



UNIVERSITY *of*
ST. AUGUSTINE *for*
HEALTH SCIENCES

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences PA
Program Student Handbook

2022 – 2024

Dear student,

Please read this handbook carefully and become familiar with its contents. Questions regarding the information presented should be directed to your faculty advisor or the PA Program Director.

It is your responsibility to keep this book at hand and use it as a reference. Additions or updates will be provided to you at the start of each calendar year.

Best wishes for a productive and successful year!

This handbook (A3.01; A3.02) is designed to provide a framework within which the faculty and students can function together as a community. It provides the Physician Assistant (PA) Program policies. These policies apply to all students regardless of location. Members of any community with common objectives must have policies and procedures that ensure that the rights and responsibilities of all are explicit and protected. These policies and procedures are not intended to be restrictive, but rather are an instrument to ensure that the operation of the program will be consistent with its obligations as a professional program. All policies and procedures are in effect through the 2024 calendar year. Changes may be made in subsequent years. Students may access the handbook on the PA program's website: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Contact information:

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences
5401 La Crosse Ave
Austin, TX 78739
(800) 241-1027

Faculty and Staff

PA Program Faculty and Staff (A1.07; A2.01; A2.02; A2.03; A2.04; A2.13)

PA Program Director: Mike Roscoe, PhD, PA-C (A2.06, A2.07)

Medical Director: Johanna Busch, Ph.D., MD (A2.07)

Assistant Program Director / DDE / Principal Faculty: Lindsay Kozicz, MHS, PA-C

Director of Clinical Education (DCE): Julia Forsberg, MPAS, PA-C

Principal Faculty 2: Julia Forsberg, MPAS, PA-C

Principal Faculty 3: Sarah Talbot, BSN-RN, MPAS, PA-C

Principal Faculty 4: Jenny Rodriguez, MPAS, PA-C (starting June 2023)

Principal Faculty 5: XXXXXXXX, June 2024

Principal Faculty 6: XXXXXXXX, June 2025

Part time/Contributing Faculty: Elizabeth Blankenship MPAS, PA-C

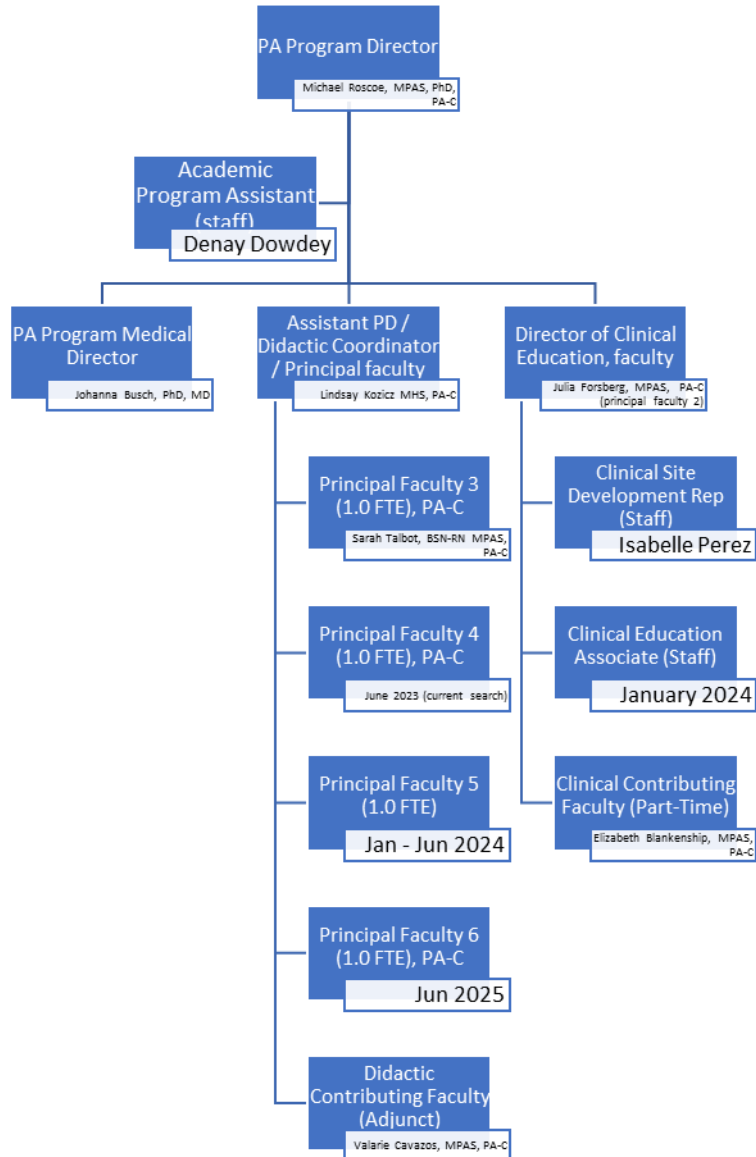
Part time/Contributing Faculty: Valarie Cavazos MPAS, PA-C

Academic Administrative Assistant: Denay Dowdey (A2.18)

Clinical Site Development Representative: Isabelle Lopez (A2.18)

Clinical Education Associate; XXXXX, January 2023 (A2.18)

Department Task Organization Chart (A2.10)



Mission Statements

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences

The mission of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is the development of professional health care practitioners through innovative, individualized, and quality classroom, clinical, and distance education.

USAHS Core Values

- Students at the Center
- Professionalism
- Collaboration
- Promoting Excellence and Innovation in Education
- Integrity
- Health and Wellness
- Creative and Critical Thinking
- Responsiveness

PA Program

The mission of USAHS' MSPAS program is to train physician assistants who will serve their communities by delivering high-quality, value-based healthcare with empathy, compassion, and cultural humility as part of a collaborative healthcare team.

PA Program Philosophy

The PA program leadership and faculty believe in:

- Focusing on “why” before “how” or “what”
- Patient-centered, team-based healthcare
- Long-term relationships and a strong culture of partnering vs. a short-term collaboration

We also believe that the *art* of medicine (focusing on the patient's values and preferences) is as important as the *science* of medicine (treatment of a disease).

These beliefs define the USAHS PA program's “why,” which drives our “what” (the program itself) and our “how.” Our “how” is our purposeful curriculum, student-centered approach, faculty involvement, and collaboration with our partnered health professions. Through our “why” and “how,” we offer an excellent physician assistant program that is designed to train leaders in the community and help increase access to healthcare, especially in the Austin region.

PA Program Core Values

(I²-CARE)

Innovation

Innovation means always searching for a better solution. It means cultivating curiosity and openness to new ideas. It's about creating and anticipating change, and constantly striving to exceed expectations.

Integrity

Integrity means valuing honesty and openness, demonstrating reliability and trustworthiness, and doing what is right.

Collaboration

Collaboration means valuing everyone's input by listening, learning, working together, and helping each other in support of the collective goal to improve all aspects of the PA program and the University as a whole.

Accountability

Accountability means taking responsibility for our words, our actions, and our results as they relate to our students and colleagues.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness means anticipating the needs of our patients and team members and putting proactive, thoughtful plans in place to meet those needs in a timely manner.

Excellence

Excellence requires constant adaptation, innovation, and vigilance to provide evidence- and problem-based education and patient care.

Competencies and Learning Outcomes (A2.05; A2.12; A2.14; A3.12; B1.01)

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Upon graduating from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, graduates will have achieved the following in their healthcare-related roles.

1. Apply knowledge, current research, skills, critical thinking, and evidence-informed decision making.
2. Exhibit professional behaviors consistently and adhere to ethical standards.
3. Demonstrate effective professional communication appropriate to the situation and individuals.
4. Apply interprofessional competencies.
5. Establish strategies for post-graduation growth and development (lifelong learning)

PA Program

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon completing the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences PA Program, graduates will be able to perform all the following within a clinical setting for entry-level PA Practice:

- PLO 1: Apply **Medical Knowledge** in the clinical care of patients (ILO 1, B4.03d)
- PLO 2: Demonstrate **Interpersonal and Communication Skills** appropriate to the situation and individuals. (ILO 3, B4.03c)
- PLO 3: Demonstrate **Clinical and Technical Skills** in the care of patients (ILO 5, B4.03a)
- PLO 4: Exhibit **Professional Behaviors** consistently and adhere to ethical standards (ILO 2, B4.03e)
- PLO 5: Demonstrate **Clinical Reasoning and Problem-solving** to make evidence-informed patient care decisions (ILO 5, B4.03b)
- PLO 6: Apply **Interprofessional Collaboration** competencies (ILO 4)

PA Program Competencies

Upon completing the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences PA Program, graduates will have demonstrated proficiency in each of the following:

Medical Knowledge

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic medical sciences.
2. Apply knowledge of human development, anatomy and physiology and pathophysiology to distinguish normal from disease.
3. Critically evaluate and incorporate evidence-based medicine to make practice-based improvements.
4. Integrate a multi-faceted, holistic approach to the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

1. Demonstrate effective verbal, non-verbal and written communication which results in exchange of information and collaboration with patients, families, caregivers, and members of the healthcare team.
2. Incorporate elements of shared decision-making into communication with patients, families, and caregivers to facilitate active participation in their care.
3. Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in difficult conversations, including those about disclosure of errors, prognosis, and end of life.
4. Communicate effectively with and demonstrate cultural competency for a diverse patient population, including but not limited to diversity in gender, gender identity, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, socioeconomic status, body habitus, and sexual orientation.

Clinical and Technical Skills

1. Perform and document a comprehensive full and focused history and physical exam across all age groups.
2. Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.
3. Interpret diagnostic laboratory and radiographic tests.

4. Provide patient education, counseling, resources, and referrals.

Professional Behaviors

1. Demonstrates integrity, honesty, compassion, respect, and empathy with all individuals.
2. Adhere to all ethical and legal principles governing medical practice.
3. Respects the patient's privacy and autonomy.
4. Perform continuous self-assessment for clinical proficiency, the prevention of medical errors and risk management.
5. Demonstrate community engagement and service.

Clinical Reasoning and Problem-solving

1. Develop comprehensive differential diagnosis and problem lists.
2. Develop appropriate treatment plans that include pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies.
3. Provide appropriate medical care in preventive, emergent, acute, chronic, rehabilitative, palliative, and end-of-life settings.
4. Assess patient outcomes for accuracy of diagnosis, effectiveness of interventions, patient adherence and other factors that can impact patient care

Interprofessional Collaboration

1. Work with other health professionals to establish and maintain a climate of mutual respect, dignity, diversity, ethical integrity, and trust to provide patient and population-centered care that is safe, timely, efficient, effective, and equitable. (Teams and Teamwork and Values/Ethics for Interprofessional Practice)
2. Use the knowledge of one's own role and roles of other health professions to appropriately assess and address the health care needs of the patients and populations served. (Roles and Responsibilities)
3. Communicate with other health professionals in a responsive and responsible manner that supports the maintenance of health and treatment of disease in individual patients and populations. (Interprofessional Communication)

PA Program Goals (A2.05; A3.12; B1.01)

- Support students to achieve first-time board passing rates consistently above the national average.
- Prepare competent entry level PAs through foundational knowledge and professional skills.
- Prepare students to work within a patient-centered interprofessional healthcare team.
- Promote professionalism, leadership and service of students and faculty within their communities.
- Recruit and retain a diverse population of faculty and students.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Additional information is available via the University Student Handbook available at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/>

Institutional Requirements (A1.02)

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 1001 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 402, Alameda, CA 94501, (510) 748-9001, www.wascsenior.org. USAHS is responsible for (A1.03):

- Supporting the planning by program faculty of curriculum design, course selection, and program assessment
- Hiring faculty and staff
- Ensuring effective program leadership
- Complying with ARC-PA accreditation Standards and policies
- Conferring the credential and graduate level academic degree which documents satisfactory completion of the educational program
- Ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules, and regulations
- Documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs
- Teaching out currently matriculated students in accordance with the institution's regional accreditor or federal law in the event of program closure and/or loss of accreditation,
- Defining, publishing, making readily available and consistently applying to faculty, its policies and procedures for processing faculty grievances and allegations of harassment
- Defining, publishing, making readily available and consistently applying to students, its policies, and procedures for processing student allegations of harassment, and
- Defining, publishing, making readily available and consistently applying to students, its policies, and procedures for refunds of tuition and fees.

