount Spirit wear, and running shoes may also be worn in the classroom.

While in clinical skills and physical diagnosis labs, the attire will include clean grey scrubs along with closed toe shoes. Undershirts or undergarments should always be worn under your scrub top to maintain modesty during clinical activity.

During the didactic phase of the program, we require all students to have their student identification card available to access student facilities, including clinical skill labs and library. During the clinical phase of the program a clean short white lab coat with name tag and program patch identifying you as a Physician Assistant Student **must** be worn at all times.

Always dress in a professional manner as you will become the symbol and public representation of the program, the university, and the PA profession. Your attire and behavior will become a reflection that may shape the image of Physician Assistants to others.

The program reserves the right to ask any student to remove or cover anything that is deemed inappropriate or unprofessional. Failure to comply with the dress code policy will result in a referral to the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee for further action, which may include dismissal from the program.

## **Health Care and Insurance**

All students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program are required to have personal health insurance. Students must submit proof of coverage to both the program and university annually e.g., a photocopy of a current health insurance card. Failure to comply may preclude a student from participating in some clinical practice experiences. You are not an employee of the program or the University and as such, you are not entitled to worker’s compensation coverage.

All Mount St. Joseph Students are eligible to participate in health and counseling services offered through the Wellness Center, located in the Harrington Center. These services are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

See [https://mymount.msje.edu/ICS/Mount\\_Community/Wellness\\_Center/](https://mymount.msje.edu/ICS/Mount_Community/Wellness_Center/) for additional information.

While unlikely, injuries or health issues may occur during the course of your training. As stated in ARC-PA Standard A3.09; *the principal faculty, medical director and program director are precluded from participating as health care providers for students in the program, except in an emergency situation.*

Students should report any condition, which might endanger their health and well-being or that of other students, patients, program faculty or staff, to the Wellness Center or their personal health care provider immediately. If medical attention is required at any point during the Program, **the costs incurred are the student’s responsibility**, and not that of the PA Program or Mount St. Joseph University.



## **Immunization Policy**

The program requires that each student provide verification of immunization status prior to matriculation into the program and annually thereafter to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, staff and patients. The required immunizations are those described in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for healthcare professionals, namely Hepatitis B, Influenza, MMR, Varicella, and Tdap. Additional information is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>

Students will update their immunization status annually through the Castle Branch website, which students utilized prior to matriculation into the program. Students will receive an email detailing the list of required immunizations, including a TB skin test, along with information on how to provide the necessary documentation. This information **must** be available to the program prior to scheduling a student for any clinical experience. Students are responsible for the costs associated with these annual immunizations and should budget accordingly. Failure to complete these requirements will, at the very least, delay the student's progression in the program and may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including possible dismissal from the program.

### **Covid-19 Information**

The Mount St. Joseph University (University or Mount) COVID-19 Safety Guidelines (Guidelines) are a temporary University Policy that applies to all students, employees, and visitors and to all aspects of campus operations. The Guidelines are intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the University community and beyond. They are predicated on the individual responsibility all persons have to monitor their health and to take precautions in the time of COVID-19. The current version of the Guidelines are available on myMount under the Policies tab ([https://mymount.msje.edu/ICS/Info\\_and\\_Policies/](https://mymount.msje.edu/ICS/Info_and_Policies/)). All students are encouraged to read the Guidelines in their entirety. Additional resources are available at:

[https://mymount.msje.edu/ICS/Mount\\_Community/Wellness\\_Center/COVID-19\\_Resources.jnz](https://mymount.msje.edu/ICS/Mount_Community/Wellness_Center/COVID-19_Resources.jnz)

As outlined in the CDC Guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19.html>), it is recommended that healthcare personnel receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Students who are not vaccinated may request a University approved exemption to this policy, however they;

- Are required to follow all other University Guidelines and applicable rules, practices and protocols related to COVID-19
- Must understand that, as a result of a COVID-19 vaccine exemption, a clinical, internship or other external placement required for the student's academic progression and/or graduation may not be possible and the student is responsible for any class or course work missed as a result of an approved COVID-19 vaccine exemption

The program will assist a student initiate a request for exemption from COVID-19 vaccine requirements imposed by a clinical facility, if it indicates that it is willing to consider such a request. The availability of clinical rotation sites that do not require students to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine to participate may not be possible or may be extremely limited, which would result in delayed graduation.



## **Criminal Background and Drug Screen Policy**

The Mount St. Joseph University School of Health Sciences Criminal Background and Drug Screening Policy applies to all students in the PA program and is included as Appendix A. Students must read this policy and sign the acknowledgement form attesting to their compliance.

Students will update their background checks and drug screens annually, and as may be necessary to facilitate compliance with the requirements of health facilities used by the program for supervised clinical experiences. This is undertaken through the Castle Branch website, which students utilized prior to matriculation into the program. Students will receive an email detailing the items necessary and how to provide the necessary documentation. This information **must** be available to the program prior to scheduling a student for any clinical experience. Students are responsible for the costs associated with the required background checks and drug screening procedures and should budget accordingly. Failure to complete these requirements will, at the very least, delay the student's progression in the program and may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including possible dismissal from the program.

## **Accident and Personal Safety Policy**

The Mount St. Joseph University campus' safety and security is the responsibility of the University Police Department. Police Officers are available on campus 24 hours a day/365 days a year.

- If a situation develops that poses imminent danger, dial "0" from any campus phone.
- If a non-imminent safety or security issue is identified, notify faculty or staff that is available or contact campus police at 513-244-4226 or simply "4226" from any campus phone.

