



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH

UNIVERSITY

*Physician Assistant Program*

# Student Handbook

## Class of 2028

*Effective Jan. 2026*

## Welcome

Congratulations on your acceptance into a most demanding, yet exceptionally rewarding academic program. You should be especially proud of this accomplishment, given the challenges you have overcome over 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 Master's in Physician Assistant Studies.

The program is divided into three phases: the didactic phase, clinical phase, and summative phase. The didactic phase is the initial academic component, comprising three semesters of on-campus coursework. The clinical phase, comprised of eleven 5-week rotations over the span of 15 months (~ 3.5 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 enhance your ability to deliver comprehensive, competent healthcare across diverse 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 from knowing that you are working to improve these patients' health outcomes and quality of life.

The final component of the program is the Summative Phase, which typically occurs just before graduation. During this period, the faculty will assess a student's readiness for graduation. This component of the program is designed to evaluate our program competencies, which broadly assess medical knowledge, clinical skills, interpersonal communication, clinical decision-making, and professionalism. It will determine the student's ability to apply these traits in clinically relevant scenarios and meet the program's expectations for graduates.

Important information, including links to the Mount Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog, is provided throughout 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 any issues that may arise during the program.

Sincerely,

Jen Garrett, MPAS, PA-C  
Assistant Professor, Chair and Program Director

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While every student enrolled at Mount St. Joseph University is covered by the University's policies and procedures, as outlined in the Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog, students in the Physician Assistant program face unique situations that may not be addressed in the general student handbooks. Hence, this student handbook is published annually to serve as an additional resource for PA students throughout 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.

Institutional administrators have reviewed all policies and procedures within the Physician Assistant program to ensure they are consistent with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations before publication. This handbook is reviewed annually by the Program Planning Committee and faculty to ensure its relevance and applicability.

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 attract and graduate students who model the PA program mission by demonstrating compassion, empathy, and cultural awareness.
2. To graduate students committed to life-long learning and ethical practice.
3. To prepare clinicians who exhibit excellent medical knowledge, interpersonal communication skills, and professionalism.
4. To educate clinicians who demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
5. To foster health and well-being through community service in the Greater Cincinnati region.

## 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.

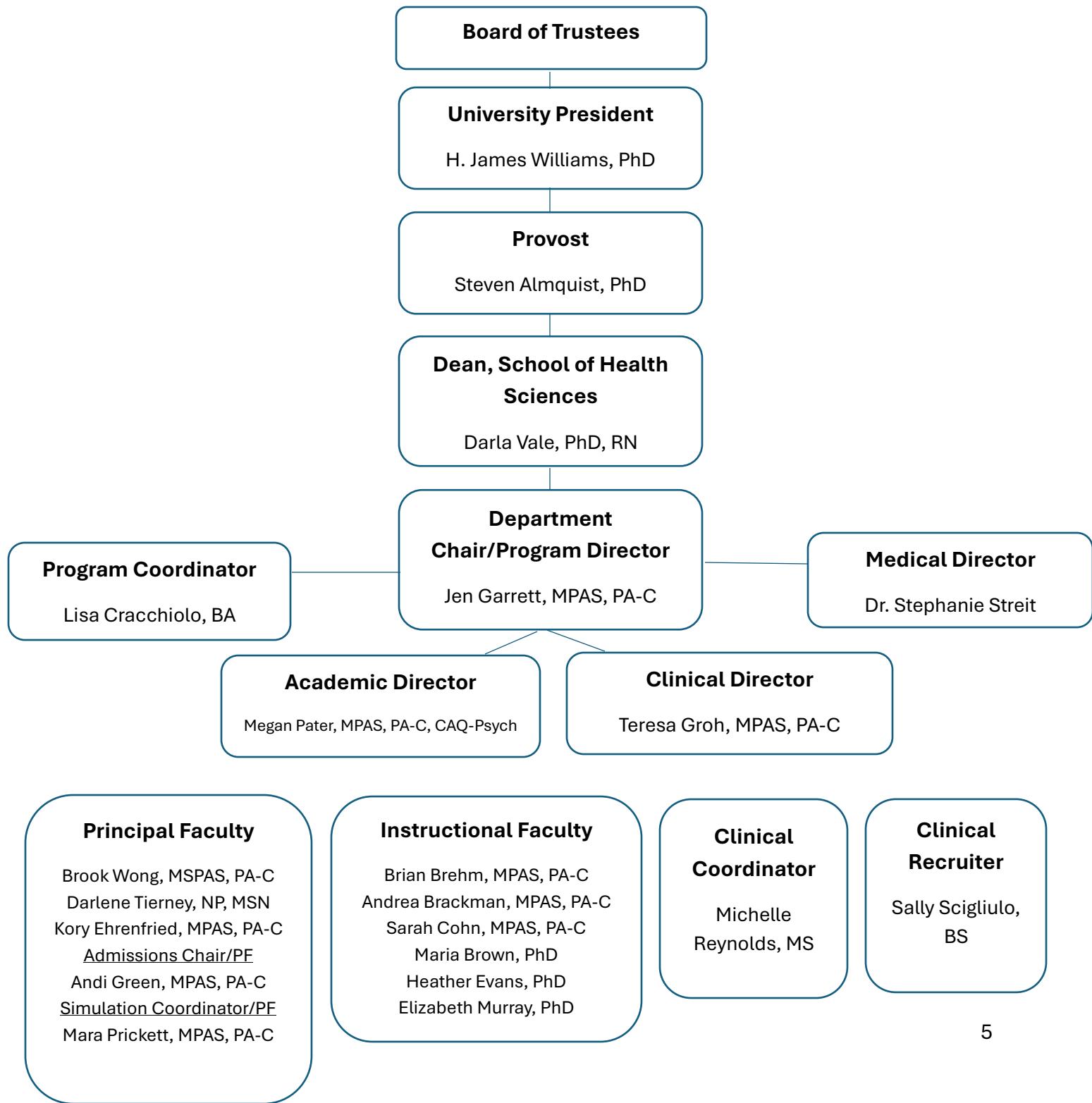
Mount St. Joseph University's PA program has also been approved by the Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission.

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 additional part-time expert instructional faculty and the board-certified physician who serves as Medical Director. Refer to the chart below to contact any program faculty or staff member.



## Contact Information

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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

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

**1. Obtain Patient History**

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

**2. Perform Physical Exam**

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

**3. Using Laboratory and Diagnostic Studies**

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

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

- a. 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**

- a. 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**

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

**7. Clinical Intervention**

- a. Objective focuses on skills 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**

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

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

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

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

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

**11. Work-Related Behavioral Objectives**

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

## Academic Standing and Evaluation Policy

It is the program's policy to maintain an effective evaluative process for student performance, both individually and in the aggregate. Specific program practices to communicate and consistently enforce program policy include:

- Students are assigned a faculty advisor who will meet with the student, at a minimum, twice each semester during the didactic phase and once per semester during the clinical phase of the program. These sessions are designed to discuss the student's academic performance, reinforce relevant policies, and provide suggestions for resources available through the University to address specific student needs.
- Academic policies are communicated to students before the start of classes during didactic orientation. Students read the student program handbook and have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions before endorsing their understanding and compliance with a signature. These policies, along with relevant university policies, are referenced in each course syllabus.
- Student performance is monitored continuously by faculty/primary course instructors via the Blackboard Learning Management System to identify at-risk students and initiate early intervention.