Student Rights

All students enrolled at the University are accorded the basic rights as set forth by the Board of Directors. See the full list of Student Rights in the catalog at

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>.

Student Responsibilities

The University expects its students to be responsible for helping to maintain a healthy academic climate where students can grow and develop as mature individuals with a commitment to lifelong learning. See Student Responsibilities in the catalog at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>.

Academic Support and Student Services (A1.04)

Advisors

Student Success Advisors / Faculty Advisors

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, all USAHS PA students are connected to a Student Success Advisor who can assist students with non-academic activities and to a Faculty Advisor who advises on academic and professional development matters

Procedure: For information about Student Success Advisors, Faculty advisors and how to contact them, see the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2243#student-services>

Students with Disabilities

Policy: The USAHS PA program and the Office of Student Welfare and Accessibility, In in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title IX and other federal and state laws, and the University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Office of Student Welfare and Accessibility is dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to qualifying students.

Procedure: See the Accessibility and Accommodations policy in the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272#ada>

Health Services

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, PA Students are required to carry health insurance.

Procedure: Students must provide proof of health insurance to Clinical Services each term. For information on local medical services, see Health Services in the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2243#health-services>.

Counseling Services

Policy: Counseling services and online resources are available to students and members of the same household who are experiencing concerns related to personal adjustment; or any personal issue the student (or household member) may be experiencing.

Procedure: For information about free support resources, see the Student Assistance Program in the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2243#student-assistance>. Students can also contact their Student Success Advisor or the Office of Student Welfare and Accessibility for more information about counseling services.

Academic Support

Policy: USAHS offers a variety of academic resources to PA students. For more information on these service, see Academic Resources in the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2243#academic-resources>.

- Library: The library provides reference, research, and information services to PA students. Full details of all library resources and services are available at <https://library.usa.edu/>.
- iLEARN: iLEARN is a hub for USAHS students to connect to university-sponsored live and recorded training events to enhance academic, personal, and professional development. More

information, including the iLEARN calendar of events and event registration, is available at ilearn.usa.edu/.

- Writing Center: The Writing Center offers live and asynchronous, individual, or small group appointments as well as style guide workshops.
https://my.usa.edu/ICS/Student_Services/Writing_Center/
- Tutoring: Group tutoring is available to all students, and individualized tutoring is available to students who have a demonstrated need.

Technology (IT) Support

Policy: Technology support (hardware and software) is available to all USAHS students.

Procedure: Technology support for students can be found at (<https://usa7417.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>). This includes a help desk area as well as numerous self-help guides.

The library has a computer lab space that include printing availability to all students if needed. These computer lab spaces also contain additional computer software that may be requested (example SPSS).

Additional Student Services (info taken from the USAHS Catalog/Handbook)

Bursar

The Bursar's Office handles billing, posting loans, 1098-T statements, refunds, and payments. The Bursar can provide information to students regarding the CASHNet Payment Plan and setting up refund preferences in BankMobile. The Bursar's Office can also provide receipts upon request. Phone Contact: 737-202-3304

Career Services

USAHS does not guarantee employment, and completion of the degree program is not a guarantee of employment.

Career Services provides services to students online via the Optimal Resume and Handshake platforms, through on-campus career fairs twice yearly, and via online career coaching. Students have access through the MyUSA portal, Student Services tab, Career Services link. Please see USAHS student handbook for additional information.

Instructional and reference materials (A1.09)

University Reference Material and Program Required Databases

Policy: The University provides access to databases required for PA students and to supplemental learning materials through the USAHS Library.

Procedure: Databases required for PA students include 1) Access Medicine textbook database, 2) JAMA Evidence Database, and 3) CaseFiles Collection. Other databases most relevant to PA students include the following:

- DynaMed
- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
- PubMed

- Medline – EBSCO
- Medline - Ovid
- CINAHL Plus with full text
- ProQuest
- Web of Science
- Clinical Trials
- Digital Commons Network: Medicine and Health Sciences
- Finding Answers Intervention Research (FAIR) Database
- R2 Library
- Others (<https://library.usa.edu/>)

Other Required Programs

Policy: The USAHS PA Program will provide full access to the following instructional programs: 1) Blackboard Ultra (CMS), 2) Kaltura (Lecture Capture), 3) Core Higher Education, 4) ExamSoft

Procedure: The program provides access and instructions for use of these systems to students during orientation and the first week of coursework. Students may request additional assistance for access at any time through the department.

Student Medical Equipment

Policy: The USAHS PA Program will provide students with all required medical equipment. This includes at a minimum: 1) Stethoscope, 2) otoscope/ophthalmoscope, 3) White coat, 4) tuning fork(s), 5) reflex hammer, 6) Snellen chart, and 7) blood pressure cuff

Procedure: Students will be provided with information for a medical equipment package during orientation and again prior to the start of the second semester. Students may opt out of receiving the package at their request.

Diversity and Inclusion (A1.11)

University Policy

Diversity Policy: The University's Diversity Policy is available to students in the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272#diveristy>.

PA Program Policies

Policy: The USAHS PA Program is committed to student, faculty, and staff diversity and inclusion. The PA Program will have a diversity and inclusion committee/workgroup that is composed of students, faculty, and staff.

Procedure: The USAHS PA Program Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (PA IDEA) committee/workgroup will have a minimum of two (2) faculty, one (staff) and at least 2 (students) from each current PA Class/cohort. This committee will have at a minimum the following charges: a) supporting the program in defining its goal(s) for diversity and inclusion, b) supporting the program in implementing recruitment strategies, c) supporting the program in implementing retention strategies,

and d) managing resources/budget (provided by the USAHS PA Program) that promote diversity and inclusion.

Fair Practices and Admissions

Accreditation Status (A3.12a)

ACCREDITATION REVIEW COMMISSION ON EDUCATION FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

The University of Saint Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) Physician Assistant Program (Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) has applied for Accreditation-Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). USAHS MSPAS anticipates matriculating its first class in January 2024, pending achieving Accreditation-Provisional status at the September 2023 ARC-PA meeting. Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding accreditation-provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Evidence of effectiveness in meeting goals (A3.12b)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program Goals and effectiveness in meeting the goals are found on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

PANCE Pass Rate Report (A3.12c)

Policy: The *NCCPA PANCE Exam Performance Summary Report (5-years)* are found on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Master of Physician Assistant Science Curriculum and credit (A3.12d,e)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program current curriculum and credit hours are found both on the USAHS Catalog and Handbook page (<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2304>) and the PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Estimated Cost (A3.12f)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) estimated cost are found on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Program Competencies (A3.12g)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) program competencies are found on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Student Attrition Rates (A3.12i)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) program student attrition rates are found on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Admissions Process (A3.13)

Special Populations (A3.13a)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) does not recognize any special populations.

Prior Healthcare Experience or Education (A3.13b)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree to be awarded prior to matriculation into the PA program, but does not require prior healthcare experience or education within the admissions process.

Advanced Placement (A3.13c)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program does not offer advanced placement.

Academic Standards for enrollment (A3.13d)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) program student has all required academic standards for enrollment on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Additional Admission Policies

Policy: Candidates who are not admitted to the University are permitted to reapply to any program after the first denial of admission. A candidate whose admission is denied a second time, no matter the program, cannot reapply (University Policy)

Policy: Admitted students (at their own expense) are required to complete a criminal background check, 12-panel drug screen, and fingerprint report, which are conducted by a third-party vendor. (University Policy).

Procedure: A background check that includes a positive drug screen or any felony conviction will result in rescission of admission or dismissal from the University. Certain misdemeanor convictions, including but not limited to those involving drugs, theft, violence, or crimes against a person, may also result in rescission of admission or dismissal from the University. Any felony conviction or positive drug screen while enrolled as a student at USAHS will result in dismissal from the program, while certain misdemeanor convictions may also result in dismissal from the program.

Technical [Functional] Standards (A3.13e)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) program student has the functional technical standards on the USAHS PA Program website at: <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program/>.

Admission Decisions (A3.14)

University students are admitted based on their academic abilities and professionalism. The Student Acquisition Team coordinates the admissions for all degree-seeking students on all campuses in conjunction with the appropriate Program Director and the Admissions Committees.

Admission to the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences' programs is competitive. The USAHS admissions process is holistic and may include a review of academic credentials, resume or vitae, personal statement, recommendations, GRE and TOEFL reviews, observation, or practicum hours and for some programs the process culminates in an admissions interview.

PA Program Academic Admission Requirements

The PA Program (MSPAS) will use the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). Any content within the CASPA application may be used to make admissions decisions. Additionally, supplemental material such as Altus Assessments will be used within the admissions process.

Policy: All applicants must have a minimum overall GPA (Overall) of 3.0 on a 4.0 grade scale.

Procedure: The GPA used for this policy is based solely on GPA as calculated by CASPA.

Policy: The USAHS PA Program does not use nor require any standardized academic admissions exams during the admissions process.

PA Program Non-Academic Admissions Requirement

Policy: All applicants must complete all components of the Altus Suite online assessment. This includes the Casper (situational judgement test), Duet (value-alignment assessment) and Snapshot (one-way interview).

Policy: The USAHS PA Program will use a holistic evaluation of the CASPA application using the Universities Core Values and the PA Programs competency domains as guidelines.

Interview

Policy: All USAHS PA applicants will complete an in-person interview. Exceptions on a case-by-case basis are made for extenuating circumstances.

Procedure: The PA Program uses the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) format for its on-site interview process. Any applicant who cannot meet the in-person interview requirement will be given a virtual interview. All attempts to provide a virtual MMI will be made, but the program has the authority to perform a standard behavioral interview if needed to complete this requirement.

International Student Requirements

TOEFL

Policy: International applicants from a country where English is not the primary language, who did not complete their undergraduate degree in English, or if deemed necessary by the Director of Admissions, must provide an official TOEFL score report.

- The minimum Internet-based TOEFL score requirement is 89 (including sectional minimums of 26 in speaking, 24 in writing, 21 in reading, and 18 in listening). The date of the reported test must fall within two years of the application deadline.
- For tDPT, A minimum score of 550 (paper-based testing), 210 (computer-based testing), or 80 (Internet-based testing [IBT]) is required. If candidate is licensed in the United States a TOEFL is not required.

International Coursework

Policy: International applicants are required to submit all foreign coursework to a US-based evaluation service for a course-by-course US equivalency report. This report should then be sent directly to CASPA from the evaluation service.

Procedure: The following are foreign evaluation vendors our applicants have used in the past. [World Education Services \(WES\), Inc.](#) or [Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.](#)

PA Program Requirements upon Admission (A3.15)

Academic Standards (A3.15a)

Satisfactory Academic Progress / Good Academic Standing

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, to remain in good academic standing, a student within the College of Health Sciences must meet the following criteria:

1. Maintain at least a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher each trimester;
2. Complete program of study within 150% of the published program length; and
3. Complete the program with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Procedure: Failure to meet any of the above criteria results in the following actions:

1. After the first trimester in which a student fails to meet academic standards, the student is placed on Academic/Financial Aid Warning. Students who are placed on Academic/Financial Aid Warning are required to meet with their Faculty Advisor to develop an Academic Improvement Plan on how to improve their academic study.
2. If the student fails to meet academic standards at the completion of any subsequent trimester, the student is dismissed and loses Title IV eligibility. If the student successfully appeals, the student is placed on Academic/Financial Aid Probation and Title IV eligibility is reinstated.
3. If the student does not meet academic standards in any trimester following the trimester in which they are on Academic/Financial Aid Probation, the student is dismissed from the program and loses Title IV eligibility.