Further information is available in the University Student Handbook and on the Public Safety & Campus Police website accessible at: <http://www.msj.edu/student-life/public-safety-campus-police/>

Safety and security while on clinical rotations is the responsibility of the participating facility. Students should exercise good judgment while off campus, in terms of their own personal safety. Most institutions have security personnel available to walk students to their cars after hours. If an incident occurs while on a clinical rotation, the student should immediately contact the institution's security team or the local authorities along with the Clinical Director or Program Director.

Exposures to blood and other body fluids occur across a wide variety of occupations including health care workers such as Physician Assistants. Students, in the course of their training, can be exposed to blood through needle stick and other sharps injuries, mucous membrane, and skin exposures. Students will receive instruction in methods of prevention utilizing universal precautions and other risk reduction behaviors using OSHA Guidelines before undertaking educational activities that place them at risk.

**Should a student sustain a needle stick injury or exposure to a potentially infectious and/or hazardous substance during any instructional or clinical activity:**

- Report the incident **immediately** to the appropriate person:
  - If you are on-campus and receive a needle stick or other exposure, wash the affected area and contact the clinical instructor or the program director.
  - If you are at an off campus clinical site, wash the affected area and contact your preceptor and the clinical director.
- They will follow the policies in effect at that site to provide immediate proper care and necessary follow-up care. If necessary, you will be taken to the local emergency department for immediate care and subsequent follow-up.
- The student will be responsible for any cost incurred for evaluation and treatment. Students are required to have health insurance at all times while enrolled in the program.
- Complete the appropriate School of Health Science Incident form and return it to the program director's office **within 24 hours** of the incident.
- A School of Health Sciences Incident form **must** be completed for any accident or incident that occurs, regardless of whether treatment was needed or not.

Incident forms are available here:



SOHS 2017 incident  
report form classroom



SOHS 2017 Incident  
report clinical form r

## **Professional Liability Insurance**

The University provides all health science students, coverage under a professional liability insurance policy. This coverage includes minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 in aggregate for the duration of the program. Clinical sites are offered a copy of the policy as evidence of the student's coverage. Coverage is in effect for program related clinical experiences, however no coverage is available for outside employment or volunteer activity not sponsored through the Physician Assistant program.

## **Harassment Policies and Procedures**

The PA program fully supports and adheres to the University's policies related to student grievances, mistreatment, and allegations of harassment, which are defined and consistent with state and federal law. These documents are available in the University Student Handbook and via the myMount intranet. Links to institutional policies and processes are found at:

<https://www.msj.edu/about/title-ix/index.html>

Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Conduct

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/IV\\_Policy\\_on\\_Prohibited\\_Discrimination%2c\\_Harassmen.pdf?target=84565fe7-b1eb-4a0d-8aca-6134c4cc0148](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/IV_Policy_on_Prohibited_Discrimination%2c_Harassmen.pdf?target=84565fe7-b1eb-4a0d-8aca-6134c4cc0148)

Sex Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence Policy:

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/V\\_Sex\\_Disc\\_Misconduct\\_Interpersonal\\_Violence\\_Polic.pdf?target=11f1702e-87f8-4bca-9e85-628ec315b266](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/V_Sex_Disc_Misconduct_Interpersonal_Violence_Polic.pdf?target=11f1702e-87f8-4bca-9e85-628ec315b266)

Student Handbook and Other Policies Including Section IV- Student Rights and Responsibilities:

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info\\_and\\_Policies/Student\\_Handbook\\_and\\_Other\\_Policies.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info_and_Policies/Student_Handbook_and_Other_Policies.jnz)

While employees in medical facilities such as hospital operating rooms or emergency rooms sometimes use humor as a means of stress relief, their humor should **never** make another person feel as though they have been harassed or create a hostile work environment.

**Mistreatment is defined as:** intentional or unintentional behavior that shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process.

**Harassment is defined as:** any conduct, physical, verbal, written or electronic, on or off campus, that has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or group's educational or work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational, work or living environment.

The PA program has zero tolerance regarding any type of mistreatment or harassment. Prevention is addressed by identifying situations and their causes, educating students, faculty and staff on institutional policies and the program's policy of zero tolerance. IF a student believes they have been subject to mistreatment or harassment in either the didactic or clinical setting, they should notify the program director or institutional official listed below.

**Sexual harassment in education is defined as:** any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's ability to learn, study, work or participate in school activities. Sexual harassment can be peer-peer, by faculty/preceptors or other university employees. While sexual harassment is legally defined as "unwanted" behavior, many experts agree that even consensual sexual interactions between students and teachers constitutes harassment because the power differential creates a dynamic in which "mutual consent" is impossible." (Dzeich et al, 1990)

Therefore, it is the PA program's policy that students are not to enter into an intimate relationship with faculty, staff, or preceptors. Incidents will be investigated and immediate action will be taken, up to and including dismissal from the program.