## Academic Integrity

- The integrity of the coursework, students, and the classroom in the MSJ PA program should be protected. Students should not share questions or answers for assignments, exams, or quizzes, nor should they provide this information to students in a subsequent class. In instances where academic integrity is questioned, a referral will be made to the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee for investigation and determination of further action, including the potential for dismissal from the program.

## Academic Progression

Progression to graduation with a Master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) requires the student to complete all didactic courses and subsequent clinical rotations with a minimum GPA of 3.0. It requires completion of the summative evaluation, during which the student must demonstrate competence in medical knowledge, clinical skills, interpersonal communication, clinical decision-making, and professionalism. Students must complete all didactic courses in the offered sequence and their clinical rotations within three months of the scheduled graduation date, unless they have been granted deceleration or a leave of absence.

The maximum allowable time for completion of the program, inclusive of any period of deceleration, leave of absence, or delayed graduation, shall not exceed 45 months (3 years 9 months) from the original matriculation date, with the exception of mandatory time in the National Guard or Reserves.

## Remediation

Remediation can indicate future marginal performance or the need for additional academic support. Students who receive a grade below 74.5% on any assessment deemed eligible for remediation must address and correct the deficiency. The course instructor is responsible for implementing appropriate remediation methods (e.g., quizzes, Test B, review of the Strengths and Opportunities Report) that address specific student deficiencies. Successful remediation WILL NOT replace or change the original grade of the assessment. Successful remediation will consist of:

- Student meeting with the course instructor or faculty to discuss the matter and identify any specific issue(s) that hindered their performance.
- Completion of the remediation method specified by the course instructor by the communicated due date.
- Completion of the remediation form, including the instructor and student signatures, and filed in the student master file.

Students in the didactic year are expected to contact the course instructor within 24 hours of grades being posted to schedule the remediation meeting and to begin the process promptly. Failure to complete the remediation may result in a reduction in professionalism points at the discretion of the course director.

### Progressive Remediation Process (PAS courses only)

If a student is unsuccessful after the initial remediation attempt, a structured, progressive process will be followed to provide additional opportunities for learning and demonstration of the learning outcome(s)/competency. Each remediation completed within this process will count toward the student's cumulative remediation total for the program.

1. First Remediation: Conducted by the course instructor, focusing on the identified areas of weakness with targeted reassessment strategies.
2. Second Remediation: If the student remains unsuccessful, a verbal assessment will be conducted with program leadership to evaluate understanding of the content not yet mastered.
3. Third Remediation: If deficiencies persist, the student will be required to deliver a presentation to the Medical Director addressing the content categories deemed deficient, including discussion of pathophysiology, clinical reasoning, and management principles.

All remediation outcomes will be documented in the student's academic record and must include the student's and faculty's signatures verifying completion.

Final individual student course grades will not be submitted until all remediations obtained for that course are complete.

## Academic Standards

The MSJ Physician Assistant Program is dedicated to upholding high academic standards to ensure the success and readiness of its students. These standards are designed to promote educational excellence and accountability, aligning with our program's mission and vision. The following policies outline the expectations for satisfactory progress throughout the program.

- **GPA and probation**

Students must maintain a minimum GPA (grade point average) of 3.0 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.

- Students should be aware that academic probation can impact financial aid eligibility, including federal and institutional awards. We strongly encourage all students placed on probation to immediately contact the Financial Aid Office to understand their specific status and discuss available options.
- Students placed on academic probation are immediately removed from all leadership roles within the student society and must relinquish any assignments on university committees.

*Students who do not meet these minimum standards are subject to dismissal as outlined in the Student Enrollment Status Policy.*

- **End- of- Rotation Exams (EoR)**

*Administration*

- The EoR examination (Test A) is administered at the conclusion of each clinical rotation to evaluate the student's medical knowledge, application of clinical concepts, and readiness to progress within the clinical phase of the program.
- EoR examinations are designed to assess performance against national PA education benchmarks and ensure competency across the core disciplines of the clinical curriculum.

*Scoring and Benchmarks*

- A minimum score of 74.5% is required to pass each EoR examination.
- Any student who scores below 74.5% on an EoR examination will be required to complete a remediation process (see below)

### *Remediation*

- Students who score below 74.5% on Test A will be required to complete an alternate version of the examination (Test B) within one week of the original failure.

*Of note: The Orthopaedic EoR examination is a program-developed assessment and is not a standardized PAEA End-of-Rotation Exam. Because this examination is created internally, the remediation version (Test B) is obtained from Blueprint Test Prep, an external vendor unaffiliated with PAEA. To ensure fairness and consistency, a passing score for Test B is defined as being at or above the national average performance reported by Blueprint at the beginning of the cohort's clinical year.*

- If the student passes Test B, the passing score will NOT replace the failing grade for the EoR component of the course
- If the student fails the first Test B, an Incomplete (I) grade will be assigned for the rotation until the student successfully repeats the clinical rotation and subsequent EoR examination.

### *Impact on academic progress*

- Due to the necessity of repeating the clinical rotation, students who receive an Incomplete under this policy will experience a delay in graduation until the next available graduation opportunity (typically August for students originally scheduled to graduate in May).
- Delayed graduation can impact financial aid eligibility and the deferment window of loan repayment. Students should discuss with Financial Aid: <https://www.msj.edu/tuition-aid/financial-aid-grants-loans-scholarships/index.html>
- Timing parameters for the resolution of Incomplete grades and course completion can be found in the [Graduate Course Catalog](#)

*Students who do not meet these minimum standards are subject to dismissal as outlined in the Student Enrollment Status Policy.*

- End of Curricular Exam (EOC)

### *Administration*

- The EOC examination, a standardized exam by PAEA, delivered during Summative (PAS 710), is designed to assess and verify student competency in medical knowledge and readiness for program completion and entry into clinical practice.
- The EOC also serves as a preparatory benchmark for success on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE).

### *Scoring and performance Benchmarks:*

- **Passing:** Students must achieve a score above one standard deviation beneath the national mean to demonstrate competency.
- **Failure:** Students who score more than one standard deviation below the national mean on the first attempt are considered to have not met the

competency threshold and must complete the remediation process described below.

- Marginal Pass: Students who meet the passing threshold but score beneath 1500 will be required to meet with the Program Director before graduation to discuss strategies for PANCE preparation and review areas of relative weakness.

#### *Remediation Process*

- The Medical Director will administer formal remediation.
- Students who successfully complete the remediation are deemed to have met the program's competency requirement.
- Students who are unsuccessful in remediation must repeat the full EOC examination in 60 days per PAEA policy (June or July) to demonstrate competency in medical knowledge.