Students who fail to meet the 3.0 GPA for graduation are required to complete remediation independent study courses or repeat prior courses, in which a letter grade is earned to obtain the required 3.0 GPA for completion of degree requirements. Completion of these additional requirements will delay graduation. Remediation independent study courses are not Title IV eligible and incur tuition charges at the student's expense.

Competency Minimum Standard

Policy: USAHS PA Students must achieve a minimum of Level 3 (competent) in each sub-domain of the program listed competencies to meet program completion requirements.

Non-academic

Policy: USAHS PA students must complete all University and PA Program requirements for graduation as stated in the USAHS Student Handbook/Catalog.

Procedure: The PA Program, through the student success and faculty advisors will monitor any additional requirements USAHS PA students may need to meet University graduation requirements. This may include items such as, but not limited to, financial aid, application for graduation, program projects not related to a specific course, etc.

Program Endorsement to take the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE).

Policy: The National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) requires that the accredited PA Program endorses a student prior to being allowed to sit for the PANCE. Endorsement consists of validation of completion of all didactic components, required competencies, and vetting of a student's professionalism.

Procedure: The USAHS PA will endorse a student to sit for the PANCE exam when the student has successfully demonstrated their ability to pass the PANCE exam, successfully meet program competencies, complete the summative/capstone program requirement, and demonstrated professional behavior through faculty and medical director endorsement and review of records.

Program Completion Timelines (A3.15b)

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences requires that the maximum timeframe in which a student must graduate is 150% of the published length of the program as evaluated by the maximum terms. A USAHS PA student must complete the professional program

within 41 months (approximately 3.5 calendar years) of matriculation to the professional program. The typical progression permits completion of the program within 27 months (approximately 2.5 calendar years).

Procedure: A student may leave their original cohort for any reason but must be able to complete the entire program within the above timeframe (41 months from matriculation). Any student who leaves their cohort will have a delayed progression and be subject to the deceleration and remediation policies below.

Program	Program Credit Hours	Min Cumulative GPA	Expected Time Frame	Maximum Time Frame
Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS)	115	3	7 terms (27 months)	11 terms (41 months)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Year 1												
Year 2												
Year 3												
Year 4												
	Didactic											
	Clinical											

Continuous Enrollment Policy

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, all degree seeking students are required to maintain continuous enrollment from the time they first enroll in their program until degree completion. <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2242>

Procedure: Each term, students must either be registered for courses or on an approved, official Leave of Absence (LOA).

Policy: The USAHS PA Program does not offer any part-time enrollment within the program and requires all students to be enrolled full-time. Any student not able to meet this policy is required to request a LOA or withdraw from the program.

Procedure: The Student Success Advisor and Faculty Advisor will work with the student to monitor enrollment within the program. Any student who is either at risk or unable to meet this policy will meet with the faculty advisor and program director to create an academic plan for the student.

Degree Awarded

Policy: After successful completion of all didactic and clinical coursework the student will be awarded the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) degree.

University Grade Policies

University Grading Scale

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, the minimum course grade for progression in the curriculum is a “C” (70%). All courses (unless stated otherwise within the course syllabus) will have a standard grading scale for determining minimum progression scores/course grades.

Procedure: The grading scale for the University and the PA program:

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Quality Points
A	90% - 100%	4
B+	85% - 89%	3.5
B	80% - 84%	3
C+	75% - 79%	2.5
C	70% - 74%	2
D+	65% - 69%	1.5
D	60% - 64%	1
F	<60%	0

Extra Credit

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, The PA Program (and University) does not award nor endorse extra credit. This implies that points/grades are more important than learning and can create inequities between students.

Rounding of Grades

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, no grades are rounded other than the final course grade. The final grade the percentage will be rounded to the nearest whole number using standard rounding technique.

Program Progression (A3.15b)

The PA Program makes decisions regarding a student’s progression through the professional program. Successful progression through the program depends on the following factors:

- Successful completion of all didactic and clinical courses
- Demonstration of professional behavior

Student infractions involving any of the above areas will result in disciplinary action. Depending upon variables such as the frequency, nature, and severity of infraction a student may (1) complete an individual corrective program, (2) be decelerated, (3) be dismissed from the program. These actions may occur at any time based upon the event. Any student required to repeat a course/rotation must

anticipate a delay in the timing of their graduation and the inclusion of additional tuition and fees required to repeat curriculum.

University Progression Requirements

Policy: In accordance to USAHS policy, to remain in good academic standing with the University (College of Health Sciences), a student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher each trimester.

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2242#good-academic-standing-crs->

Successful Completion of All Didactic and Clinical Courses

Policy: To ensure students complete the program within the prescribed time, all courses in which a student fails to earn a grade of C or above must be repeated and in compliance with course requirements and the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy (above) to graduate.

Procedure: If a student repeats a course, only one course applies toward the completed credit count. If a higher grade is earned in the repeated course, it is used to compute the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Repeated courses are included in the calculation for credits earned/attempted for satisfactory academic progress. All repeated final grades reflected on the official transcript are designated with an asterisk (*). All students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale at the completion of each trimester.

Academic Probation

Policy: In accordance to USAHS policy, a student who receives a D or an F in any course, must repeat that course in its entirety and be placed on Academic Probation.

Procedure: A remediation plan must be developed by the student and evaluated and monitored by the Academic Program Advisor.

- When retaking the course, the student must receive a grade of C or above to progress academically.
- If the student receives a grade below a C on the retake, the student is dismissed.
- When the grade of C or above is achieved on the retake, the student is taken off academic/financial aid probation if his or her GPA is above his or her program level requirements. If the GPA of a student falls below the acceptable program level, the student is placed on academic/financial aid probation.

Following placement on probation, the student is required to submit a remediation plan to the Academic Program Advisor to explain how he or she plans to elevate the GPA to the program's acceptable level. The Program Director reviews all study plans. If a student fails to elevate his or her GPA to the acceptable program level, the student is dismissed from the program and lose Title IV eligibility.

A student is not permitted to progress to the final stage of the program while on probation. Remedial coursework may be necessary to increase the GPA prior to enrolling in the Summative Experience course.

Demonstration of Professional Behavior

Please see the Professionalism section within this manual

Successful Completion of a Course

Policy: Each course instructor/coordinator has the responsibility for determining successful completion (achieving competence) in their assigned course. Course coordinators must have all requirements for successful completion of a course within the posted syllabus.

Procedure: All criteria for successful completion of a course must be articulated within the course syllabus that is provided to the student in written or electronic form. Every student is responsible for reviewing these criteria, including the methods of evaluation and grading. Any USAHS PA student who does not successfully complete a course is subject to remediation (if during clinical year) or deceleration (if during didactic phase).

Remediation and Deceleration (A3.15c)

Policy: The PA Program (MSPAS) defines remediation as the student being able to remain with their original cohort. The PA Program defines deceleration as a student moving to the following/next cohort. The didactic phase is defined as the first four (4) trimesters of the USAHS PA program. The experiential/clinical phase is defined as the final three (3) trimesters of the USAHS PA program.

Policy: A student is allowed to repeat only ONE unsuccessfully completed course within the professional program (includes both didactic and clinical). If a second course is not successfully completed, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Remediation

Policy: The PA faculty can initiate a remediation program within a course or term at any time to assist a student if the same opportunity is provided to all students within that course or term.

Policy: Any USAHS PA student who receives a final course grade below 70% ("C") within any course during the experiential/clinical phase may be remediated.

Procedure: A student who is unsuccessful in the completion of an experiential course (receives a final course grade below 70% ("C") or is unable to complete all SCPE requirements) will be required to repeat the course/SCPE. This will delay program completion. The student will meet with their faculty advisor and the DCE to determine when the course will be repeated within the clinical phase of the program.

Deceleration

Policy: Any USAHS PA student who receives a final course grade below C (70%) within any course during the didactic phase will be decelerated to the next cohort.

Procedure: A student who received a final course grade below 70% (non-progression grade) will immediately stop progression within the program and become an inactive student and complete (with

program help) a leave of absence form with the University. The student will meet with their faculty advisor and the PA Program Director to determine if the student will return with the next new cohort.

Policy: All students who are decelerated (during the didactic portion) are required to restart/repeat the entire professional program (i.e., “start over”).

Procedure: Students who are decelerated will be given an admission seat within the next cohort (January the following year). Restarting the program is allowed only **once**.

The program completion timeline is NOT reset with restarting the program. Students must be able to meet the program completion policy to be eligible to restart the program.

Withdrawal from a course (A3.15d)

Policy: Students within the USAHS PA Program are not permitted to withdrawal from a professional phase course and remain an active PA student. Any student withdrawal, other than an approved leave of absence (LOA), from any course is considered a withdrawal from the USAHS PA Program.

Procedure: A student may elect to withdraw from any professional phase course at any time, however, if the student wishes to return to the USAHS PA Program they must reapply.

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, the option of withdrawing from a course and receiving a grade of "W" on the academic transcript is possible within the withdrawal period listed on the academic calendar each semester.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, students may request/take a voluntary leave of absence from the USAHS PA Program for extenuating circumstances. The policy is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2271#loa-policy>

Procedure: Any student wanting to take a voluntary leave of absence must submit their request in writing to the PA Program Director. The PA Program Director will take the request to the USAHS PA faculty, who will decide by majority to approve or deny the request. Students must be in good standing to be granted a voluntary leave of absence. If approved by the department, a LOA form must be submitted to the University Registrar. If the LOA is not approved by the PA Program the student may withdraw from the program.

An approved leave of absence during the didactic phase (first four semesters within the professional phase) will have to take and meet a minimum score on a program knowledge exam. If successful, the student will be able to re-start at the beginning of the semester they left. Failure to complete this requirement would result in deceleration and re-starting the program with the next cohort.

An approved leave of absence during the clinical phase course will follow the remediation policy and be allowed to continue rotations per an agreed upon time of absence. All students granted a leave of absence are still subject to the PA Program timeline completion policy.

Dismissal (A3.15d)

Policy: The PA Program makes final decisions regarding a student's progression through or dismissal from the PA Program.

Procedure: The following conditions WILL be cause for the PA Program to dismiss a student from the professional program:

- The student receives a non-progression grade (<70%) in two courses within the professional program. (Received a grade below C when retaking any course).
- The student does not meet the conditions outlined in a progression letter (re-admission criteria) or in a corrective plan.
- Does not return to active status after an approved LOA period
- A student who is accused of and denies academic dishonesty will be referred to the Professional Misconduct Committee. If the charge is affirmed, the student will be dismissed from the program. A student found guilty of an Honor Code violation may appeal that decision to the University Appeals Board.
- Two major breaches of professional conduct.
- While on probation, a student does not improve academic performance to program-level GPA within the prescribed calendar year
- Fails to comply with University Academic Integrity Policy
- Fails to complete the program requirements within the prescribed timeframe.
 - An extension of the program enrollment timeline for extenuating circumstances may be requested in writing to the Program Director who presents the request to the progression committee for review.

The following conditions MAY be cause for dismissal from the professional program:

- A student is accused of and admits to academic dishonesty.
- Violation of professional standards of conduct.

Appeal: A student may appeal against the decision of the PA Program regarding progression and/or dismissal from the PA Program. Please see the USAHS policy at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2242#academic-appeal-process>.

Internal Student Employment (A3.04, A3.15e)

Policy: Students are not be permitted to work for the program. Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences and skills may assist faculty in didactic and laboratory sessions to share knowledge and skills.

Policy: Students are not to be the primary instructor of any component of the curriculum and may not substitute for clinical or administrative staff during a SCPE.

Policy: Students may be employed on campus if not associated with the PA Program and must meet the following requirements:

- Minimum 3.0 USAHS GPA

- In good standing at USAHS
- Be in second term or later in their program

External Student Employment (A3.15e)

Policy: Outside employment is strongly discouraged for USAHS PA Students. However, students are permitted to work during the program.

Policy: A student may not use work as an excuse to miss program activities.

