

# **UAB** SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

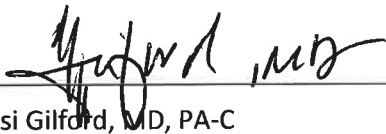
## *Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences* *Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies*

# 2024-2025 STUDENT HANDBOOK



# UAB // SHP

**UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS**  
**CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC SCIENCES DEPARTMENT**  
**PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES PROGRAM**  
**2024-2025 ACADEMIC HANDBOOK**



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M. Tosi Gilford, MD, PA-C  
Program Director



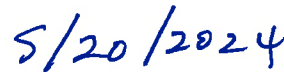
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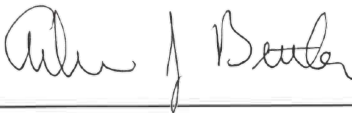
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Kathy Nugent, PhD  
Department Chair



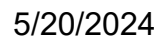
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Date



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Andrew Butler, PhD  
Dean, School of Health Professions



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Date

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>DEAN’S WELCOME MESSAGE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS CONTACT INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ACADEMIC CALENDAR .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ADVISING.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>AMBASSADORS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ASKIT.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>BACKGROUND CHECK .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BLAZERID / BLAZERNET / EMAIL.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BLAZER EXPRESS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BOOKSTORE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CAMPUS ONECARD .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CAMPUS MAP .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CAMPUS SAFETY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CATALOG .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>COUNSELING SERVICES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>DRUG SCREEN .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>EMERGENCIES.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>FERPA TRAINING .....</b>	<b>16</b>

FINANCIAL AID .....	17
FOOD SERVICES .....	17
GRADUATE SCHOOL.....	17
GRADUATION .....	17
HEALTH INSURANCE .....	17
HIPAA TRAINING .....	17
HONOR SOCIETIES .....	18
IMMUNIZATION POLICY .....	18
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN USE (IRB) .....	18
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY .....	18
LACTATION CENTERS .....	18
LIBRARIES AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER .....	19
NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY .....	19
ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES .....	20
PARKING.....	20
PLAGIARISM AND TURNITIN .....	20
RECREATION CENTER .....	20
SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AWARDS .....	20
SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS .....	21
SOCIAL MEDIA.....	22
STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES.....	22
TITLE IX.....	22
TUITION AND FEES .....	23
WEATHER .....	23
WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE / PROGRAM.....	23
<b>SECTION 2 – SHP AND UAB POLICIES .....</b>	<b>24</b>
SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES .....	24
BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY .....	24
DISMISSAL OF STUDENT FOR FAILURE TO MAKE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS.....	28
EMERGENCY PLAN – SHPB/LRC/WEBB .....	28

<b>UAB POLICIES .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ACADEMIC PROGRESS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>HEALTH .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>INCLUSIVENESS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>SECTION 3 – PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES PROGRAM INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE PROFESSION .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>PA PROGRAM PRINCIPAL FACULTY .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>PA PROGRAM STAFF .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>PA PROGRAM POLICIES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>IMMUNIZATION AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>ADMISSION POLICIES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>TECHNICAL STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>REGISTRATION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>CLASSROOM AND LAB SUPPLIES .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>DIDACTIC CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>CLINICAL CURRICULUM .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>CLINICAL YEAR COURSES .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>PA PROFESSION COMPETENCIES .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>STUDENT GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>50</b>

<b>DIDACTIC YEAR ATTENDANCE POLICIES .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE DURING THE DIDACTIC YEAR .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>EXCUSED ABSENCES.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>PERSONAL DAY POLICY FOR THE DIDACTIC YEAR .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>ACADEMIC PROBATION, DISMISSAL, AND WITHDRAWAL.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>LEAVE POLICY .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>DRESS CODE DURING THE DIDACTIC YEAR .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>PA PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>COMPLAINT POLICY .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>REPORTING HARASSMENT .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>ACADEMIC APPEALS .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>STUDENT RECORDS POLICY.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>SECTION 4 – PROGRAM INFORMATION REGARDING THE CLINICAL YEAR .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION FOR CLINICAL PRECEPTORS.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLINICAL PRECEPTORS .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>CREDIT FOR PRIOR CLINICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>CLINICAL YEAR SCHEDULE.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2024 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2025 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>CLINICAL YEAR PRINCIPLES AND RULES.....</b>	<b>67</b>