#### *Impact on academic progress*

- Due to the necessity of repeating the full EOC, students who receive an Incomplete (I) for PAS 710 (summative course) under this policy will experience a delay in graduation until the next available graduation opportunity (typically August for students originally scheduled to graduate in May).
- Delayed graduation can impact financial aid eligibility and the deferment window of loan repayment. Students should discuss with Financial Aid: <https://www.msj.edu/tuition-aid/financial-aid-grants-loans-scholarships/index.html>
- Timing parameters for the resolution of Incomplete grades and course completion can be found in the [Graduate Course Catalog](#)

*Students who do not meet these minimum standards are subject to dismissal as outlined in the Student Enrollment Status Policy.*

## Documentation

Final course grades, summative assessments (including End-of-Curricular (EOC) examination), and any associated remediation will be documented in each student's academic record. Documentation of remediation must include the signatures of both students and faculty to verify completion and understanding of the outcomes. All records are reviewed by program leadership and the Assessment Committee to ensure accurate tracking of academic progress, verification of remediation, and support for continuous quality improvement in curriculum and student outcomes.

## Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee

Any student who meets one or more of the following criteria will be required to meet with the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee to review their academic standing and overall potential for success in the program:

- Receives a sixth remediation during the didactic phase
- Failure of a third remediation with the Medical Director in the progressive remediation process
- Fails an End-of-Rotation (EoR) examination during the clinical phase
- Failure to pass the second EOC examination
- Earns a second final course grade of "C" during the program
- Is reported by preceptors, clinical site personnel, or faculty for unprofessional or concerning behavior, whether or not the conduct was directly observed by program faculty
- Other academic or professional concerns at the discretion of the committee

The committee will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or other intervention, including dismissal, is warranted.

## Grade Appeals Process

To protest a course 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 faculty member's decision, they may contact either the Academic or Clinical Director, who will respond once a review and final determination of the grade have been made. This determination will include a review of all materials with the Program Director. If the student continues to appeal the grade/they may follow the grade appeal process outlined in Mount St. Joseph University's graduate catalog. Additional information available at:

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/IV\\_Academic\\_Grade\\_Appeal\\_Policy.pdf?target=24568132-3f79-4fed-a7ba-cdcc11aea349](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/IV_Academic_Grade_Appeal_Policy.pdf?target=24568132-3f79-4fed-a7ba-cdcc11aea349)

## Student Enrollment Status Policy

### Withdrawal

The physician assistant program involves a sequential course of study, in which subsequent 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.

## Withdrawals and Reduced Charges

- All students complying with established procedures for withdrawal from the University or credit hour reduction are entitled to have charges reduced. Please see the tuition reduction schedule, which is published in the *Semester Policies and Procedures* (link below).
- Notification of withdrawal or cancellation is recognized as the date the drop (withdrawal) is completed in *MyMount*, or the date the form is received in Student Administrative Services.
- In cases where students feel extraordinary circumstances warrant an exception from the reduction policy, an appeal for review can be made in writing and directed to Student Administrative Services, Conlan Center.
- A full reduction of departmental fees is made in cases of withdrawal before classes begin. After classes begin, no reduction is made for departmental/general fees.
- All tuition refund requests must be in writing and directed to Student Administrative Services, Conlan Center. Requests for refunds based on outside assistance will be processed upon the completion of the add/drop period. Governmental loan refunds will be processed in accordance with the guidelines of the specific loan program.

Students are referred to the Graduate Catalog for information related to the course withdrawal policies of Mount St. Joseph University. <https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/advising-registration/registration-procedures.html>

## Interruption of Progress

There are two pathways for a student to pause their current progress in the curriculum: deceleration or a leave of absence, both of which require a formal request to the Program Director.

- *Deceleration* is the removal of a student from their entering cohort (class) who remains matriculated in the program and returns with the subsequent cohort.
  - Deceleration may only be granted **once** throughout the student's time in the program
- A *Leave of Absence (LoA)* is when a student pauses their clinical phase and resumes with their same cohort.
  - Depending on life circumstances and proximity to graduation, a leave of absence may not always be possible.
  - Depending on life circumstances, multiple leave of absences may be granted, but cannot exceed a cumulative time frame of 6 months in duration.
    - If the LoA exceeds a timeframe that prevents resumption of curricular progression with the same cohort, then it may be transitioned to a deceleration.

Poor academic performance alone does not qualify someone for either deceleration or leave of absence. In other words, if a student is failing or performing poorly academically, they can't request or be granted a deceleration or LOA as a way to avoid dismissal or remediation.

### Timing of Request

- Requests for Deceleration or Leave of Absence (LOA) may be submitted at any time; however, such requests will not be considered immediately following a failed course or as a means to avoid academic consequences.
- If the request is made after the semester withdrawal date (the last day to have a "W" on the transcript instead of a letter grade), and the student subsequently fails a course, they will be dismissed from the program.
  - In this circumstance, the student can appeal to the provost, and the provost may grant the decision regarding reinstatement (or deceleration).

Reinstatement into the program will occur in accordance with the terms agreed upon at the time the leave commences.

### Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the program for academic or non-academic reasons. See the Mount St. Joseph University graduate catalog for additional information.

<https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/index.html>

- Academic dismissal will result if a student violates any of the criteria needed to be in good academic standing. These specific situations include:
  - 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"** (defined as <74.5%) in any didactic, clinical, or summative course will be dismissed from the program.
  - Any student who obtains a **third final course grade of "C"** (defined as 74.5-79.4%) during the program will be dismissed from the program.
  - Any student who scores **lower than a 74.5% on more than three Test A EoR** exams will be dismissed from the program.
  - Any student who scores **lower than 74.5% on a second Test B EoR** will be dismissed from the program.
- Non-academic dismissal may occur for reasons of academic fraud or dishonesty, poor professional behavior, or violations of program policy. This includes, but is not limited to: attendance, social media, or HIPAA violations.
- 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.

## **Student Support Policy**

### **Student Advising Procedure**

The program is dedicated to providing comprehensive, continuous advising that supports each student's academic success, professional development, and personal well-being. Faculty advisors serve as key mentors throughout the program, monitoring student progress, identifying potential challenges, and connecting students with appropriate resources to promote successful progression and completion.

#### **Advisor Assignment:**

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor at the time of matriculation. The assigned advisor remains the student's primary point of contact for academic, professional, and personal advising throughout both the didactic and clinical phases of the program. If a faculty member leaves the program or is otherwise unable to continue in an advising role, the student will be promptly reassigned to another faculty member. The reassigned advisor will assume all advising responsibilities for the duration of the student's enrollment to ensure continuity of support and compliance with program advising expectations.

#### **Advising Expectations and Frequency:**

Advising is a required component of the curriculum. Students will meet with their assigned faculty advisor a minimum of:

- Two times per semester during the didactic phase, and
- One time per semester during the clinical phase.

Each advising meeting provides an opportunity to review academic performance, professional behaviors, and any personal or situational factors that may influence student success. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the advisor or student as needed.

### Confidentiality:

Information shared is treated as confidential and intended to support the student's academic, professional, and personal success. However, confidentiality may be limited in specific circumstances, including when information:

- Poses a risk to the safety or well-being of the student or others.
- Indicates a violation of University, program, or professional standards (e.g., academic integrity, professionalism, or Title IX).
- Directly impacts the student's ability to meet program, clinical, or patient-care expectations.
- Necessitates referral to University support or compliance offices (e.g., Disability Services, Counseling Services, Title IX Office).