Policy: A student may not represent himself/herself as a PA-S or SPA (Student Physician Assistant) except during official USAHS sponsored clinical affiliations. The professional liability coverage provided by USAHS does not apply to student employment situations.

Student Mistreatment/Harassment (A3.1.02j; A3.15f)

Policy: The USAHS policy on nondiscrimination and anti-harassment is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>.

Policy: The USAHS policy and procedures on Title IX issues is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>.

Grievances and Appeals (A3.15g)

Student Rights

Policy: Students in the USAHS PA Program are entitled to the same rights as any other USAHS student. The USAHS policy on student rights is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>

Complaints Policy

Policy: The USAHS complaints policy is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>

Academic Appeals Process

Policy: The USAHS Academic appeals policy is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2242>

Student Records (A3.17, A3.18, A3.19)

Policy: Electronic Student files are kept on a secure server with password access for the USAHS PA Department only access. Paper student files/folders are kept in a locked file cabinet within a secured secondary locked office

Policy Student files/folders *minimally* include the following:

- Documentation that the student has met published admission criteria

- Student Medical Record Form demonstrating the student has met institution and program health screening and immunization requirements
- Student performance while enrolled
- Remediation efforts and outcomes
- Summaries of any formal academic/behavioral disciplinary action taken against the student
- Student has met requirements for program completion

Policy: PA students do NOT have access to the academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty.

Policy: Student health records are confidential and must not be accessible to or reviewed by program, principal or instructional faculty or staff except for immunization and tuberculosis screening results which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student.

Procedure: A student must obtain a current physical exam (within 12 months) for enrollment at USAHS. This record is to be given and kept with the Clinical Services Office. The PA Program WILL NOT accept any portion of the health record. The program will only verify that a current physical exam is on file. Any sharing of the physical exam or health record will be coordinated by the student, not the PA program.

Privacy and Confidentiality – (FERPA)

Policy: USAHS complies with the provisions of Public Law 93-380, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, in reference to student records.

Students must consent to the release of any student information other than directory information to any person or agency.

Procedure: Consent must be in writing, signed, and dated. The consent must specify the information to be released, the reason for the release, and the names of the individual or agency to whom the information is to be released. The Registrar’s Office is responsible for fulfilling requests for student information. The opportunity to complete this form will be available at student orientation, but also from the Student Success Advisor.

All permanent PA student records are either secured on an electronic server or filed in a locked record room in the PA Office. Access to these records is limited to program personnel. Each faculty member has access to a private space that can be used to ensure maximum privacy in conversations with a student. Confidential information includes but is not limited to health status, student counseling and advising sessions, clinical performance, and grades. Release of any medical/health information will require the written informed consent of the student for each inquiry.

Privacy Education – HIPAA

Policy: Competency in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) must be demonstrated prior to a student going to a health care facility for any experiential learning activity or clinical course.

Procedure: Education on HIPAA will be provided to students during the first semester of the PA Program and again reviewed prior to the start of any experiential learning activity or clinical course. If for some reason a student is unable to attend the mandatory class, the student must acquire the necessary information from the instructor and/or from audiovisual aids.

Each student is required to review this information independently on an annual basis prior to his/her clinical internship. Written materials are available for this review on request.

It is the responsibility of the clinical faculty to instruct the student in the appropriate facility specific information about HIPAA prior to the student beginning his or her clinical course work at the health care facility.

Required Physical Examination

Policy: PA students are required to have a physical exam and proof of immunization prior to matriculation in the program. (Physical exam must be within one-year of matriculation).

Procedure: Students must submit an attestation that a physical examination determining eligibility for enrollment was performed. The USAHS PA Program will NOT accept any HIPAA protected information (actual physical forms). Attestations will be sent to the Clinical Services Department.

Criminal Background Check and Drug Screen

Policy: The USAHS policy for background checks, drug screens and criminal records policy is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2271>

Background checks and drug screens are required to comply with the clinical education agreements between USAHS and clinical sites.

Procedure: The student is responsible for the financial cost associated with this record check. The student will be provided with relevant details to initiate this background check through a university-approved third-party vendor. The student will be notified and have access to the results of the background check.

Policy: A background check that includes any felony conviction will result in rescission of admission or dismissal from the University. Certain misdemeanor convictions, including but not limited to those involving drugs, theft, violence, or crimes against a person, may also result in rescission of admission or dismissal from the University.

If new legal charges arise at any point in the program, the student is required to disclose information relevant to new legal charges to the Program Director. Failure to report these behaviors will be considered a breach of professional conduct and may result in student dismissal from the program.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is defined as an individual's conduct within the workspace. USAHS PA considers professionalism as part of its culture and critical to successful completion of our curriculum. The NCCPA also requires the USAHS PA Program to endorse each student's professionalism prior to being allowed to take the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE).

The USAHS PA Program considers all activities involved with the PA Program to all be your "workplace". The program also considers all PA students to be professionals and are held to the standards within this section.

Mastering professionalism in the workplace is critical for anyone hoping to sustain a long and successful medical career. Acting, dressing, and communicating professionally helps your employer, coworkers and patients view you as a trustworthy and hardworking individual. Not acting professionally can damage your reputation and cause people to view you as sloppy and unprepared.

Being a professional isn't hard, but it can take time to cultivate the wisdom and foresight to master, especially when you've never been exposed to a formal workplace environment. This section of the handbook provides policies and procedures to help prepare you for the professional world.

Breaches in professional behavior, which include any unsafe, unethical, or unprofessional activity may prevent a student from successfully completing a didactic or clinical course even if the student successfully completes other course requirements. Breaches in conduct may result in course failure, delayed progression, and/or other disciplinary actions, including dismissal from the program.

Examples of unprofessional behavior include but are not limited to the following (PA Program faculty would decide if infraction was minor/major based on circumstance of event):

- Inappropriate communication, by any means, with academic and clinical faculty, staff, patients, classmates, and colleagues. This includes contacting clinical facilities within the USAHS catchment area to arrange clinical course placements (without prior permission).
- Disrespectful/disparaging comments to academic and clinical faculty, staff, patients, classmates, and colleagues.
- Consistent late arrival for or early departure from: class, experiential activities, clinical courses, scheduled individual or group meetings or any other required event.
- Late completion of program non-academic forms/requirements including but not limited to health documents, HIPAA forms, background checks, releases, evaluations, etc.
- Late completion of any course assignments.
- Lack of preparation or participation in academic or clinical courses, including but not limited to sleeping in class, not being prepared to participate in class discussions or demonstrations, or not providing clinical faculty with the appropriate forms/documentation on the first day of the clinical experience.
- Consistent lack of initiation/responsibility in communication about academic and clinical issues.
- Consistent disruption of class or experiential or clinical courses by use of electronic and non-electronic devices.
- Inappropriate touching during laboratory or practical experiences (e.g., unnecessary palpation near genitals or breasts).

- Offensive jokes or comments (e.g., those based on ethnic background, gender, religion, and scatological jokes/comments).
- Inappropriate or disruptive use of laptop computer in class.

Student Code of Conduct

Policy: The USAHS student code of conduct is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>

Professional Dress and Appearance Code

Policy: The USAHS professional dress and appearance code is found within the student code of conduct at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2272>

PA Program Dress Code Policy

Policy: The PA Program interprets and enforces the USAHS dress code policy as attire that is suitable to perform a clinical patient encounter. This includes PA Program approved scrubs.

Procedure: A student that is not within dress code policy will be verbally notified of non-compliance. Repeated violation will result in a formative minor professionalism violation. Repeated violations may result in a summative major professionalism violation.

Academic Integrity

Policy: The USAHS Academic Integrity policy is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2242>

PA Program Academic Integrity Policy

Policy: The USAHS PA Program (MSPAS) treats academic dishonesty as both a professionalism issue, and an academic issue.

Policy: The PA Program (MSPAS) operationalizes the USAHS academic integrity policy into two categories: 1) minor academic dishonesty (University level 1), 2) major academic dishonesty (University levels 2 and 3).

Procedure:

Minor Academic Dishonesty

Minor levels of academic dishonesty are handled at the program level and can be treated as a formative process. These types of errors typically occur because students not familiarizing themselves with writing and course requirements. They may include the following:

- Lazy plagiarism; forgetting a citation or leaving a reference off a reference list
- Failure to cite or acknowledge a source in a small or limited part of the paper
- Quoting directly or plagiarizing, to a moderate extent, without acknowledging the source
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course, or the same course when repeated, without permission from the instructor

- Receiving assistance and failing to acknowledge this in a paper or research study

All incidents of minor academic dishonesty will have a note placed within the student file and are handled at the program level through the instructor/course. The program will work with the instructor to determine the actions associated with the offense based on the wording within the syllabus or program policies and procedures. The individual programs determine how long the note remains within the student file.

Policy: Any faculty or staff may/will complete a “professionalism concern” form for observed minor professionalism breaches when observed. Three (3) “professionalism concerns”, will be considered a major level of academic dishonesty.

Procedure: A faculty or staff member who observed the behavior will complete a “professionalism concern” form and place in the student’s folder. Additionally, they will notify the faculty advisor. The student and the faculty advisor are NOT required to meet regarding the concern; however, it is recommended that a meeting occur to provide any guidance to prevent future concerns. Below are the steps regarding a minor professionalism breach:

The faculty or staff member will complete a “professionalism concern” form when a student displays professional conduct that is “concerning” and potentially inappropriate. (Examples: tardiness, sleeping in class, failure to respond to faculty email message, dress code violations).

The student will be notified that a “professionalism concern” was initiated and placed in student file. The student is encouraged to meet face-to-face with their faculty advisor, or the initiator of the concern.

Upon the student receiving three (3) “professionalism concerns”, a major breach of professional concern form will be initiated and considered a major level professionalism dishonesty.

Major Academic Dishonesty

Examples of the most serious types of offense include but are not limited to the following:

- Copying another’s exam
- Copying another’s assignment, including online discussions
- Plagiarizing a substantial amount of text in an assignment or assessment
- Enabling someone else to copy your material during an exam
- Using books, notes, or other forbidden aids during an examination
- Giving or receiving information about the content of an exam
- Stealing or distributing a copy of an examination
- Submitting the work of someone else as your own
- Using purchased or copied manuscripts
- Removing posted or reserved instructional material, or otherwise preventing access to it
- Inventing material (this includes citing artificial sources)
- Using illegal or unethical means of acquiring information
- Utilizing an instant messenger or a cell phone while taking an online exam
- Repeated offenses of academic dishonesty

Policy: Students committing/accused of a major violation are referred to the Professional Misconduct Committee.

Procedure: The Professional Misconduct Committee will determine if the infraction is valid and make appropriate recommendations to the designated Program Director. Actions may include dismissal from the program. The individual program has the responsibility for determining the final action.

Any singular major professionalism violation may be grounds for the PA faculty to recommend dismissal from the program to the PMC.

The PA Program **will** make the recommendation to the PMC for program dismissal if a student receives two (2) major violations of professionalism

Additional USAHS PA Program Professionalism Policies

USAHS Brand Use

Policy: The USAHS logo/brand may not be used for any unofficial University business. Any use of the brand/logo must be approved prior to use and must follow the University marketing guidelines found at: <https://www.usa.edu/brand-assets/>.

Procedure: If the USAHS name, logo, or brand is needed for business purposes, a written request will be made to the PA Program Director. If approved, the use will follow the marketing guidelines listed on the website within the policy. Any unauthorized use of the USAHS brand or logo may result in disciplinary action via the University.

Media and HIPPA

Policy: Students are expected to maintain confidentiality and professionalism at all times related to patient care. Students are prohibited from disclosing *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act* (HIPPA)-protected and other confidential patient information in any medium, including via social media.

Procedure: Violation of this policy may result in a professionalism violation and dismissal from the PA Program.

Social Media Use

Policy: Students should use good judgment when using social media and avoid unprofessional language, images, and behavior that reflect poorly on themselves, the Program, the University, and the PA profession.