A student or employee who believes herself/himself to be the subject of discrimination, mistreatment, harassment, sexual harassment (not including sexual misconduct/violence), or retaliation may report the complaint to the following individuals:

- Paige Ellerman, VP of Compliance, Risk and Legal Affairs, 513-244-4393
- Rayshawn Eastman, Title IX Coordinator, 513-244-4467
- Teri Compton, Director of Human Resources, 513-244-4979
- Janet Cox, Dean of Students, 513-244-4466

A student or employee who believes herself/himself to be the victim or subject of sexual misconduct, violence, assault, or retaliation may report the complaint to the MSJ Police

Department, 513-244-4226 or dial 0 from any campus phone. Additional information regarding this topic is available at <https://www.msj.edu/about/title-ix/> or on the MSJ Police Website at: <http://www.msj.edu/student-life/public-safety-campus-police/> or in the University Student Handbook at: [https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info\\_and\\_Policies/Student\\_Handbook\\_and\\_Other\\_Policies.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info_and_Policies/Student_Handbook_and_Other_Policies.jnz)

## **Faculty Advisor**

Students are assigned a faculty advisor during the program's orientation. These same faculty members will typically be your advisor throughout the program. You are encouraged to email with your advisor to discuss any and all aspects of your experiences. Students meet with their advisor, at a minimum, twice each semester during the didactic phase, and once per semester during the clinical phase of the program to discuss academic performance, professional development and potential areas for improvement. These individuals are committed to seeing you succeed in the program and as a future PA. They are to be utilized as a mentor and advisor. Faculty are available to assist in the timely access and referral of students to the Wellness Center or other departments for support services, when warranted. See Appendix B for links to on campus services.

## **Clinical Rotations**

The program's required supervised clinical practice experiences begin in January of the second year. This includes eight core rotations, as well as three elective clinical experiences, which are each 5 weeks in length.

Students are **not** required to either provide or solicit preceptors or clinical sites. Students **may** suggest potential preceptors or clinical sites to the clinical faculty/staff by completing and emailing the preceptor referral form with the necessary contact information. The suggested preceptor or clinical site will be evaluated and reviewed as outlined in program policy.



PA Preceptor  
Referral Form.pdf

Clinical rotations will occur in locations both in and outside of the Cincinnati/Tristate region. The program does not provide housing for students during clinical rotations. **Students are responsible for the cost of transportation, lodging, meals, clothing, laundry, etc., during their clinical rotations and must budget accordingly.**

Rotation assignments are entirely the prerogative of the clinical committee; they maintain the responsibility of pre-approval on all program and program-related activities. All aspects of the student's performance in the program will be considered during deliberation concerning rotations, including, but not limited to grades, professionalism and ethical conduct. Assignments are not made based on where the student resides or whether they have a spouse or children.

Every student is provided the rotation schedule and preceptor contact information in advance of each individual rotation. It is imperative that the student contact clinical sites **at least one week** prior to the start of a rotation to confirm the schedule. Preceptors appreciate this and it

gives them a chance to let you know where and at what time you should report on your first day. The student will need to contact human resources or medical staff at any facility they are placed to set up orientation, and ensure necessary credentialing activities are completed.

Please understand that the rotation schedule may have to change for a variety of reasons and in all likelihood your schedule will change during the clinical year. Whenever there are any changes to the rotation schedule, the program will inform you as soon as possible.

Students are expected to work the hours established by the preceptor recognizing that the practice of medicine and learning opportunities continue past 6 pm and on weekends. The preceptor sets clinical hours for students, typically around 30 hours per week with a suggested maximum of 50 hours per week. Students adjust their schedules according to the desires of the preceptor and availability of learning opportunities. Preceptors determine when and where students work, when the workday ends, and if students take call. Only in cases of family emergency, illness, or injury, will you be excused from your rotation. See the Attendance Policy (p 11) and Work Policy (p 13) for additional information.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Academic Standards**

As specified in the MSJ Graduate Catalog (See <https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/>): To remain in good standing in the program, students must maintain a minimum GPA (grade point average) of 3.0 in all courses to progress in the program. Failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 will result in a student being placed on academic probation. The student will have **one** academic semester to raise their GPA to 3.0 or higher. If a student is unsuccessful, and has a GPA of < 3.0 at the end of the semester, they will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program. A student may be placed on academic probation only once during the course of the program. If a student has a GPA < 3.0 at the end of a semester and has previously been on academic probation, they will be dismissed from the program. Students who receive a final grade of “F” in any didactic or clinical course or a third final course grade of “C” during the program will be dismissed. The program director will confirm the student grades with the registrar and communicate the student’s dismissal to the Dean, who will inform the student via email.

### **Academic Progression**

Progression to graduation with a Masters degree in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) requires the student successfully complete all first year didactic courses and subsequent clinical rotations with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and necessitates completion of the summative evaluation, where the student must successfully demonstrate competence in medical knowledge, clinical skills, interpersonal communication skills, clinical decision making and professionalism. Students must complete all didactic courses in the sequence offered, and their clinical rotations within three months of the scheduled graduation date unless they have been granted deceleration.

### Remediation

Students identified as having deficiencies (grade below 75%) on any individual exam or skill evaluation must remedy the deficiency to earn a passing grade in the course. Successful remediation will consist of the student meeting with the course instructor, or faculty advisor, to discuss the matter and identify any specific issue(s). The student will be provided additional instruction and intervention plans will be developed for academic improvement. The student will be required to complete a supplemental assignment to demonstrate their comprehension. Written documentation will be placed in the student file. Repeated remediation is indicative of poor subsequent performance. In response to this concern, any student who needs a 6<sup>th</sup> remediation during the program, or receives a second final grade of C during the program will meet with the Promotions and Professional Conduct committee to discuss their academic standing and potential for success in the program.

### Deceleration

Deceleration is the removal of a student from their entering cohort (class) who remains matriculated in the program and enters a subsequent cohort. A student who is experiencing an extraordinary life circumstance may request a leave of absence or deceleration, in writing to the program director, of up to one year's duration. This process does not substitute for poor academic performance, and any request must be submitted prior to the final course assessment each semester. The student must submit a letter requesting deceleration to the program director outlining the specific circumstances that warrant consideration. The documentation and circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Promotions and Professional Conduct committee. Reinstatement into the program will occur based on the terms agreed to at the time the leave commences.