In such cases, the advisor will notify the Program Director or appropriate University personnel to ensure proper support and adherence to institutional policy.

### Timely Access and Referral

Students who experience personal issues that may jeopardize their progress in the program will receive prompt guidance and be referred to appropriate University or community resources (e.g., Counseling Services, Student accessibility services, or the Title IX Office). The Program Director will be the first to be made aware of such concerns to ensure coordinated support, documentation, and timely access to services. Further disclosure of information will occur only at the Program Director's discretion and in accordance with University policy, professional ethics, and applicable law.

### Documentation and Follow-Up:

All advising meetings are documented using the program's standardized advising form and maintained in the student's academic record. Advisors collaborate with the Program Director as appropriate to ensure timely support, intervention, or remediation when indicated.

## Student Disability Accommodation and Accessibility Services Policy

*(Extracted from Mount St Joseph University policy:*

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/III\\_Student\\_Disability\\_Accommodation\\_and\\_Accessibility.pdf?target=03312905-9f5f-4690-b374-81c80480ee78](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/III_Student_Disability_Accommodation_and_Accessibility.pdf?target=03312905-9f5f-4690-b374-81c80480ee78)

Mount St. Joseph University (the "University") Division of Accessibility Services, located in the Learning Commons, offers accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities to allow full access to and participation at the University as set forth in this

policy and related procedures. This commitment is consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended in 2008, and embodies the University's long-standing mission to ensure the inclusion of all members of its community. For information about accommodations available under this policy, please call 513-244-4623 to speak with the Director or email [studentaccessibilityservices@msj.edu](mailto:studentaccessibilityservices@msj.edu).

### **Disability**

Generally, a person with a disability is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING AND IMPLEMENTING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

An academic accommodation includes the provision of specific auxiliary aids and/or modifications of policies, practices, or procedures that will allow the student with a disability to meet the requirements of the course or program. The University will not permit academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids that would fundamentally alter academic requirements that are essential to the instruction pursued by a student or to any directly related licensing requirements, would cause undue hardship on the University, or would jeopardize the health or safety of others.

Examples of academic accommodations may include, but are not limited to, arranging for priority registration; reducing a course load; substituting one course for another; providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, extended time for testing; and equipping computers with screen-reading, voice recognition, or other adaptive software or hardware. Students who seek to obtain academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids must:

- Step 1- Call 513-244-4623 or email [studentaccessibilityservices@msj.edu](mailto:studentaccessibilityservices@msj.edu) to schedule an intake meeting with the Director. If an in-person intake meeting is not possible, a phone intake meeting may be scheduled.
- Step 2- Prior to or at the scheduled intake meeting, provide the Director with "Adequate Documentation" of the student's disability or disabilities as defined in this policy.
- Step 3- Collaborate with the Director to discuss reasonable academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids that will reduce or remove the barrier(s)

resulting from the disability or disabilities identified in the Adequate Documentation. Each request for academic accommodations is handled on a case-by-case basis.

- Step 4- Determine, through collaboration with the Director, the reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations for the student that will be formalized in an Accommodation Letter approved by the Director. The Accommodation Letter states a student's academic accommodations but not a student's disability diagnosis. A copy of a student's Accommodation Letter is available on Mount Connect.
- Step 5- Accommodations Letters will be emailed to each course instructor on the first scheduled day of class and simultaneously sent to the student. The student and instructors must electronically sign the Accommodation Letter before any accommodations are considered active. Although the letter is delivered electronically, students are strongly encouraged to follow up with each instructor within the first week of the course. This follow-up ensures the instructor has received the letter, provides an opportunity to discuss how the accommodations will be implemented in the specific course, and allows for clarification of any questions.
- Step 6- Contact the Director with any questions or concerns about implementing the accommodations outlined in the Accommodation Letter in any course.

**“Adequate Documentation” is a prerequisite to any student receiving academic accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and requires:**

- That the documentation be on letterhead and from a qualified diagnostician;
- A description of the nature and extent of the student's impairment and the diagnostic tools used in the diagnosis;
- An explanation of the functional impact of the impairment, especially as it relates to the academic environment;
- Recommendations for reasonable academic adjustments and auxiliary aids; and,
- If the documentation provided is more than three years old, it will be evaluated by the Director to determine whether updated documentation is necessary.

If a student needs, or expects to need, an accommodation not supported by Adequate Documentation, the student should discuss evaluation needs with the Director. Please be aware that other institutions, licensing authorities, and testing agencies (which administer standardized tests such as the GRE and LSAT) may require documentation of disabilities that differs from the Adequate Documentation required by the University. Students not satisfied with the result of the Academic Accommodations process should consult the Student Disability Grievance Procedure

## Advance Notice for Foreseeable Accommodations

The program will make every reasonable effort to accommodate students with documented needs in accordance with University policy and applicable law. For foreseeable accommodations—such as those related to religious observances, elective medical procedures, or known disabilities/diagnoses—the program requests advanced notice, preferably at least **90 days** before the anticipated need. Providing timely notice allows the program to collaborate with University support services and make appropriate schedule adjustments to ensure the student can meet program requirements while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum. There is no guarantee that accommodations will be granted. The Student Accessibility Officer will make the final recommendation.

Additional student support services are listed below:

### **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/Default\\_Page.jnz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount_Community/Wellness_Center/Default_Page.jnz)

### **Academic Advising Resource Center**

[https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/III\\_Academic\\_Advising\\_Resource\\_Center.pdf?target=a5ba3e99-77f9-49f5-8dee-b6e74cc66dd2](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/III_Academic_Advising_Resource_Center.pdf?target=a5ba3e99-77f9-49f5-8dee-b6e74cc66dd2)

### **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/icsfs/Student\\_Disability\\_Accommodation\\_Policy\\_and\\_Griev.a.pdf?target=6a336aea-f525-450c-94d2-9be2a59d204a](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/Student_Disability_Accommodation_Policy_and_Griev.a.pdf?target=6a336aea-f525-450c-94d2-9be2a59d204a)

### **Information Services & Support**

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

### **Library**

<http://library.msj.edu/friendly.php?s=index>

### **Campus Police**

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

## Attendance Policy

The Mount St. Joseph PA program policy on required attendance is conveyed to students in multiple documents, including the program handbook, which defines attendance and the consequences for non-compliance. This is reiterated in the course syllabi, along with the potential impact on student grades. Further information is available to students in the MSJ Graduate Catalog available below and at: <https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/student-rights-policies/academic-policies/index.html>.

The attendance policy is established to support students' academic achievement. Due to the rigorous nature of the coursework and the accelerated pace of learning, attendance for classes and clinical experiences is mandatory for successful completion of the program. Physician assistant students are **required** to attend all scheduled classes (virtual or face-to-face), laboratory sessions, callback days, orientation, and clinical practice experiences, except in the event of emergencies, personal illness, or injury (or if previously requested and approved from allotted time off).