Procedure: No material posted on social media is entirely private and should be considered public and permanent. Violation of this policy may result in a professionalism violation and dismissal from the PA Program.

Policy: Students should not “friend” patients, preceptors, faculty or staff, and should not accept “friend requests” from these individuals.

Punctuality

Policy: Students are expected to be on time for required events. This includes all classroom, lab, and SCPE activities.

Procedure: When you arrive late for class, lab, SCPEs or meetings (work), it gives your faculty, peers, and preceptors the impression you don't care, or their time is not valuable. Pay attention to the clock. Set alarms if you must. Show up at least a few minutes before “work” is supposed to start. Failure to meet this policy may result in a minor professionalism violation (see below).

Student Schedule during the week

Policy: Students are expected to be available for any program curriculum event between 8:00am and 5:00pm Monday through Friday during the didactic year. This is regardless of any posted schedules.

Procedure: Students will be provided an overall schedule for program related events at the beginning of each semester (for that term). Additionally, students will be provided with the planned schedule for each course within the respected syllabi. However, understanding that this is a graduate professional program, there are often opportunities or events that may occur based on availability of external speakers, classroom availability, off-campus events, IPE opportunities that can cause a need to move regular scheduled events. Students are required to consider M-F, 8a-5p as the standard “work-day” and be available for any of these potential adjustments.

The PA Program will not make any events outside of these times mandatory unless provided on the original term program calendar.

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2273#email-account>

General Communication between Faculty/Staff and Students

Policy: The USAHS policy related to email account is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2273>

Policy: USAHS PA Students will check their USAHA email a minimum of once a day. All University related communication (including PA Program communication) will occur via the USAHS email address.

Change in personal information

Policy: The USAHS policy for change of personal information is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2271>

Procedure: The PA Program request that this information is shared directly with the Academic Program Assistant in the PA Department and the Student’s faculty advisor.

Written Communications

Policy: Students are expected to communicate using clear, grammatically correct English with appropriate greetings/titles and salutations. Students should also be judicious in “reply all” and mindful of tone when responding to email or other forms of electronic communication.

Procedure: Being professional in your communication is essential. Having an email riddled with typos, slang and emoticons can damage your reputation and discredit you as a professional. Take the time to pause and read over what you’ve written—even the best writers make plenty of errors in their rush to get their thoughts written out. Failure to meet this policy may result in a minor professionalism violation (see below).

Verbal Communications

Policy: Students are expected to be respectful in all verbal communications. Yelling, swearing/cursing/cussing is considered unprofessional. Derogatory terms toward race, religion, beliefs will not be tolerated.

Procedure: Medical professionals rely on good, respectful communication with patients and their peers in all situations. Poor communication leads to bad outcomes and a breakdown of trust. There is rarely a situation as a professional that requires yelling, cursing, or belittling somebody. Passion is a great quality, but often unfiltered emotion can lead to issues. Failure to meet this policy may result in a professionalism violation (see below).

Sleeping in Class

Policy: Students are expected to not sleep during class or on a rotation.

Procedure: There are numerous variables that can cause a student to not get enough sleep and thus be tired during class/work. However, sleeping during class is distracting to your peers and the instructor. It is okay to stand-up in the back of class if you feel you are at risk of falling asleep. It is also better to miss class than to sleep in class. Failure to meet this policy may result in a professionalism violation.

Collegiality/Civility

Policy: USAHS PA students are expected to be collaborative not competitive. Supporting your peers is an expectation.

Procedure: A true professional is willing to help their co-workers when they are overburdened or facing a challenge at work. They aren’t afraid to share knowledge, opinions or simply an extra pair of hands. One person’s success reflects well on everyone in the workplace.

Honesty and Accountability

Policy: Students are always expected to be honest and accountable.

Procedure: Dishonesty always makes you look bad, whether it's lying about being sick, why you were late, on a resume or a chart. A true professional is always upfront and accountable. Failure to meet this policy will result in a professionalism violation.

Professionalism Competency Review

Policy: The USAHS PA Program will formally review each student's professional behavior at least once each term with their academic advisor.

Procedure: The student and faculty advisor will set an advisor appointment to discuss a student's progression toward the program's competencies, and specifically the student's professional behavior. This will be documented on a programmatic counseling form.

Operations Policies

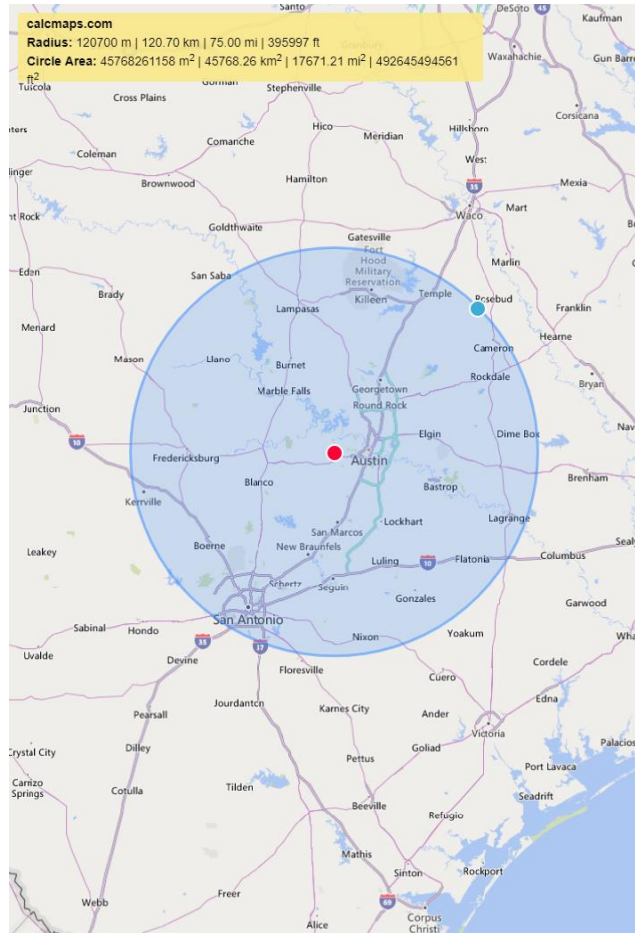
Application of Program Policies (A3.01, A3.02)

Policy: Program policies (found within the USAHS Student Handbook/Catalog and the USAHS PA student handbook) apply to all students, principal faculty, and the program director regardless of location. A signed clinical affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding may specify that certain program policies will be superseded by those at the clinical site.

SCPE Sites and Preceptors Procurement (A3.03)

Policy: ALL SCPEs (Clinical sites) will be provided for every USAHS PA student within the defined catchment area 75-miles from campus.

Policy: Students (prospective and enrolled) are NOT required at any time to identify, provide, or solicit clinical sites or preceptors.



Internal Student Employment (A3.04)

Policy: Students will not be permitted to work for the program. Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences and skills may assist faculty in didactic and laboratory sessions to share knowledge and skills.

Student as Instructors or Staff (A3.05)

Policy: Students are not to be the primary instructor of any component of the curriculum and may not substitute for clinical or administrative staff during a SCPE.

Student Identification (A3.06)

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, All USAHS PA students are required to wear name badges while involved in any USAHS related activity. This includes attending classes, participating in community interactions, or attending Interprofessional Education (IPE) events. See USAHS policy at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2273#id-badges>

Policy: All USAHS PA students within the clinical setting *must* be clearly identified to distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners.

Procedure: A lanyard or retractable name badge holder that will hold your USAHS ID will be provided by the PA Department. Badges must be worn above the waist in a location that can be easily viewed. The student is responsible for replacing the lost or broken badges. A separate badge may be required for clinical rotations and will be provided by the hospital systems.

Policy: Within the clinical setting, all USAHS PA Students are required to introduce themselves to patients as PA students and are required to ask each patient for permission to treat prior to initiating treatment.

Required Immunizations (A3.07)

Policy: PA students are required to have proof of immunization prior to matriculation in January based on the current Center for Disease Control Recommendations for health professionals. Additionally, students are required to submit updated immunizations in January each year.

Procedure: Students must submit completed immunization records to the PA Office. The current required vaccinations: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>

Additional Immunizations for Clinical year

Policy: PA students will be required to have either a two-step TB skin test OR a QuantiFERON-TB Gold (QFT-G) blood test prior to clinical rotations. Students will be required to have a Flu Shot annually during clinical rotations. Students may need to have a serum titer to check immune status for Varicella, Rubella, Rubeola, Mumps and Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C antibodies prior to clinical rotations. There may be additional requirements based on clinical affiliation agreements and/or regional requirements.

Additional Immunizations for International Travel/Rotations

Policy: Students participating in elective international clinical experiences are required to meet CDC immunization recommendations for international travel to specified region

Potential Health Risks for Students (A3.08)

Being a student in a PA Program does not markedly elevate the risk of illness or injury above the background rate, but certain activities that are required do pose unique risks. The faculty endeavors to minimize these risks by incorporating safeguards into the activities, advising students of the potential for injury or illness, and providing students with the cognitive information necessary to be safe. Students are responsible for protecting themselves by following directions, using standard precautions, asking for help if uncertain as to the safest manner of accomplishing a task, and being aware of hazards.

Accidental Exposure Policy (A3.08)

Policy: The Program, College and University will provide all students appropriate training in Universal/standard precautions and other risk reduction behaviors prior to any educational activities

that poses a risk of exposure. This is mitigated by students following the required CDC immunization policy found in this document. All students will pass a Workplace Blood borne Pathogens Safety Training Program prior to exposures.

Procedure (Off-Campus) Exposure: If a student experiences a needle stick or biohazard exposure during his/her rotation, the following steps shall be taken:

1. Immediately wash the injury with soap and water and induce bleeding. If the eye is contaminated, rinse with sterile water or normal saline for 15 minutes. Other mucous membranes can be rinsed with tap water.
2. Per affiliation agreements, the student will immediately notify the preceptor and determine what procedures exist at that site to deal with needle sticks/biohazard situations
3. Based on the services provided at the site, the student should have the appropriate steps taken based on the site's protocol for needle sticks/biohazard exposure. Otherwise, follow appropriate blood screening.
4. The student will be responsible for any cost associated with testing provided by the site.
5. If the site does not have a protocol in place for accidental exposures, the student and preceptor will determine where the nearest emergency room is located so the appropriate laboratory tests can be collected within 30 minutes of exposure.
6. Students must submit an exposure incidence form within 48 hours

Procedure (On-Campus) Exposure: If student experiences a needle stick or biohazard exposure on a USAHS campus location, the following steps shall be taken:

1. Immediately wash the injury with soap and water and induce bleeding. If the eye is contaminated, rinse with sterile water or normal saline for 15 minutes. Other mucous membranes can be rinsed with tap water
2. Notify the instructor immediately.
3. The student and instructor will determine where the nearest emergency room is located so the appropriate laboratory tests can be collected within 30 minutes of exposure.
4. The student will be responsible for any cost associated with testing provided by the site.
5. Students must submit the Accidental Exposure Reporting Form below within 48 hours to the program. (Campus injury form is available through the USAHS MyUSA website).
6. Students can use an affiliated urgent care for treatment of all non-critical on-the-job injuries.

Accidental Exposure Reporting Form

Student Name: _____

Date of Exposure: _____

Site and Supervisor: _____

Exposure description and action taken: _____

Submission Date: _____

Faculty Providing Healthcare (A3.09)

Policy: Principal faculty, program director and the medical director must not participate as health care providers for students in the program, except in an emergency.

Student Referral Process for Personal Issues (A3.10)

Policy: Counseling services are available to any student experiencing concerns related to any personal issues which may impact their progress in the PA Program.

Procedure: Students (and members of the same household) may call 844-819-4777 toll free and be connected to free and confidential, highly trained, masters- or doctoral-level clinicians via phone. This licensed counselor can help with anxiety, depression, stress, grief, relationship conflict, substance abuse, or any other personal issue a student may be experiencing. If needed, the counselor will also be able to refer the student to meet with an in-person counselor for up to three complimentary sessions.