### Withdrawal

The Physician Assistant program involves a successive course of study, where future courses build on prior learning and must be completed in the prescribed sequence. Students who voluntarily withdraw from a course, without an approved leave of absence (see Deceleration), are in effect withdrawing from the program. This should be communicated to the program director in writing, who will arrange to meet with the student for an exit interview. Students are referred to the Graduate Catalog for information related to course withdrawal policies of the Mount St. Joseph University. (<http://registrar.msje.edu/graduate-catalog/student-rights-policies/academic-policies/index.html>)

### Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program for academic or non-academic reasons. See the Mount St. Joseph University graduate catalog for detailed information related to academic standing, dismissal and reinstatement.

(<http://registrar.msje.edu/graduate-catalog/student-rights-policies/academic-policies/index.html>)

- Academic dismissal will occur when a student receives an “F” in any course, or a third final course grade of “C”, or if a student, who has previously been placed on academic probation for a cumulative GPA of <3.0, completes any subsequent semester in the program with a cumulative GPA of <3.0.
- Non-academic dismissal may occur for reasons of academic fraud or dishonesty, poor professional behavior or violations of program policy related to attendance or social media.

The student will be referred to the Program's Promotions and Professional Conduct committee to determine their future in the program.

- The program director will communicate the student's dismissal to the Dean, who will inform the student via email.
- An Appeal for Reinstatement to the program must be submitted to the Provost, in writing, within 10 business days. The Provost or designee decides whether to grant or deny appeals and determines conditions of reinstatement in consultation with the Program Director/Chair.

#### Disability Policy

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mount St. Joseph University provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit or restrict one or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, or learning. Students with disabilities should contact Stacy Mueller, the Director of Learning Center & Disability Services, to present documentation and develop individualized accommodation plans (513-244-4524 or [Stacy.Mueller@msj.edu](mailto:Stacy.Mueller@msj.edu)). Students who have already registered with MSJ Disability Services are encouraged to discuss their accommodations with their course faculty at the beginning of each semester. Additional information can be found at <http://www.msj.edu/academics/disability-services/>

#### Grade Appeals Process

To protest a grade, you must do so in writing, stating the reasons for differing with the assigned grade to the faculty course director. If a student is dissatisfied with the determination of the faculty member, they may contact either the Academic or Clinical Director who will respond as soon as a review and determination of the grade has been made. This determination will include a review of all materials. If the student continues to appeal the grade he/she may follow the grade appeal process outlined in the Mount St. Joseph University's graduate catalog. Additional information available at: <http://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/rights-policies1/academic-policies1/academic-grade-appeal/>



## **Handbook Receipt**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Student Handbook for the Physician Assistant Program at Mount St. Joseph University, and access to the University Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog. I understand that I am responsible for the information contained in this Handbook, and I will abide by the policies and procedures as stated in this Handbook, the University Handbook and the Graduate Catalog. I also understand that, at any time, the Mount St. Joseph University Physician Assistant Program may change a policy or procedure, and that I will be notified in writing and asked to replace the current policy or procedure contained in this Handbook with a new or revised policy/procedure.

I acknowledge that the Student Handbook contains information that is helpful to me as a student in the Physician Assistant Program. Since this Handbook may be the only source of such information, and will be referred to by the faculty, I will keep this Handbook safe and available for use throughout my attendance in this professional program.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Witness Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## **Release of Information Form**

### **NCCPA Personal Information Release**

I authorize the Mount St. Joseph University PA Program to release to The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), my name, social security number, date of birth, gender, address, e-mail address, graduation date or other information that they may require to ensure my eligibility to take the PANCE.

Initials\_\_\_\_\_

### **Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screening**

Certain federal, state and local regulations now require students to provide criminal background checks and, in some cases, drug screen results to prospective clinical sites. I authorize the Mount St. Joseph University PA Program to release the results of my background check and/or drug screen to clinical sites and/or preceptors as needed to facilitate scheduling of clinical experiences.

Initials\_\_\_\_\_

### **Release of Immunization Information and Health Screening Results**

I authorize the Mount St. Joseph University PA Program to release my personal information regarding immunization status, health screenings (e.g. TB test results) to preceptors, hospitals, or other institutions that require that information to allow me to function in the role of a PA student in their areas of authority.

Initials\_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the Mount St. Joseph University Physician Assistant Program to release my information as outlined in the above paragraphs. This consent will remain in effect for the duration of my enrollment in the program unless otherwise revoked, in writing or I am provided with a revised policy and consent form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS**

In consideration for maintaining my student status in Medical Interview and Physical Examination (PAS 505), Patient Assessment I & II (PAS 540 & PAS 570) and Clinical Skills in Medicine I & II (PAS 545 & PAS 575), I understand that PA students perform routine physical examinations on each other as well as minor procedures (e.g., drawing blood, starting an IV or administering an injection) when necessary and appropriate for the purpose of instruction in the approved PA program curriculum. These activities are only to be conducted under the direct supervision of the faculty during a scheduled laboratory session. I fully understand that certain parts of my body may be examined, palpated, percussed and auscultated. I further understand that although appropriate precautions will be taken, said examination and clinical procedures could cause me personal embarrassment or mild injuries. In an effort to minimize any injury, each student is responsible to inform the faculty and their lab partner(s) of any limitations or pre-existing injury, which might increase the student's risk.