- 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. A family/faculty member cannot issue this.
- The final determination of "emergency" will be at the discretion of the Program Director and/or the Medical Director.
- 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. If the primary program email is not notified of an absence or tardiness, this could result in a deduction in professionalism points.
  - 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 Program Director and the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee will determine the consequences for excessive absences.
- Business appointments, routine dental and medical appointments, weddings, graduations, and other social events should be scheduled outside of regular class hours. Accommodations will not be made for unexcused absences.
- Students with expected absences during the didactic or clinical year should complete a "Student Time Off Request" form and turn it in to the Academic or Clinical director. Examples of an expected absence may include, but is not limited to, weddings, graduation, family events, or medical appointments/procedures. This should be submitted before the anticipated absence so that appropriate planning can take place (advanced notice is looked more favorably upon for approval). Students are permitted a total of 3 (three) days of requested time off (no more than two consecutive days) throughout the 27-month program. A half-day request will count as a full day. If a requested time-off day conflicts with an exam, the student

must still take the exam with remote proctoring at the same time as the cohort. Remote proctoring will be scheduled before the exam date, with instructions shared with the student at least 48 hours before the exam. Requests cannot be for OSCE days, skills check-offs, clinical orientation, or callback days. Students are responsible for all material missed. Final decision/approval will be made within 14 days of submission. If requested time off occurs during the clinical year, the Clinical Coordinator will notify the preceptor of the student's anticipated absence. The clinical team/preceptor is not responsible for providing the student with supplemental instructions.

- 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.
- Time off due to personal circumstances including bereavement may be granted at the discretion of the Program Director.
- Unexcused absences will not be tolerated & may result in disciplinary action & a failing grade.
- Recurrent absences and tardiness will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, which may include a deduction in professionalism points and/or a formal review by the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.
- Examinations
  - Attendance is mandatory for all examinations. Students are responsible for being present at the beginning of all examinations. Exams will begin **on time**, and the examination must be downloaded before the exam time.
    - If tardy, must start exam prior to the first student finishing exam to preserve the integrity of the exam. The window to take the exam will not be extended. The Course Director reserves the right to change the exam window time. The timing of arrival will determine if the student can take the exam with the cohort.
  - Being absent on the day of an examination is an unexcused absence unless documentation is provided that explains why the absence should be excused (e.g., provider's note). This documentation must be sent to the PA Program within 24 hours of the scheduled exam time.
  - For unexcused absences, it is at the discretion of the program leadership if the student will be allowed to take the examination for a maximum achievable grade of 75%. Subsequent absences will result in increasing increments off the total course grade, and could lead to dismissal from the program.
  - PA program faculty are not expected to give make-up exams for unauthorized absences.
  - Final decision is at the discretion of the Academic or Clinical Director and the Program Director.

The University or Program Director will decide to cancel class due to inclement weather or other reasons. Course directors can move instruction to remote learning rather than cancel the class entirely. Announcements of cancellations or transitions to remote learning (Zoom instruction) will be sent to faculty and students via email. All canceled classes will be made up during the remaining weeks of the semester.

Clinical year students are expected to report to their rotations. If travel is impossible due to road conditions, it is the student's responsibility to discuss with the preceptor and notify the Clinical Director.

Additional detailed information related to the University policies on Emergency Medical Leave and Temporary Illness, Injury, Pregnancy or Related Condition Modification Policy is available at [https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount\\_Community/Wellness\\_Center/Health\\_Services.jnz?portlet=Handouts](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Mount_Community/Wellness_Center/Health_Services.jnz?portlet=Handouts) or in the Graduate Catalog at <https://registrar.msj.edu/graduate-catalog/>

## **Dress Code Policy**

This dress code policy is written to ensure that PA students represent the Mount St. Joseph University PA program and the Physician Assistant profession professionally and respectfully by wearing appropriate attire as defined by the Program Planning Committee. This policy is communicated to students in the PA program's Student Handbook and is provided to all students during orientation.

Appropriate personal appearance is required in all phases of the program, including proper attire, good grooming, and good personal hygiene. Classroom attire (virtual or face-to-face) should be comfortable and modest. Avoid extremes in clothing or grooming that may be offensive to peers, faculty, or patients. Short skirts, short shorts, hats, and sleeveless T-shirts are not permissible. Open-toed shoes are permitted in the classroom, but may not be worn in labs or any clinical setting. 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 a student is uncertain about wearing a particular attire, the more conservative option is probably the safest bet. Though others may be noted wearing "**less than professional**" dress, that doesn't justify 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 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.

- Undergarments should always be worn.
- Dress codes of clinical sites must be followed (potential considerations of tattoos, artificial/acrylic nails, piercings, artificial hair colors).

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, a nice shirt or blouse, a knee-length or longer dress, skirt, and shorts. Mount Spirit wear, scrubs, and running shoes may also be worn in the classroom. In clinical skills and physical diagnosis labs, attire will include clean scrubs and closed-toe shoes.

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. During the clinical phase, an MSJ-issued name badge (and a facility-issued name badge, if applicable) identifying the student as a physician assistant student must be worn at all times. The program-provided white lab coat should also be clean and worn at all times unless specified by the clinical site.

Students may request a reasonable accommodation to the dress code policy due to religious or disability reasons. Dress should be professional, as students will serve as symbols and public representatives of the program, the university, and the PA profession. Attire and behavior will reflect on the image of physician assistants to others.

The program reserves the right to request that any student remove or cover any material 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.

## **Class Recording and Disclosure Policy**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable federal and state privacy laws protect the educational records and privacy of students at Mount St. Joseph University (the “University”) from disclosure. “Education records” under FERPA, with certain exceptions, refer to records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by the educational agency or institution, or by a party acting on behalf of the educational agency or institution. Certain privacy laws protect the image, likeness, and voice of individuals from use and third-party disclosure without consent. Generally, a student’s education records may not be disclosed or released, and a student’s privacy rights cannot be waived without that student’s written consent.

Faculty at Mount St. Joseph University (the “University”) are permitted, in their sole discretion, to record their classes via Zoom (or another University-approved video or audio-conferencing platform) and to make those recordings available to the students in their courses through Blackboard if all the following parameters are met in advance:

- All students in a class have executed the “FERPA Consent Form and General Waiver for Class Recordings” (the “Consent Form”), which provides consent and waives claims under FERPA and applicable privacy laws, prior to the disclosure of a class recording to any student.
- No faculty member may disclose any class recording to students unless and until all students in the class execute the Consent Form. Consequently, if any student in a class chooses not to execute a Consent Form, the faculty member may not record or disclose the class recording to any students.
- The University has an approved form of Consent Form that is the only acceptable form to use under this policy.
- Electronic consent is permissible, and the University will make the Consent Forms available for students to e-sign and for faculty to track through Blackboard.
- Faculty are responsible for tracking the receipt of Consent Forms from all students through Blackboard. Faculty members are also responsible for confirming that all students in a class have executed the Consent Form before making any class recordings available to students.
- Recordings may only be made available via Blackboard to students enrolled in the class.
- Personal recording devices are prohibited if **all** students have not signed the Consent Form.
- Lecture recordings are provided solely as supplemental instructional resources for enrolled students. They may not be used as the basis to dispute, challenge, or appeal examination questions, grading decisions, or assessment outcomes. All examinations are derived from course learning objectives, required readings, and designated instructional materials; therefore, class recordings cannot serve as authoritative evidence in the review of test items.
- Lecture recordings may not be shared, distributed, posted, or otherwise disseminated to any individual outside the enrolled course cohort or on any public or private social media platform. Unauthorized use or distribution of recordings constitutes a breach of program professionalism expectations and may result in disciplinary action.
- The Consent Form executed by students includes an acknowledgement that disclosing recordings to anyone outside of that particular class is strictly prohibited. That prohibition also applies to faculty. If a faculty member believes that a recording should be disclosed to someone outside of a particular class, please contact the University’s General Counsel at 513-244-4393.