Students and household members also have unlimited access to guidanceresources.com. Students will need to use “USAHS” as the Web ID to create a free account. This website provides information, tools, and support on a wide variety of subjects including wellness, legal, financial, and relationship topics. Students can view articles, podcasts, videos, or slideshows and can utilize Ask the Expert to receive personal responses to questions.

Announcements and Advertising (A3.11)

Policy: USAHS and the USAHS PA Program announcements and advertising must accurately reflect the program offered.

Procedure: The USAHS PA Program will conduct a formal review of all sections of the program website at the beginning of each trimester to ensure accuracy in content related to the program being offered.

Program Information (A3.12)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program will define and make readily available via its programmatic website at <https://www.usa.edu/college-health-sciences/master-of-science-in-physician-assistant-studies-mspas-program>, all the following information:

- ARC-PA accreditation status (A3.12a)
- Program goals and effectiveness in meeting the goals (A3.12b)
- PANCE Score Reports (A3.12c)
- All curriculum components (A3.12d)
- Academic credit offered by the program (A3.12e)

- Estimates of all cost related to the program (A3.12f)
- Program Competencies (A3.12g)
- Geographic Distant campus resources (A3.12h)
- Annual student attrition information (A3.12i)

Procedure: The USAHS PA Program website will be reviewed and updated by the program at the start of each trimester. An additional special audit will occur prior to April first of each year to specifically update attrition reports and PANCE pass rate data.

The ARC-PA accreditation status to be listed must be as provided from the ARC-PA without alteration. The PANCE Summary Report as provided by the NCCPA through its program portal, no later than April first each year.

The curriculum section will include all academic credit offered and all components including all SCPEs related to the clinical year.

A separate page will list tuition, fees, and any other related cost for attendance to the program. This page will also include a link to financial aid and any tuition refund pages/policies.

The student attrition information will be provided via the table provided by the ARC-PA.

Student Safety (A1.02)

The University and the PA Program always seek to ensure student safety while the student is on and off campus. Students are expected to adhere to all general campus policies dealing with safety. The USAHS Catalog / Handbook section on Safety, Security, and Technology is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2273>. Additionally, the Emergency Operations Plan and Annual Security Report is available on the main website: <https://www.usa.edu/safety-security/>.

Policy: The University is not responsible for any injuries incurred by a student while traveling to or from a clinical site or off-campus educational or volunteer experiences.

Procedure: Emergency situations involving a threat to life or property should be reported to the police (911) and communicated immediately thereafter to the University by calling campus security at the numbers below or 800-241-1027. The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) encourages all students, faculty, and staff to be involved in campus crime prevention. The safety office number is: 512-348-9649.

Emergency Medical Care

Policy: Students participating in scheduled off-campus educational experiences, who experience a medical emergency should go to the nearest location that provides access to emergency medical care when indicated. The student assumes responsibility for the financial costs associated with these services.

Procedure: Written agreements exist between the University's PA Program and all clinical centers providing approved off-campus educational experiences for students. This agreement states the clinical center will provide the student access to emergency medical care in the event the student becomes ill or impaired while participating in sanctioned educational experiences.

Health Insurance

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, all students are required to have health insurance.

Procedure: Students must provide proof of health insurance to Clinical Services each term. For information on local medical services, see Health Services in the catalog at <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2243#health-services>.

Health Status

Policy: Students must demonstrate overall physical and mental health and maintain their personal appearance and hygiene to safely participate in classroom and clinical courses to avoid presenting health hazards to themselves, their classmates, and patients. Students have a responsibility to inform the PA Program Director of any condition that could impact their ability to perform the essential functions for the PA student, with or without accommodations.

Procedure: Each student will submit documentation of a physical exam upon entrance to the University. A student who becomes aware of any health condition that may impair or impede the ability to participate in any aspect of the PA Program must inform all instructors and his/her academic advisor immediately. Students should report emergency surgeries or medical procedures to their academic advisors as soon as possible.

Surgery/Other Medical Conditions - Discussion with course instructors and the student's academic advisor is strongly encouraged **prior** to a planned surgical or medical procedure. In the case of emergency procedures, discussion should be made prior to resumption of classroom or lab activities or clinical course work. Following a change in health status, a letter from the student's medical provider giving medical clearance to return to activity must be submitted to the PA Program before the student will be allowed to participate in class activities.

Pregnancy - A pregnancy should be reported to the PA Program Director immediately upon medical confirmation. Learning experiences will be modified to ensure maximum safety for mother and baby. Medical clearance is necessary to resume activity following a delivery. Pregnancy may result in delayed graduation and/or cohort deceleration, depending upon the timing within the curriculum and the individual students' curriculum sequence.

Substance Abuse

Policy: The USAHS Controlled Substance policy is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2273>

Policy: The PA Program reserves the right to request drug screening when substance abuse is suspected. Students may also be required to complete a drug screen prior to or during full-time clinical coursework in compliance with the clinical facility's policy.

Alcohol Policy

Policy: The USAHS alcohol policy is found at: <https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2273>

Policy: No alcohol shall be consumed by any PA student, faculty, or staff before or during any academic event (class, lab, SCPEs).

Tobacco Policy

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, USAHS is a smoke- and tobacco-free environment. Smoking is not permitted on any University campus. Smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes are not permitted in any University building. This includes any clinical education site (SCPE) and while identified as a USAHS student.

Prohibited Weapons Policy

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, the possession, transfer, sale, or use of weapons, dangerous instruments, or paraphernalia associated with a weapon is prohibited on university premises and while conducting University business.

Professional Associations

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, all USAHS PA students must be members of their respective national professional associations.

Procedure: Students will be given registration information for the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) during orientation. The PA Program will support this fee if there is a budget available.

Attendance at Professional Meetings

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, PA students are required to attend a minimum of two full days of one professional conference or one full day of two professional conferences during their program enrollment. The USAHS policy is found at:

<https://catalog.usa.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2242>.

Technology Requirements

Policy: Each USAHS residential student is required to have a laptop computer that can access the University's wireless network for course notes, exams, and the online course platform.

Procedure: Most new or recently manufactured computers will easily meet or exceed the requirements.

Laptop/Computer Requirements

Operating System	MacOS or Windows with the latest updates and patches
Processor	Intel Core i5 5th generation or greater
Memory	8 GB or more
Hard Disk Storage	500 GB or more
Webcam	Internal or External web camera (1280×720 resolution)
Internet	Download speeds > 1.5Mbps and upload speeds > 1Mbps

Microsoft Office is the preferred office suite. Students can access Microsoft Office Online apps and Microsoft OneDrive using their USAHS email login. Students can quickly create and save new Office documents when signed into Office 365.

The campus supports 802.11g/n/ac wireless standards. To successfully connect to the wireless network while on campus, the computer or tablet will need to conform to the 802.11g/n/ac standards.

Students must be sure the computer has reliable antivirus software installed. Please be aware that sharing files or using the internet without an antivirus solution is extremely likely to get the computer infected.

Policy: All PA students are required to have a functional portable computer device.

Teach-Out for Degree Programs

Policy: In accordance with USAHS policy, if the University decides to halt enrollments in a program, the University is obligated to develop a plan to teach-out the remaining students in the program. If that occurs, the students will receive timely and complete information regarding individual course plans and a timeline for degree completion.

Overall Curriculum (B1)

USAHS PA Online Lecture Attendance/Professionalism

Policy: For all synchronous online instruction (Zoom), student cameras must be always on, and professional attire is expected.

Procedure: Failure to meet these expectations will result in a minor professionalism violation. Restroom breaks, and other personal matters that require a student to temporarily turn off his/her camera are certainly allowed but should only occur when necessary. If a student cannot attend an online lecture, he/she should make every effort to let the instructor know of this absence ahead of time. If advance notice is not feasible, then the student should contact the instructor about the absence as soon as reasonably possible. Only in cases of bona fide absences (i.e., due to illness, or University approved excused leaves) will that student receive a link to the recorded lecture(s). This link will be for that student only and shall not be shared with any other student or electronically posted for others to view. Unauthorized sharing of these links will result in a major professionalism violation.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to asynchronous online instruction (e.g., pre-recorded Panopto videos). Individual faculty retain the right to make exceptions to this policy for his/her course if deemed appropriate for the instructional format they are using.

Curriculum Mapping (B1.01)

Policy: The USAHS PA curriculum must be consistent with the mission and goals of the program, while ensuring each student can meet the program's defined competencies. It must include core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to

patient care and be of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare the student for the clinical practice of medicine.

Procedure: The USAHS PA Program will map the entire curriculum to include instructional objectives (IOs), course learning outcomes (CLOs), program competencies, program learning outcomes (PLOs) organ system/content area, tasks, three-level Blooms, and ARC-PA standards. The results/data is available to any student with a request given to the PA Assessment Committee.

Course Sequencing (B1.02)

Policy: Content and course sequencing must reflect content and course sequencing that builds upon previously achieved student learning.

Procedure: The USAHS PA Assessment Committee will collect data from the curriculum mapping and student performance and present the material initially to the PA Curriculum Committee and then to the PA Faculty at the annual summer retreat. Cohort performance, course content and sequencing will be part of the annual PA Program Assessment Report. The PA faculty will meet at a minimum annually to review curriculum performance.

All students will complete an end-of-program evaluation that provides student feedback on course content and sequencing. Additionally, all courses are required to have student evaluations where a portion of the survey is based on course content. Students are encouraged to share opinions on course sequencing with their class faculty advisor and/or class officers.

Course Learning Outcomes and Instructional Objectives (B1.03)

Policy: For each didactic and clinical course, there must be course learning outcomes (CLOs) and instructional objectives (IOs).

Procedure: All courses within the USAHS PA Program require the use of the USAHS Master Course Syllabus, which contain at a minimum: Course name, Instructor of record, course meeting time/location, office hours, contact methods, teaching format, course learning outcomes, assessment methods, grade scale/requirements to pass course, schedule, instructional objectives.

Didactic Phase (B2)

Prerequisite course content (B2.01)

Policy: No prerequisite courses or material will substitute for any component of the USAHS PA Curriculum.

Required Courses/Content Within the Curriculum (B2.02-B2.20)

Policy: The USAHS PA didactic curriculum must cover all required content found in the ARC-PA B2 standards.

Procedure: The USAHS PA curriculum committee in conjunction with the USAHS PA Assessment committee must review the B standards annually, and student outcome and feedback data to evaluate the curriculum. The curriculum is mapped and linked with ExamSoft Assessments to facilitate this process.

Informed Consent for Laboratory Participation

Policy: Each student is expected to participate in laboratory experiences as a student PA and as a patient-simulator. Each student is required to sign an informed consent for these experiences. A student has the right to refuse to be a subject in lab activities, with legitimate reason. Legitimate reasons include but are not limited to medical conditions and religious beliefs. Each student signs an informed consent for being videotaped, audio recorded and photographed as part of the educational experience and for student recruitment purposes.

Procedure: The student must be respectful of the person acting as the patient simulator and always protect his/her modesty by utilizing appropriate draping procedures. Each student will be encouraged, but not required, to work with fellow students of both genders. A student not willing to have a lab partner of the opposite gender should notify the instructor of record and/or the PA program Director.

The student will utilize the laboratory equipment in a safe manner. The student will follow guidelines for use of equipment given in the appropriate textbooks, course manual and faculty instructions to ensure the safety of the patient-simulator.

Laboratory Assignments

Policy: PA faculty and administrative staff may need to make changes to individual student lab assignments after the registration period.

Procedure: Students will register for labs but may be reassigned at the discretion of PA faculty or staff to match lab groups based on variables such as number of students in each lab, gender, and undergraduate degree.

PA faculty or staff will notify students and the University Registrar of final lab assignments once they have been determined.

Laboratory and Equipment Safety

Policy: Student safety during laboratory experiences is the responsibility of the student and the faculty involved in the educational experience. Proper storage of all equipment is the responsibility of faculty and students. Equipment will be kept in good safe working order to decrease the risk of personal injury.