The conditions described below will require special precautions and therefore are exceptions unless otherwise indicated (list any known medical or surgical conditions that would preclude you from participating as a subject for practice or demonstration without your specific consent). If there are no conditions and this section is not applicable, list "None".

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In some instances, a previously undiagnosed condition or physical finding may become apparent. The faculty are **not** responsible for the further evaluation and diagnosis, and the student will be directed to seek medical advice from their personal health care provider. I hereby knowingly release and discharge Mount St. Joseph University, its Board Members, executive officers, administrators, faculty, PA program director, PA faculty, and other agents of the University from all claims, demands, actions, judgments, and executions which the undersigned may be created by or arising out of my participation in the course(s) mentioned in the paragraph above. This release is also binding on my family, spouse, heirs, assigns, and personal representative.

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STUDENT NAME (PRINT):

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SIGNATURE:

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DATE:

---

WITNESS:

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## **Simulation and Skills Lab Confidentiality Agreement**

Mount St. Joseph University (MSJ) is committed to ensuring the evaluation process of your performance in simulation is directed towards helping you achieve professional and personal growth as a healthcare professional. Our goal is to provide simulation experiences that will advance the quality and safety of the care you provide to your patients and increase your confidence and competence as a healthcare provider.

Simulated clinical scenarios, simulated task training, standardized patient scenarios/cases, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE), debriefings and/or other simulation activities are planned and structured as safe learning opportunities for learners and educators. Participants may be actively involved in the scenario or act as observers.

All simulation activities at Mount St. Joseph University are considered confidential, whether electronic, written, verbal, observed or overheard, and may not be disclosed or discussed outside of the simulation environment. Any participants (e.g., students, learners, educators, instructors, faculty, staff or observers) in simulation activities at MSJ are expected to maintain confidentiality. The PA Program believes that “what happens in simulation, stays in simulation!”

Sharing scenario experiences with fellow learners outside of the simulation lab will be considered a breach of professionalism and will result in referral to the program’s Promotion and Professional Conduct Committee for further action, which may include dismissal from the program.

Your signature below acknowledges that you have read, consent to, and fully understand the implications of this agreement, and agree to maintain the strictest confidentiality regarding simulation activities, including the nature of the scenarios, as well as the names, functions and performance of all participants. Furthermore, you understand a violation of confidentiality is strictly prohibited and serious consequences will occur if you violate the agreement.

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Printed Name

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Signature

---

Date

Appendix A  
**Criminal Background and Drug and Alcohol Screen Policy**  
**Mount St. Joseph University**  
**School of Health Sciences**

1) **Purpose**

The Criminal Background and Drug and Alcohol Screening Policy (the “Policy”) of Mount St. Joseph University (the “University”) School of Health Sciences (the “School”) is grounded in the School’s mission to “prepare students for professional careers in selected health disciplines” and in accordance with the University Mission to “educate students through... professional curricula emphasizing values, integrity and social responsibility.” The purposes of this Policy are to:

- Encourage students to make decisions with integrity and place value on their own health and well-being as current or future health care providers;
- Uphold our shared social responsibility to protect the public, including patients and clients; and
- Comply with the requirements of regulatory bodies and affiliated clinical facilities and/or their authorized agents and representatives in the health disciplines.

2) **Policy Definitions**

The following terms apply to this Policy:

“**Under the influence**” means that in the opinion of the University, its employees and/or representatives, a student has drugs and/or alcohol in his or her system and the use is detectible in any manner. Indicators of being under the influence may include, but are not limited to, misconduct or obvious impairment of physical or mental ability such as slurred speech, smell of alcohol, marijuana or other drugs on the student, or difficulty maintaining balance.

A “**drug**” is any substance (other than alcohol) which may, can or does alter the mood, perception, conduct, or judgment of the individual consuming it including both legal and illegal drugs.

A “**legal drug**” includes prescribed drugs and over-the-counter drugs that have been legally obtained and are being used only in the amounts and prescribed and/or for the purpose for which they were prescribed or manufactured.

An “**illegal drug**” means any drug which (a) is not legally obtainable, (b) is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained, (c) is obtained legally but abused. The term includes prescribed drugs not being used for prescribed purposes. It also includes, without limitation, those drugs classified as narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, and marijuana/cannabis.

“**Non-negative**” means any drug screen that is not negative, including but not limited to findings of positive, dilute negative and non-negative.

“**Reasonable suspicion** occurs when a student has demonstrated a notable change in affect, behavior, or physical appearance consistent with the prohibited use of drugs or alcohol or when information is obtained that may indicate that a student has engaged in criminal behavior.

Reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use includes, but is not limited to, slurred speech, decreased coordination, drowsiness, pinpoint or dilated pupils, reddened eyes, forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, impaired judgment, sedation, decreased inhibitions euphoria, and the possession of drugs, alcohol or paraphernalia. Reasonable suspicion for a background check may be based on information from various sources, including but not limited to, the media, police, third-parties, or other public records.

“**Alcohol**” means an intoxicating liquid or compound, including beer, subject to liquor control laws of any kind in the State of Ohio.

### **3) Required Student Conduct Related to Drugs and Alcohol**

Students of the School must comply with the standards set forth in this Policy and complete criminal background checks and drug and alcohol screenings as requested and/or required by the School. It is a violation of this Policy for a student to refuse to timely obtain a requested and/or required criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen for any reason.