Any failure to follow these parameters may expose the University to unnecessary legal risk and may result in disciplinary action against the faculty member who failed to adhere to this policy.

This policy is separate from and does not impact the University’s Student Disability Accommodation Policy. The University may provide accommodations to permit a qualified

student to record a class for individual use consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008.

## **Communication and Social Media Policy**

The official method of communication between students and the PA program is through the Mount St. Joseph University email system. Students are provided with a university email address during the program orientation and are required to check and respond to emails daily. The use of other email domains (e.g., Hotmail or Gmail) for official communication is unacceptable.

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

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 (e.g., Facebook, X, 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 may lead to subsequent dismissal from the program. Examples of inappropriate material include, but are not limited to, breaches of patient privacy, foul language, pornography, discrimination, harassment, as well as threatening, inflammatory, or defamatory comments.

The integrity of the coursework, students, and the classroom in the MSJ PA program should be protected. Students should not share questions or answers to assignments, exams, or quizzes via social media, nor provide this information to students in a subsequent class.

Students are expected to use AI (artificial intelligence) technologies responsibly and ethically, adhering to copyright laws, privacy standards, and the intellectual property rights of others. AI must not be used for plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty. Submissions should reflect the student's work, and AI-generated content should not be presented as a substitute for original student efforts.

Didactic and clinical site training commitments should be respected. Students should refrain from engaging in social networking during in-class and on-site clinical time. This includes instant messaging and texting via social media websites or mobile applications.

Students should ensure accuracy when making statements about the MSJ PA program and its community members. Students should refrain from providing false, intentionally inaccurate, or inflammatory comments.

All laws governing copyright and fair use of intellectual property must be followed.

The MSJ PA Department will manage and oversee all official social media accounts for the MSJ PA Program. The students appointed to the social media committee will be authorized to post on the program's Instagram account. They will create, schedule, and curate content specific to their respective class activities and events in collaboration with MSJ PA Program faculty and staff.

### Official School-Owned MSJ PA Social Media Accounts

<https://www.facebook.com/MSJ.PhysicianAssistant>

<https://www.instagram.com/msjpaprogram/>

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, assuming they will use it responsibly. The institutional guidelines on Responsible Use can be found in the University Student Handbook:

[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)

### Professionalism Policy

The Professionalism policy of the Mount St. Joseph PA program is to define, enforce, integrate, and evaluate the professional behavior expected from our graduate students. This applies to their skills, knowledge, integrity, attitude, and appearance.

The PA community has defined the skills, knowledge, integrity, appearance, and attitudes that a physician assistant must demonstrate to achieve 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.

These expectations are clearly communicated to students in the Student Handbook and in course syllabi.

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

The PA Program expects all students to:

- Display 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
- Engage in both didactic and clinical year activities through listening, asking questions, and collaborating with classmates/faculty/staff.
- Demonstrate receptiveness to constructive feedback from faculty, staff, preceptors, 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 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 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.

#### Privacy and Conflicts of Interest

Students are bound by all state and federal privacy laws (e.g., the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regarding the protection of patient information. In addition, students are prohibited from performing clinical rotations with nuclear family members or other close personal relations as preceptors. Additionally, students should recuse themselves, or may be asked to recuse themselves, from the clinical care of family members, close friends or acquaintances, or program affiliates. Students may not be financially compensated for any activities that are required assignments for the school.

#### Professionalism Evaluation

Professionalism will be assessed throughout the PA Program in all PAS courses using established rubrics, with points distributed at the discretion of the course director.

If a faculty or staff member identifies severe 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, upon completion, may recommend actions ranging from counseling and non-academic probation to dismissal from the program.

## **Immunization Policy**

The Immunization policy of the Mount St. Joseph PA program is to inform and ensure students have the required immunizations as described in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (namely Hepatitis B, Influenza, MMR, Varicella, and Tdap immunizations).

The PA Program requires proof of immunizations before matriculation and annually thereafter to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and patients.

The student will receive the required immunization list upon notice of acceptance into the program. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of all immunizations. The PA Program will review the CDC Healthcare Personnel Vaccination Recommendations on an annual basis and as necessary to update immunization requirements. Students will be notified of changes or updates to the immunization schedule.

Students are responsible for any costs associated with immunizations before and during their enrollment in the PA Program.

### **Procedure**

- Students receive an electronic list of required immunizations, based on the most recent CDC Healthcare Personnel Vaccination Recommendations, before matriculation and annually thereafter.
- Students are informed they are financially responsible for costs associated with immunizations.
- Students are provided contact information for Castle Branch, where the student will upload documentation of immunization and/or laboratory evidence of immunity.
- Students are informed that they will not be able to participate in clinical rotations without completion of the immunization requirements. Students do reserve the right to request an exemption for any vaccination, noting that this exemption may not be upheld at clinical sites, which may result in a delay in graduation.
- Immunization Exemption request needs to be submitted by the first day of Fall semester.
- Students who have never had the Hepatitis B vaccination may matriculate into the program after the initial vaccine and complete the series in the ensuing 6 months. After the final vaccination, laboratory testing for immunity will be required.
- Students who are “non-responders” to the Hepatitis B vaccine will be counseled on the risk of acquiring Hepatitis B and preventive measures, including universal precautions.

### Healthcare Personnel Vaccination Recommendations

<https://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf>

<https://www2a.cdc.gov/vaccines/statevaccsApp/Administration.asp?statetmp=OH>

## Vaccines and Recommendations in brief

**COVID-19** – If not up to date, administer the COVID-19 vaccine according to current CDC recommendations (see [https://www.cdc.gov/acip-recs/hcp/vaccine-specific/covid-19.html?CDC\\_Aref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vaccine-specific/covid-19.html](https://www.cdc.gov/acip-recs/hcp/vaccine-specific/covid-19.html?CDC_Aref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vaccine-specific/covid-19.html)

**Hepatitis B** - Unvaccinated healthcare personnel (HCP) and/ or those who cannot document previous vaccination should receive either a 2-dose series of Heplisav-B at 0 and 1 month or a 3-dose series of either Engerix-B or Recombivax HB at 0, 1, and 6 months. HCP who perform tasks that may involve exposure to blood or body fluids should be tested for hepatitis B surface antibody (anti-HBs) 1–2 months after dose #2 of Heplisav-B or dose #3 of Engerix-B or Recombivax HB to document immunity. If anti-HBs is at least 10 mIU/mL (positive), the vaccinee is immune. No further serologic testing or vaccination is recommended. If anti-HBs is less than 10 mIU/mL (negative), the vaccinee is not protected from hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, and should receive another 2-dose or 3-dose series of Hep B vaccine on the routine schedule, followed by anti-HBs testing 1–2 months later. A vaccinee who's anti-HBs remains less than 10 mIU/ mL after 2 complete series is considered a “non-responder.” HCP who are non-responders should be regarded as susceptible to HBV and should be counseled regarding precautions to prevent HBV infection and the need to obtain HBIG prophylaxis for any known or probable parenteral exposure to hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)-positive blood or blood with unknown HBsAg status. It is also possible that non-responders are individuals who are HBsAg-positive. HBsAg testing is recommended. HCP found to be HBsAg positive should be counseled and medically evaluated.