Laboratory and Equipment Procedures:

1. All laboratories are kept locked except when in use for scheduled class sessions.
2. Under no circumstances is a student to use laboratory equipment for self-treatment.
3. Students participate in role-playing as both a patient and a provider as part of course requirements. The safety of the students during these simulations is the Responsibility of the students and course instructors.
4. Students are required to wear gloves, and closed toe shoes when performing or observing dissection in the gross anatomy lab. An eye wash station is in place should there be accidental exposure to hazardous material or body substances.
5. Emergency numbers are posted in all laboratories available for independent practice.
6. All laboratory equipment is to be checked by the instructor prior to student use.
7. Any damaged equipment is to be reported immediately to the laboratory supervisor or to the course instructor who will inform the laboratory supervisor.
8. Preventive equipment maintenance, including any necessary or indicated equipment calibration, is done annually.

Standard Precautions

Policy: Each student will demonstrate competence in aseptic technique, blood borne pathogens, and standard precautions prior to going to a health care facility for any experiential learning activity. Students are responsible for reviewing and complying with facility specific policies and procedures associated with clinical course work.

Procedure: Education on standard precautions will be provided to the students in the PA program prior to the start of any clinical experiential learning. If a student is unable to attend the mandatory class, the student must acquire the necessary information from a source that is approved in advance by the instructor of the class. This may be accomplished by taking a suitable course from an agency such as the Red Cross, or from annual competencies at a known health care facility.

Each student is required to review this information independently on an annual basis prior to his/her clinical coursework.

Use of Research Subjects

Policy: All research using human, or animal subjects requires approval by the Institutional Review Board. All research in the PA Program will comply with the policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and USAHS.

Procedure: Research proposals involving human or animal subjects must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board.

Clinical Phase (B3)

International Clinical Sites (B3.02)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program does NOT allow clinical sites and/or preceptors located outside of the United States to be used for any required rotation/SCPE. International clinical sites/preceptors may only be used for elective rotation.

Procedure: A student interested in an elective international rotation must communicate this intent at least 6 months (180 days) prior to the date of the rotation. This allows enough time for vetting of the site/preceptor, required immunizations and other logistics to be completed.

Required SCPEs (B3.07)

Policy: The USAHS PA Program requires rotations/Clinicals within the following areas of medicine: family medicine, emergency medicine, internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, women's health, behavioral/mental health.

Required SCPE Documentation

Policy: All students during their clinical year will have readily available the following items at the start of each rotation:

- Biographical Sketch/CV/Resume
- List of procedures taught and letter of competency
- Documentation of current physical exam
- Immunization record
- Background check
- BLS certification
- Urine Drug Screen

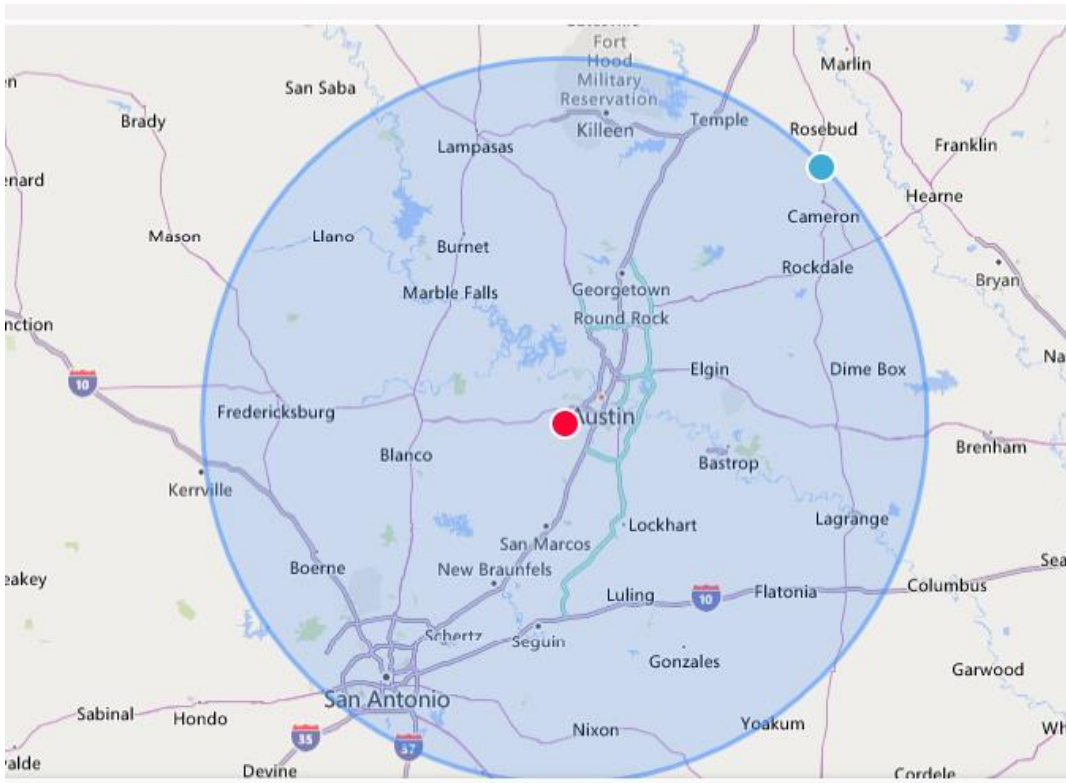
Structured Clinical Practice Encounters (SCPEs) A1.01, A2.15

Policy: There will be written and signed agreements between the PA Program/sponsoring institution and the clinical affiliates used for rotations that define the responsibilities of each party related to the educational program for students.

Policy: The *primary* instructor/preceptor for didactic or clinical education (SCPEs) may not be resident physicians. Resident physicians may participate in the education of PA students under the supervision of either a PA Program principal faculty or a board-certified physician who is the primary instructor of record.

Policy: The USAHS PA Program will provide all required rotations (SCPEs) and will be within a 75-mile radius from campus. Students are responsible for all cost associated with all SCPEs. Students are prohibited from individually contacting sites or preceptors within the 75-mile radius without approval from the DCE. Students may make suggestions to the DCE but are NOT required to do so.

Procedure: The DCE is responsible for ensuring that there are signed agreements with all clinical affiliates/sites. They will also ensure that the University provides student SCPE opportunities within a 75-mile radius of campus. If a site is required, not a student request, and beyond this radius the University will arrange housing opportunities. The DCE (with faculty) will evaluate/discuss all SCPEs to determine effectiveness of the education opportunity. This includes determination of primary instruction.



SCPE Attendance

Policy: Clinical attendance is required per the clinical faculty’s work schedule for the total hours specified in the course syllabus (based on a 32 hour’ week). Absence or repeated tardiness may result in grade deduction or course failure.

Procedure: The student will be expected to assume the work schedule of assigned clinical faculty. In the event of illness, the student is responsible for notifying supervising clinical faculty prior to the start of the workday. The student is also responsible for notifying the DCE within 24 hours of any absence from the clinic. Any absence during a clinical course may require make-up time scheduled at the discretion of the clinical faculty. The DCE needs notification and approval by preceptor to makeup time.

Unexcused absences will result in possible failure of the rotation and violation of professionalism standards. Special circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the DCE and program director.

Distant Rotation Policy

Policy: Students may complete a rotation (SCPE) outside of the 75-mile radius by request to the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) or Program Director.

Procedure: Student makes written request to DCE for a distant rotation (> 75 miles from campus). Students must request the potential distant clinical site with written documentation and submit the site and preceptor information to the DCE or Director of Clinical Outreach. The PA Program will evaluate the suitability of the clinical practice and if accepted by the DCE will complete required affiliation agreements and coordination upon confirmation of the distant site. Students are responsible for all associated costs of a distant SCPE.

Accommodations and Transportation During Clinical Courses

Policy: Each student is responsible for arrangement and payment for accommodation and transportation associated with clinical course work.

Procedure: Students may discuss potential accommodation and transportation options with the DCE and clinical faculty. While the Austin community and the catchment area (75-mile radius) provides several clinical opportunities, students should anticipate the personal and financial impact associated with transportation and accommodation outside the immediate Austin area for the majority of their full-time clinical course work.

Risk-Free right of patients to refuse to participate in clinical education

Policy: Patients have a risk-free right to refuse to participate in clinical education.

Risk-Free right of students to refuse to participate in specific clinical education experiences

Policy: Students have a risk-free right to refuse to participate/prescribe anything that violates their religious or cultural beliefs.

Procedure: When possible, a student should inform the DCE of any clinical procedures or potential situation that may arise that would violate their religious or cultural beliefs. The DCE will work with the clinical site/preceptor to accommodate the situation. If a situation arises, the student must communicate with the preceptor in a professional manner indicating their desire to be excused from the clinical activity due to personal beliefs. The student should notify the DCE of the event.

Student Safety at Rotation Site (SCPEs) A1.02

Policy: The PA Program will provide appropriate training to students regarding Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards prior to being at clinical sites.

Policy: The facility at which the rotation/experience takes place shall provide students access to the facility's rules, regulations, policies, and procedures with which the PA students are expected to comply, including, the facility's OSHA standards, personal and workplace security and personal safety policies and procedures and shall address all appropriate safety measures for all PA students and any instructors on site.

Policy: The Director of Clinical Education (DCE)/faculty will evaluate a clinical site for student safety prior to allowing a student to be assigned to that location. The PA Program will take reasonable steps to ensure personal safety and security of students during the rotation/experience.

Procedure: The DCE or faculty member assigned to that rotation/SCPE will review available safety/security documents for each clinical facility and/or talk with the clinical preceptor on student safety and security. The preceptor/clinical site is responsible for distributing all safety/security information.

SCPE/Rotations and University Closure

Policy: In the event of closure of the University of Saint Augustine for Health Sciences due to inclement weather, students on clinical rotations (SCPEs) are still expected to attend the clinical rotation. The exception to this policy is if the student feels that it is not safe to proceed to the clinical site, or the clinical site is closed.

Procedure: The priority is student safety. Students who believe it is not safe to attend the clinical rotation must contact the preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) to inform them of the missing day. Failure to inform the DCE will result in an unexcused absence.

Missed clinical days may require "make up" additional days to ensure adequate student exposure. This will be at the discretion of the DCE in collaboration with the preceptor.