### **4) Prohibited Conduct Related to Drugs and Alcohol**

Students in the School are required to comply with the University’s Drug and Alcohol Policy and Guidelines at all times, including while participating in clinical program activities of the School that take place on or off campus. The University’s Drug and Alcohol Policy and Guidelines are located in the Student Handbook and available at

<https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/DrugAlcoholPolicy.pdf?target=2cc870d5-79bb-4a79-9953-435edc251fe2>

In addition, students in the School are prohibited from reporting to or participating in any clinical program or other School activity, including but not limited to classroom or lab work, while under the influence of alcohol, any illegal drug, and/or while under the influence of a legal drug that impairs the student’s healthy and safe performance of School activities. The University reserves its right to determine, in its sole discretion, whether the use of any legal drug by a student poses a threat to the student’s health and safe performance of School activities.

### **5) Reporting Use of Legal Drugs that May Impair Performance**

Any student whose use of a legal drug has the potential to threaten the health or safety of the student or others or to impair the student’s clinical performance or any School activities shall immediately report such drug use to the Wellness Center or Learning Center & Disability Services to discuss any appropriate precautions or accommodations. The student may be required to provide certification from the prescribing physician/physician assistant or nurse practitioner that the drug will not impair the student or threaten the health or safety of the student or others when the student is performing clinical or School activities. Students who are impaired by legal drugs will not be permitted to perform “safety sensitive” clinical or School-related tasks.

### **6) Required and/or Requested Background Checks and/or Drug and Alcohol Screens**

Criminal background checks and/or drug and alcohol screens may be requested by the University and required of a student for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- As a requirement for enrollment into the professional phase of the curricula;
- As a requirement of applicable regulatory bodies or assigned affiliated clinical facilities and/or their authorized agents and representatives;

- As a periodic random sampling of the student body;
- Under reasonable suspicion by a University faculty member or staff member if the student is on the University's campus, or a clinical instructor/preceptor/professional staff of the clinical facility if the student is at a clinical site off of the University's campus (the "Representative"); and,
- As required by a School-affiliated clinical site/facility and in accordance with the site/facility's reasonable procedures.

## **7) Immediate Consequences of Suspected Policy Violations**

In the event that a student is suspected of violating this Policy by a Representative, the student will be immediately removed from any clinical program or activity of the School while the student is believed to be under the influence subject to the safety and transportation provision described in 8a. Students must immediately comply with requests by Representatives to leave clinical programs or School activities.

## **8) Process for Obtaining a Required/Requested Criminal Background Check or Drug and Alcohol Screen**

### **a) Request Based on Reasonable Suspicion for Being Under the Influence**

Immediately upon the receipt of a verbal or written request of a student to obtain a criminal background check and/or drug and alcohol screen from a Representative based on a reasonable suspicion for being under the influence, the student shall go directly to the Testing Provider (described in this Policy) for the requested test. In the event that the Testing Provider is closed at the time the verbal or written request is made, the student shall return to the Testing Provider at its next open business hour for the requested testing.

It is the sole responsibility of the student to provide his or her own safe and lawful transportation to and from the test facility or lab when requested and/or required to obtain a criminal background check and/or drug and alcohol screen. Operating a vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol is against the law and will be considered a separate violation of this Policy. All costs associated with such transportation will be the student's sole responsibility. University employees, clinical site representatives, other students of the University and/or other individuals affiliated with the academic program shall not provide transportation to students suspected of violating this Policy.

### **b) Request or Requirement Not Based on Reasonable Suspicion for Being Under the Influence**

A student who receives verbal or written request and/or is otherwise required to obtain a criminal background check and/or drug and alcohol screen for any reason other than reasonable suspicion of being under the influence shall complete the required testing at the Test Provider by the deadline established by the Representative.

### **c) Proof of Compliance**

Students who are requested or required to complete a criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen must produce evidence within 48 hours of the verbal or written notification to the student of such a requirement that they have placed the order with the Testing Provider.

### **d) Failure to Timely Comply**

Failure of any student to timely complete a requested and/or required criminal background check and/or drug and alcohol screen under this Policy will, at the very least, delay the student's progression in the student's academic program and may result in disciplinary actions

as described in this Policy, up to and including possible dismissal from the student's academic program and/or University.

**9) Cost of Background Check or Drug and Alcohol Screen**

Regardless of the reason for a criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen, the cost of any such tests will be the *sole* responsibility of the student.

**10) Student Status Pending Test Results**

It is the sole discretion of the University to permit a student suspected of violating this Policy to remain enrolled in classroom classes and/or labs while awaiting results of a test, but the student shall not be allowed in any clinical setting.

**11) Testing Provider**

When a background check or drug and alcohol screen is required and/or requested of a student for any reason, the student *must* utilize the School's preferred provider for criminal background checks and drug and alcohol screens (the "Testing Provider") and place an order, complete the required steps and provide any required samples in accordance with established testing protocols of the University and/or Testing Provider.

The Testing Provider tests for drug compounds with screening and cutoff levels per their established standard. Confirmed drug testing results at or above their established levels are considered a "positive" or "non-negative" test. Alcohol test results indicating a blood alcohol concentration of 0.02 or greater are considered a "positive", "or non-negative test.

**12) Test Result Evaluation**

Each academic program in the School shall have a representative assigned to review criminal background checks and drug and alcohol screen results (the "Program Representative"). In the case of a non-negative result, this person may consult with the Program Director, Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Nursing, and Dean of the School of Health Sciences.