**Influenza** - All HCP, including physicians, nurses, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, employees of nursing homes and chronic care facilities, students in these professions, and volunteers, should receive annual vaccination against influenza. Live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) may be given only to non-pregnant healthy HCP aged 49 years and younger. Inactivated injectable influenza vaccine (IIV) is preferred over LAIV for HCP who are in close contact with severely immunosuppressed patients (e.g., stem cell transplant recipients) when they require protective isolation.

**Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)** - HCP who work in medical facilities should be immune to measles, mumps, and rubella. HCP born in 1957 or later can be considered immune to measles, mumps, or rubella only if they have documentation of (a) laboratory confirmation of disease or immunity or (b) appropriate vaccination against measles, mumps, and rubella (i.e., 2 doses of live measles and mumps vaccines given on or after the first birthday and separated by 28 days or more, and at least 1 dose of live rubella vaccine). HCP with 2 documented doses of MMR are not recommended to be serologically tested for immunity; but if they are tested and results are negative or equivocal for measles, mumps, and/or rubella, these HCP should be considered to have presumptive evidence of immunity to measles, mumps, and/or rubella and are not in need of additional MMR doses.

Although birth before 1957 generally is considered acceptable evidence of measles, mumps, and rubella immunity, 2 doses of MMR vaccine should be considered for unvaccinated HCP born before 1957 who do not have laboratory evidence of disease or immunity to measles and/or mumps. One dose of MMR vaccine should be considered for HCP with no laboratory evidence of disease or immunity to rubella. For these same HCP who do not have evidence of immunity, 2 doses of MMR vaccine are recommended during an outbreak of measles or mumps and 1 dose during an outbreak of rubella.

**Varicella** - It is recommended that all HCP be immune to varicella. Evidence of immunity in HCP includes documentation of 2 doses of varicella vaccine given at least 28 days apart, laboratory evidence of immunity, laboratory confirmation of disease, or diagnosis or verification of a history of varicella or herpes zoster (shingles) by a healthcare provider.

**Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Td/Tdap)** - All HCPs who have not or are unsure if they have previously received a dose of Tdap should receive a dose of Tdap as soon as feasible, without regard to the interval since the previous dose of Td. Pregnant HCP should be revaccinated during each pregnancy. All HCPs should then receive Td boosters every 10 years thereafter.

#### International Rotation Requirements

Students participating in any international rotation must comply with all CDC Travelers' Health recommendations for their specific destination. This includes—at minimum—reviewing required and recommended vaccines, prophylactic medications, and region-specific health precautions published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Students are encouraged to obtain a travel health evaluation from a licensed medical provider or travel clinic to determine required or recommended immunizations, medications (e.g., malaria prophylaxis), and preventive measures.

Students are responsible for all costs associated with international immunizations, titers, prophylactic medications, and travel health evaluations.

## **Accident & Personal Safety Policy**

The policy of the Mount St. Joseph PA program is to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, faculty, and staff during regular program activities.

### **On-campus Safety/Security**

The Mount St. Joseph University campus's 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. 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/>

- To report a non-emergency, contact the MSJ police department by dialing “0”, 4200 or 4226 from any campus phone or call 513-244-4226.
- In the event of an emergency, call 911 and the MSJ police department at 513-244-4200 or 4200 or “0” from any campus phone.

## Clinical Year

Safety and security during clinical rotations are the responsibility of the participating facility. Students should exercise good judgment regarding their personal safety while off campus. Most institutions have security personnel available to walk students to their cars after hours. If an incident occurs during a clinical rotation, the student should immediately contact the institution’s security team or local authorities, as well as the Clinical Director or Program Director.

Confirmation of clinical site compliance with program, institutional, and regulatory safety standards is documented during the initial site visit (virtual or in-person) and during subsequent maintenance site visits (virtual or in-person). These visits evaluate the physical environment, the adequacy of resources, and the safety and security of the clinical site. All findings, including any required corrective actions, are formally documented. The Mount St. Joseph PA Program reserves the right to pause or discontinue student placement at any clinical site that does not meet or maintain required safety standards.

## Blood-borne Pathogen Exposure

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

**Should a student sustain any injury, including 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 required, you will be taken to the local emergency department for immediate care and subsequent follow-up.
- The student will be responsible for any costs 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.
- These policies will be communicated to students via the Handbook and addressed during the orientation program.
- Students will acknowledge receipt of the handbook with copies of the signed receipt placed in the student's file  
Documentation of OSHA and Bloodborne Pathogen training will be maintained in the student's file.

## Clinical Site Travel Policy

### Travel Expectations for Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs)

Mount St. Joseph University PA Program students are required to complete eleven (11) five-week Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs) during the clinical phase of the program. Some SCPEs may require students to travel.

#### Definition of a Travel Rotation:

A travel SCPE is any clinical rotation located more than 60 miles from Mount St. Joseph University's campus but still within the United States.

#### Notification Timeline:

Students will receive at least 3 months' notice for any rotation requiring travel. Exceptions may occur in extenuating circumstances, such as—though not limited to—preceptor or site cancellations.

#### Student Eligibility and Expectations:

All students should anticipate traveling for multiple clinical rotations during the clinical phase. Marital status, having children, or owning pets does not exempt a student from required travel.

#### International Rotations:

International SCPEs may be available only as elective rotations, pending completion of the designated application process and successful selection.

## Travel Accommodations:

Students are responsible for arranging and funding their own housing and transportation during travel rotations. The institution and PA Program does not provide, secure, or cover the cost of accommodations or transportation.

## Faculty as Medical Providers Policy

The policy of the Mount St. Joseph PA program is to advise faculty, students, and stakeholders that all *Principal Faculty*, Program Director, and Medical Director must not participate as healthcare providers for students in the program, except in emergencies. This is clearly stated in the program's Faculty and Staff Orientation manual and the Student Handbook.

Suppose an occasion arises where a student presents to a facility where a faculty member is practicing. In that case, the faculty member should first request that another provider see the student. If the faculty member is the sole provider in an emergency setting, the emergency will be addressed and privacy maintained. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of the faculty member's employment.

## Student Grievance and Harassment Policy

PA students are encouraged to foster a collaborative and respectful learning environment. Before filing a formal grievance, students are encouraged to attempt to resolve the issue informally by directly addressing the concern with the individual involved (either the student or faculty member). Open and respectful communication is often the quickest way to clarify misunderstandings or find mutually agreeable solutions.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the student may submit a formal grievance. The grievance should be submitted in writing, detailing the nature of the complaint, the parties involved, and any relevant facts or documentation. This formal complaint should be submitted to the Program Director within 3 days of the incident.