Summative Experience (B4.03)

Policy: The PA Program will conduct and document a summative evaluation of each student within the final four months of the program to verify that each student meets the Program Learning Outcome (PLOs) and program competencies required to enter clinical practice.
within each of the following domains:

Procedure: The requirement is primarily assessed through the PAC 6742: Summative Experience (Capstone) course. However, there may be items in addition to this course that will be used to satisfy this policy

Miscellaneous Items

White Coat and Hooding Ceremonies

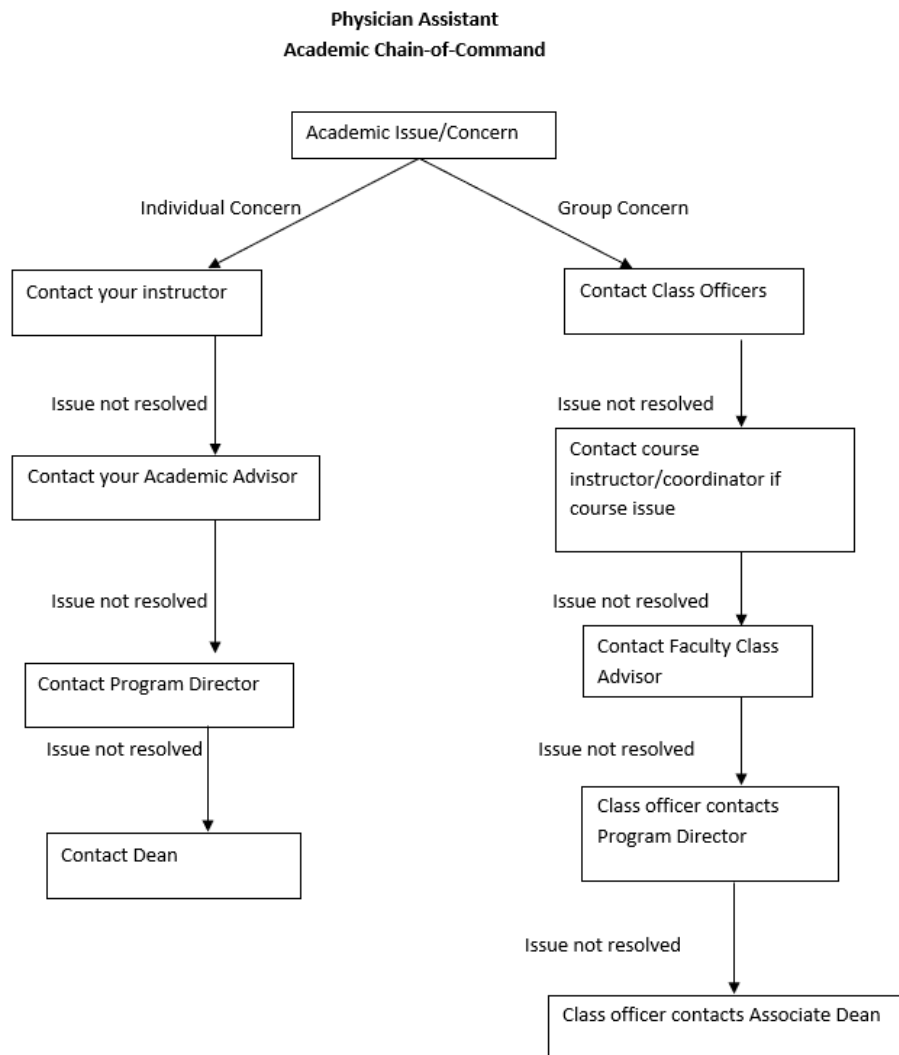
The PA Program will host a White Coat Ceremony. All PA students and their families will be invited to attend. Hooding will be part of the formal graduation ceremony.

Selection of Class Representatives and Faculty Class Advisor

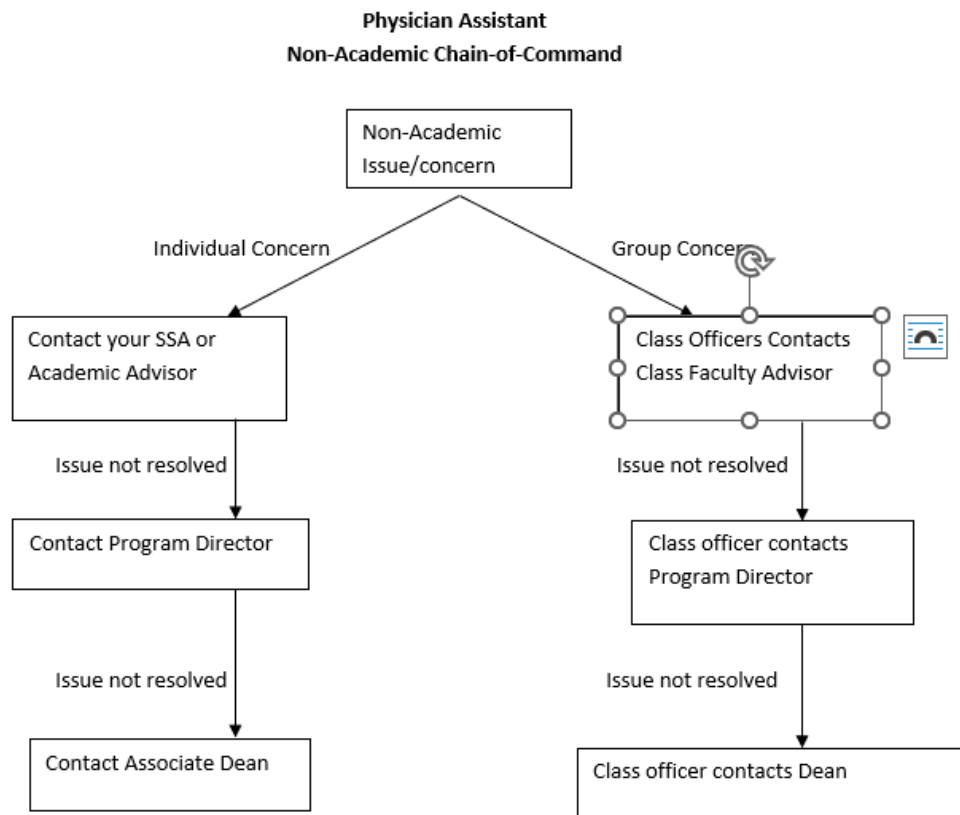
Policy: PA student cohorts will select class representatives who will serve as liaisons between the student cohort and PA faculty and administration. The role of the class representative will be to gather input from classmates on both academic and non-academic issues. The class representatives will represent the class. Below is the chain-of-command for both academic and non-academic issues.

Chain-of-Commands for Issues

Academic Issue



Non-Academic Issue



Class officer positions are:

- President – represents the class, organizes the class leadership
- Vice President – assist class president, assumes duties of president when president not available
- Secretary – records notes/votes/discussion
- Treasurer – manages class finances and organizes any fundraising activities
- Social Chair/outreach – organizes activities outside of the PA Program

Each class will select what their class views as a majority. A majority vote is needed prior to movement of any assessments or activities not initiated by the faculty.

Student Organizations

Physician Assistant Club (PAC)

The mission of the Physician Assistant Club is to meet the needs of students in the field of physician assistant through identification, coordinated action, communication, and fellowship. The club provides a conduit for information regarding a variety of aspects related to the profession and educational aspects

of the field of physician assistant. Additionally, the club provides opportunities for its members to experience leadership roles and a large portion of the club's activities are volunteer and service oriented within the community. This club as the student organization/representation to the Texas Association of Physician Assistants (TAPA) and the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA).

Physician Assistant Student Ambassadors (PASA)

The mission/goal of this group is to represent the PA Program in various community and University activities. Students must be in good academic and professional standing to be eligible. Students then must be recommended by a faculty member. Some activities may include tour guides, student shadows, panelists, and participation in admissions activities.

Pi Alpha (PA National Honorary Society)

This is the only National Honorary Society for PAs. Students may apply for membership if they meet the minimum entrance criteria. Society recognizes excellence in research/publishing or community/professional service or leadership activities.

<http://www2.paeaonline.org/index.php?ht=d/sp/i/191/pid/191>

Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA)

This is the student association of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). The AAPA is a membership organization representing PAs, all students will be members of AAPA (and SAAAPA) paid initially by the PA Program. SAAAPA is the governing body for students enrolled in PA Programs. They offer a student's resources, leadership opportunities, activities, advocacy and more.

[Http://www.aapa.org/saaapa](http://www.aapa.org/saaapa)

NCCPA Exam Content Blueprint Task and Organ Areas

This is a list of tasks that include knowledge and skill areas that were identified as important to physician assistants practice through an intensive practice analysis. Many of these knowledge areas and cognitive skills are covered on NCCPA's examinations.

<https://www.nccpa.net/examscontentbptasks>

The NCCPA also provides a list of content blueprint organ areas for its examinations. The link below provides approximate exam percentages and disease states that will be covered on NCCPA examinations.

<https://www.nccpa.net/examscontentbporgans>

<http://www.nccpa.net/examscontentblueprint>

<http://knowledgeplus.nejm.org/understanding-the-nccpa-blueprint-for-pance-panre>

<http://www.nccpa.net/Uploads/docs/Sample Questions and Critiques.pdf>

PAEA EOR Exam Content Blueprint Task and Organ Areas

This is a list of tasks that include knowledge and skill areas that were identified as important to physician assistants practice through an intensive practice analysis. Many of these knowledge areas and cognitive skills are covered on PAEA's examinations.

<https://paeaonline.org/assessment/end-of-rotation/content>

Professional Organizations and Regulatory Bodies

Accreditation Review Commission on the Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA)

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant is the accrediting agency that protects the interests of the public and physician assistant profession by defining the standards for physician assistant education and evaluating physician assistant educational programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards. <http://www.arc-pa.org>

National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

NCCPA is the only certifying organization for physician assistants in the United States. Established as a not-for-profit organization in 1974, NCCPA is dedicated to assuring the public that certified physician assistants meet established standards of clinical knowledge and cognitive skills upon entry into practice and throughout their careers. All U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories have decided to rely on NCCPA certification as one of the criteria for licensure or regulation of physician assistants. As of Dec. 31, 2014, there were approximately 102,000 certified PAs. <http://www.nccpa.net>

Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA)

PAEA is the only national organization representing physician assistant educational programs in the United States. Currently, all of the accredited programs in the country are members of the Association. PAEA provides services for faculty and its member programs, as well as to applicants, students, and other stakeholders. The Association was founded in 1972 as the Association of Physician Assistant Programs. Member programs voted to adopt the current name in 2005. <http://www.paeaonline.org>

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)

Founded in 1968, the American Academy of Physician Assistants is the national professional society for physician assistants. It represents a profession of more than 100,000 certified PAs across all medical and surgical specialties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the majority of the U.S. territories and the uniformed services. AAPA advocates and educates on behalf of the profession and the patients PAs serve. We work to ensure professional growth, personal excellence and recognition of physician assistants. We also enhance their ability to improve the quality, accessibility and cost-effectiveness of patient-centered healthcare. <https://www.aapa.org>

Texas Academy of Physician Assistants

The Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA) is a thriving group of over 2,500 Physician Assistants and students from all across the Lone Star State. TAPA was established as a non-profit organization in February 1975 by a few physician assistants who functioned under the delegatory privileges of physicians provided in the Medical Practice Act. Its Mission Statement is “The Texas Academy of Physician Assistants advances the PA profession through advocacy and development by leading PAs across Texas”.

<https://www.tapa.org/amsimis/>

Central Texas Physician Assistant Society

CTPAS is a professional society organized to benefit physician assistants in the greater Austin, Texas metro area. They represent these physician assistants and promote the physician assistant profession through education, quality services and advocacy of optimal healthcare.

<https://www.centraltexaspasociety.org/>

Texas Medical Board

This is the State Licensing agency for Texas. This site provides all licensing information for Texas. It also provides current statutes/laws and additional resources.

<https://www.tmb.state.tx.us/page/Licensing-PA-Before-You-Apply>

Permission for Disclosure

I have thoroughly read and understand the contents of the Physician Assistant Student Handbook. I agree to the policies and procedures within the handbook.

Signature

Date

I give my permission to University of Saint Augustine for Health Sciences personnel to disclose personal information needed for references, clinical affiliations, honors, awards, financial aid, continuing education, transferring to another school, employment, and licensure.

Signature

Date

I grant permission to the University of Saint Augustine for Health Science personnel to videotape, audiotape or photograph me and to use these materials for recruitment or educational purposes.

Signature

Date

I grant the University of Saint Augustine for Health Sciences PA faculty permission to use academic materials I have produced (examinations, papers, projects) for faculty evaluations including promotion and tenure and accreditation activities, and to assist other students in their academic pursuits. I understand that my name will either be removed or proper attribution will be given for any material used.

Signature

Date

I consent to participating in laboratory sessions with my classmates as both a patient-simulator as well as a student PA. These laboratory activities may include but are not limited to: examination, manual palpation, massage, visual inspection, mobilization, manual therapy/manipulation, therapeutic exercises, and application of physical agents. I agree to dress suitably for laboratory experiences. I understand that as a patient simulator, I have the right to be treated with respect at all times and that the student PA will protect my modesty by utilizing appropriate draping procedures. I also agree to behave with respect toward my fellow students when acting in the role of student PA. I agree to be responsible for reporting any actual or perceived medical conditions to the laboratory instructor that may interfere with my ability to participate in a laboratory experience as either the patient-simulator or as the student PA.

Signature _____ Date _____