**a) Non-negative Criminal Background Check Results**

Students shall receive written notice of the results of any criminal background check. In the event of a non-negative criminal background check, the Program Representative shall evaluate whether the non-negative result may be detrimental to the student's potential for matriculation in the program or eventual licensure/certification. This determination will be made in consultation with:

- Ohio Revised Code, or any similar law of Ohio or another state; and/or
- Applicable state practice acts, state boards, rules, laws, or statutes of any state in which the student intends to complete a clinical rotation or practice.

If a student's criminal background check result is determined by the Program Representative and School, in their sole discretion, to be detrimental to his or her potential for progression through an academic program or eventual licensure and/or certification, the student may be dismissed from the program.

In some instances, the Program Representative and School may be unable to definitively determine whether or not a past criminal offense may prove detrimental to the student's matriculation in the program or eventual licensure and/or certification. All students who receive non-negative criminal background check results and decide to remain in an academic program of the School accept full responsibility for any and all time and/or financial



investment they make in the program despite the risk that test results may adversely affect the student's ability to graduate or obtain required licensures and/or certifications.

*a) Non-negative Drug and Alcohol Screen Results*

Students shall receive written notice of the results of any drug and alcohol screen. In the event of a non-negative drug and alcohol screen, the student will have one week from receiving notice of the test result to provide a written explanation to the Program Representative. Drug and alcohol screens that result in dilute negative results are considered a non-negative result and need to be repeated. The student may remain enrolled in classroom classes and labs during the consideration of an explanation, but will not be allowed in any clinical setting during these processes. If the student's written explanation of his or her non-negative result is not accepted as valid by the Program Representative and School, in their sole discretion, the student may be dismissed from the program.

**13) Refusal to Submit to Testing**

The following list of situations constitute violations of this Policy and shall be deemed a refusal to cooperate with the University's required procedures by any student, which can result in discipline up to and including dismissal from the academic program or University:

- Refusal to submit to a criminal background check or drug and alcohol screening, or complete any required paperwork for same, during the prescribed timeframe.
- Providing false, incomplete, or misleading information in connection with any criminal background check or drug and alcohol screening processes.
- Engaging in conduct that unreasonably obstructs any criminal background check or drug and alcohol screening processes.
- Failing to timely obtain a requested or required drug and alcohol screening or leaving the screening site before submitting to the test.
- Failing to provide adequate urine for a drug and alcohol screen without a valid medical reason/explanation as determined by the Program Representative.
- Failing to permit observation or monitoring while providing a urine sample.
- Tampering with, diluting, adulterating, falsifying or substituting a specimen, as determined by the Testing Provider, Program Representative or the University.
- In the event that any device or other item that may be used to cheat on a drug and alcohol screen is possessed during the collection process or at the collection facility.
- Failure to respond to notice, in writing or by phone, from any Representative regarding a positive test result or the issuance of a non-contact positive result.

**14) Consequences of Policy Violations**

A student's non-negative criminal background check, non-negative drug and alcohol screen test result, refusal to submit to testing, and/or failure to comply with any terms of this Policy shall be considered Policy violations. Policy violations may result in disciplinary sanctions, including but not limited to the delay or disqualification of a student's matriculation in any professional or clinical phases of a program, the delay or disqualification of a student from graduation due to inability to complete program requirements, dismissal from an academic program in the School and/or suspension or dismissal from the University. Disciplinary sanctions shall be communicated to students in writing by the Program Representative, program director, or School Dean (the "Sanction Notice").



The School will uphold determinations of affiliated clinical facilities and the consequences of any non-negative criminal background check or non-negative drug and alcohol screen test result established by any affiliated clinical facility, up to and including cancellation of the clinical rotation for a student. In the case of cancellation of a student's clinical rotation, the student does not have a right of appeal and the student's individual program at the School will determine when and if a student may be placed in future clinical placements on a case-by-case and/or if a violation of this Policy occurred subjecting the student to consequences for Policy violations.

Refund of the tuition of a student suspended and/or dismissed from a program, the School and/or University is determined based on the University tuition refund schedule. Consistent with other University policies, course fees are not reduced or refunded once courses begin in any academic term (*see* Semester Policies and Procedures, posted on MyMount).

**15) Appeal of Disciplinary Decisions Issued Under the Policy**

A student may appeal the outcome and consequences of a Sanction Notice by making a written request for appeal to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences within 72 hours (excluding University holidays) of receiving the Sanction Notice (the "Appeal Request"). To be valid, an Appeal Request must include the student's summary of the events that led to the Sanction Notice, the student's explanation of those events, and any documentation the student wishes to have considered in the appeal.

Appeal Requests are reviewed by a panel (the "Appeal Panel") including:

- Two faculty members from the student's program;
- One faculty member from another Health Sciences department;
- The Dean of the School of Health Sciences or his/her designee;

A member of the School's faculty from outside the student's department shall serve as the Chair of the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel shall schedule a hearing within 30 days (excluding University holidays) of the receipt of the Appeal Request by the Dean (the "Appeal Hearing") and the Chair of the Appeal Panel shall provide written notice to the student of the time and place of the Appeal Hearing at least five (5) days (excluding University holidays) prior to the Appeal Hearing. An Appeal Hearing is not a criminal or civil proceeding; formal rules of evidence are not applicable. Legal counsel may not be present at the Appeal Hearing. However, the student may bring an advisor who is a full-time faculty or staff member at the University to the Appeal Hearing for support and consultation; however, the advisor may not speak on behalf of the student at the Appeal Hearing. Only the contents of the Appeal Request, test results, and student's statements at the Appeal hearing shall be considered by the Appeal Panel.