The policy of the Mount St. Joseph PA program is to adhere to the University's policies related to student grievances and allegations of harassment and related conduct, 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:

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\\_Policy.pdf?target=11f1702e-87f8-4bca-9e85-628ec315b266](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/V_Sex_Disc_Misconduct_Interpersonal_Violence_Policy.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)

**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, Title IX Coordinator 513-244-4393
- Teri Compton, Director of Human Resources, 513-244-4979

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.nz](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/Info_and_Policies/Student_Handbook_and_Other_Policies.nz)

## **Student Work Policy**

The Mount St. Joseph PA program communicates its employment/work policies to prospective and enrolled students in several ways, beginning with the program website. Enrolled students are informed of the program policy during orientation and in the student handbook.

- 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 ***strongly discouraged*** from working in any capacity while enrolled in the PA program. It is essential during the clinical rotations phase of the program that students be available to their preceptors on short notice for exceptional learning opportunities outside of regular office hours. Failure to fully participate in all clinically related activities is considered abandonment and will result in failure of the rotation unless it is an excused absence per program guidelines.
- Students are expected to work the schedule of their preceptors.
- Students enrolled in the PA program cannot substitute for practicing physician assistants or provide unsupervised services standard 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 are unable to participate fully in program activities due to outside employment, they will be referred to the Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee. The committee will conduct an investigation and, upon completion, may recommend actions ranging from counseling and non-academic probation to dismissal from the program.

## **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)

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Signature

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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)**

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**Signature**

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**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:

## **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.

---

Printed Name

Signature

Date

## **Appendix (A)**

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

#### **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 the next generation of healthcare leaders to positively transform lives and improve the health of communities*” 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 their 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/Drug\\_Alcohol\\_Policy\\_and\\_Guidelines.pdf?target=2cc870d5-79bb-4a79-9953-435edc251fe2](https://mymount.msj.edu/ICS/icsfs/Drug_Alcohol_Policy_and_Guidelines.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 departmental 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 departmental 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 departmental activities.

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

Any student whose use of a legal drug has the potential to impair the student's clinical performance or any departmental activities shall disclose such drug use to their program's clinical director/coordinator. 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 departmental activities. Students who are impaired by legal drugs will not be permitted to perform "safety sensitive" clinical or departmental-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 program-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 their 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 be responsible for the cost. The student must 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 student's University account will be charged for the cost of test as set by the 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 their 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 their 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 their 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.

**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:

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Student

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Date

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Printed name

## **Appendix(B)**

### **Technical Standards Policy**

The policy of the Mount St. Joseph PA program is to define and make readily available admission-related information to all prospective students, faculty, and other stakeholders, including the technical standards required for enrollment. This information is available at: <http://www.msj.edu/academics/graduate-programs/physician-assistant-program/technical-standards/>

### **TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES**

*The Mount St. Joseph University Physician Assistant program has established specific technical standards for admission. These standards reflect the minimum mental and physical requirements necessary to become a Physician Assistant. Candidates for the Mount St. Joseph University PA program should review these standards before making the decision to apply. While not a component of the program application, students invited to enroll in the program, will be required to provide an attestation statement from a health care professional (i.e., MD, PA or APRN) verifying that the student meets these technical standards. PA students may possess the ability to type or write effectively, sit for extended periods during academic and clinical activities, and stand for prolonged durations during specific rotations, such as surgery; if these requirements may present challenges, students are encouraged to discuss potential accommodations with the University's Student Accessibility Services Specialist to make this determination.*

#### **1. Observation**

Students must be able to observe demonstrations and conduct experiments in the basic sciences, including, but not limited to: physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of micro-organisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand, noting non-verbal as well as verbal signals. Specific vision-related requirements include, but are not limited to, the following abilities: skin, culture media, and dipstick tests; visualizing and discriminating findings on x-rays and other imaging tests; reading written and illustrated material; observing demonstrations in the classroom, including projected slides and overheads; discriminating numbers and patterns associated with diagnostic instruments and tests such as sphygmomanometers and electrocardiograms; using instruments competently, such as stethoscope, otoscope, ophthalmoscope, and microscope.

## **2. Communication**

Students must be able to relate effectively with patients, conveying a sense of compassion and empathy. A student must be able to communicate clearly with and observe patients in order to elicit information, accurately describing changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive verbal as well as non-verbal communications. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. Professional education for physician assistants presents exceptional challenges in the volume and breadth of required reading and the necessity to impart information to others. Students must be able to communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently in oral and written English with all members of the health care team.

Specific requirements include but are not limited to the following abilities: communicating rapidly and clearly with the medical team on rounds; eliciting a thorough history from patients; and communicating complex findings in appropriate terms to patient and to various members of the health care team (fellow students, physicians, nurses, aides, therapists, social workers, and others. Students must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional communications such as sadness, worry, agitation, and lack of comprehension of physician communication. Each student must be able to read and to record observations and plans legibly, efficiently and accurately in documents such as the patient record.

Students must be able to prepare and communicate concise but complete summaries of individual encounters and complex, prolonged encounters, including hospitalizations. Students must be able to complete forms according to directions in a complete and timely fashion.

## **3. Sensory and Motor Coordination or Function**

Students must have sufficient sensory and motor function to perform a physical examination utilizing palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. In general, this requires sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain and temperature), proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis and vibratory), and motor function. A student should be able to execute motor movements reasonably promptly to urgencies within the hospital, and must not hinder the ability of their co-workers to provide prompt care, measure blood pressure and pulse. A student should be able to learn to perform and diagnostic and therapeutic procedures (phlebotomy, arterial blood gas drawings, lumbar puncture, arthrocentesis, etc.). Examples of such emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants include arriving quickly, when called and initiating appropriate therapeutic procedures, administering intravenous medication, applying pressure to stop bleeding, opening obstructed airways, suturing uncomplicated wounds, and performing uncomplicated obstetrical maneuvers.

#### **4. Intellectual-Conceptual Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, judgment, numerical recognition and synthesis. Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual abilities, and must be performed quickly, especially in emergency situations. Students must be able to identify significant findings from history, physical examination, and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, and prescribe medications and therapy, recalling and retaining information in an efficient and timely manner. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the medical literature in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic planning is essential; students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others when appropriate. Student must be able to interpret graphs describing biologic relationships and other similar modes of data analysis.

#### **5. Behavioral Attributes**

Empathy, integrity, honesty, concern for others, good interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are required. Students must possess the emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. At times, this requires the ability to be aware of and appropriately react to one's own immediate emotional responses. For example, students must maintain a professional demeanor and organization in the face of long hours and personal fatigue, dissatisfied patients, and tired colleagues.

Students must be able to develop professional relationships with patients, providing composure and reassurance when appropriate while protecting patient confidentiality. Students must possess adequate endurance to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. All students are at times required to work for extended periods, occasionally with rotating shifts. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Students are expected to accept appropriate suggestions and criticism and if necessary, respond by modification of behavior.