Within one week (excluding University holidays) after an Appeal Hearing, the Appeal Panel shall render a written decision to either uphold the Sanction Notice or render some other decision (the "Appeal Decision"). The Chair of the Appeal Panel shall report the Appeal Decision to the School Dean (if the School dean is not on the Appeal Panel). The Dean will notify the student of the Appeal Decision. An Appeal Decision is final and the student has no further right to appeal.

During an appeal process, a student may attend classroom classes and labs, but will not be allowed in any clinical setting during the appeals process.

#### **16) Reinstatement**

Students dismissed from a School program due to a non-negative criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen may petition the School Dean and program director for reinstatement no sooner than 12 months and no later than 15 months following the effective date of the dismissal. Students are not automatically afforded the opportunity for reinstatement. Each petition for reinstatement will be decided by the School in its sole discretion on a case by case basis.

Reinstatement with non-negative criminal background check results determined to be detrimental to his or her potential for matriculation or eventual licensure will only be considered if a change has been made during the interim to applicable rules, laws and procedures such as:

- Ohio Revised Code, or any similar law of Ohio or another state; and/or
- Applicable state practice acts, state boards, rules, laws, or statutes of any state in which the student intends to complete a clinical rotation or practice.

Reinstatement with a non-negative drug and alcohol screen result will be considered based on the relevant circumstances including but not limited to documented proof:

- Demonstrating participation in a substance abuse education and rehabilitation program; and/or
- Passage of two random drug and alcohol screens with negative results, two weeks apart and 30 days prior to reinstatement.

*The remainder of this page is left intentionally blank.*

**Acknowledgement, Consent and Acceptance of  
Criminal Background and Drug and Alcohol Screen Policy of  
Mount St. Joseph University School of Health Sciences**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned student, acknowledge receipt of the Criminal Background and Drug and Alcohol Screen Policy (the “Policy”) of the Mount St. Joseph University (the “University”) School of Health Sciences (the “School”). The Policy has been presented to me and I have had the opportunity to read it, ask questions and seek clarification. I accept full responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the Policy, including any financial expenses incurred in connection with the completion of criminal background checks or drug and alcohol screens and any related transportation or other costs. I understand that the consequences of non-compliance with this Policy could be detrimental to my matriculation in the program and may include dismissal from the School and/or University.

I also understand, acknowledge and accept full responsibility that any non-negative criminal background or drug and alcohol screen results could negatively impact my potential to progress through the program or gain certification, licensure or employment, whether or not I am subject to dismissal from the School and/or University. I understand that the administration of the School, the University, and the faculty in my program cannot guarantee with certainty that the information on a non-negative criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen will not interfere with my ability to successfully complete the clinical requirements of the program. I am also aware that the information on a non-negative criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen may interfere in the future with my professional certification, licensure and employment. With this knowledge, I hereby release the University, its employees, representatives, officers, directors, agents, heirs and assigns and waive any and all claims against them for monetary, equitable, and other alleged damages arising out of my continued investment of money and time in my education despite the presence, now or in the future, of a non-negative criminal background or drug and alcohol screen test result and the potential that it may adversely affect my ability to matriculate or obtain required professional licensures and/or certifications.

I have also been advised that should I choose not to matriculate in the program after a non-negative criminal background check or drug and alcohol screen, a refund of my tuition will be determined based on the University tuition refund schedule. Course fees are not reduced or refunded once courses begin.

While acknowledging these uncertainties, I agree to continue my enrollment in the School and my program. In addition, I give permission to faculty and staff of the School to provide the results of my criminal background and drug and alcohol screenings to any affiliated clinical facilities and/or their authorized agents and representatives deemed appropriate by the School as required for consideration for placement in a clinical assignment and/or facility.

This acknowledgement of intent to comply with, and acceptance of, this Policy and my consent for the School to share criminal background and drug and alcohol screening results with affiliated clinical facilities and/or their authorized agents and representatives will remain in effect for the duration of my enrollment in the program unless otherwise revoked or I am provided with a revised policy and consent form.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

## Appendix B

### Academic and Student Health Services

Mount St. Joseph University offers many academic, financial and health services to all enrolled students, including those students in the Physician Assistant program. Links are available below to assist students in finding information easily. Faculty are available to assist in the timely access and referral of students to the Wellness Center or other departments for support services, when warranted.

#### **University Student Handbook**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info\\_and\\_Policies/Student\\_Handbook\\_and\\_Other\\_Policies.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info_and_Policies/Student_Handbook_and_Other_Policies.jnz)

#### **Graduate Catalog**

<http://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/>

#### **Campus Police**

<http://www.msj.edu/student-life/public-safety-campus-police/>

#### **Counseling Services**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount\\_Community/Wellness\\_Center/Counseling\\_Services.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount_Community/Wellness_Center/Counseling_Services.jnz)

#### **Health Services**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount\\_Community/Wellness\\_Center/Health\\_Services.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount_Community/Wellness_Center/Health_Services.jnz)

#### **Information Services & Support**

<https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Technology/>

#### **Library**

<http://library.msj.edu/index>

#### **Career and Experiential Education**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Career\\_Center/](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Career_Center/)

#### **Learning Center**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Learning\\_Center/](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Learning_Center/)

#### **Disability Services**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Learning\\_Center/Disability\\_Services.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/MSJAcademics/Learning_Center/Disability_Services.jnz)

#### **COVID-19 Safety Guidelines**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout\\_id=d5db e779-80cc-4cfb-894b-27ff9dac2fee](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=d5db e779-80cc-4cfb-894b-27ff9dac2fee)