<b>STUDENT CONDUCT</b> .....	69
<b>ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER CHANGES</b> .....	69
<b>ASSIGNMENT OF CLINICAL ROTATIONS</b> .....	69
<b>REQUESTS FOR ROTATION CHANGES</b> .....	70
<b>CLINICAL ROTATION REASSIGNMENT</b> .....	70
<b>USE OF OUTSIDE ROTATIONS</b> .....	70
<b>ANTI-NEPOTISM POLICY</b> .....	71
<b>FRATERNIZATION</b> .....	71
<b>BACKGROUND AND DRUG SCREEN</b> .....	71
<b>RELEASE OF INFORMATION</b> .....	71
<b>DRESS CODE FOR CLINICAL ROTATIONS</b> .....	72
<b>LIABILITY INSURANCE</b> .....	72
<b>LOCKERS</b> .....	72
<b>LOUNGE (UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL)</b> .....	72
<b>MEALS</b> .....	72
<b>UAB STUDENT / VISITING SCHOLAR CLINICAL ROTATION BLOOD / BODY FLUID EXPOSURE GUIDELINES</b> .....	73
<b>CLINICAL YEAR ATTENDANCE POLICIES</b> .....	76
<b>INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS</b> .....	76
<b>ATTENDANCE DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR</b> .....	76
<b>PERSONAL DAYS</b> .....	76
<b>EXCUSED ABSENCES</b> .....	77
<b>UNEXCUSED ABSENCES</b> .....	77
<b>PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE</b> .....	78
<b>PRECEPTOR VACATIONS / ILLNESS</b> .....	78
<b>JURY DUTY / MILITARY DUTY</b> .....	79
<b>OFF-ROTATION CLINICAL EXPERIENCE</b> .....	79
<b>CLINICAL YEAR ACADEMIC POLICIES</b> .....	79
<b>GRADING POLICY</b> .....	79
<b>SUMMATIVE EVALUATION</b> .....	79
<b>FACULTY SITE VISITS</b> .....	79

**GRADUATION** ..... 80

**APPLICATION FOR DEGREE**..... 80

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION EXAM (PANCE)** ..... 80

**INITIAL CERTIFICATION** ..... 80

**MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION** ..... 80

**STATE LICENSURE / REGISTRATION** ..... 80

**EVENT OF CLOSURE OR LOSS OF ACCREDITATION STATUS** ..... 80



## INTRODUCTION

### DEAN'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Health Professions! We are pleased you chose to join one of our many excellent programs, which in combination have established us as a national leader in health professions education.

We are home to one of the largest health professions schools in the nation with more than 30 programs at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels, with more than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled.

Moving into a post-COVID environment is a new start for everyone in health care, and you are in the best place to begin your personal journey toward joining this dynamic field. We are all committed to providing you a world-class education, and to support your pursuit of knowledge and your strong desire to serve others as a healthcare professional.

The pandemic has challenged all of us in many ways, and your entry into one of our professional programs demonstrates one of the most precious personal qualities one can have: resilience. That resilience has brought you here today and will continue to serve you well during your journey at UAB.

We recognize that healthcare needs - even outside of a pandemic - are constantly changing. That is why we continue to add innovative programs to our academic portfolio and to enhance and revitalize ongoing programs. We also offer graduate programs you will only find in Alabama at UAB, such as Genetic Counseling, Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, Low Vision Rehabilitation, Health Physics, Healthcare Quality and Safety, doctoral-level Rehabilitation Science, and Biomedical and Health Sciences.

Our degrees and programs are fully accredited by their respective professional organizations. This means you will be eligible for licensure, national certification or registrations and enjoy being in high demand within the job market. Our first-time student exam pass rate on many credentialing exams is an astounding 98 percent or higher.

Graduating from the School of Health Professions means you will acquire an esteemed degree, have a host of job opportunities in healthcare – an industry that continues to grow rapidly – and be well prepared to make a difference in your community. We look forward to maintaining our relationship with you when you join our alumni community.

Our alumni give advice to current students that is worth repeating: “learn your craft, be a better professional for your patients, be open minded to future possibilities, and remember to have a healthy work/ life balance”.

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



Andrew J. Butler, PhD, FAPTA

## OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

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

The SHP initially took shape in 1969 as UAB gained autonomy within the University of Alabama System. Originally christened the School of Community and Allied Health Resources (SCAHR), the school incorporated the School of Health Services Administration and the Division of Allied Health Sciences from the College of General Studies with parts of the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology from the medical school. An innovative facility designed to meet the growing needs of the health care industry, the SCAHR was divided into four academic divisions that functioned like regular academic departments: Health Services Administration, Public Health and Environment, Allied Health Sciences, and the Regional Technical Institute for Health Occupations.

Throughout the 1970's and 80's the school's offerings were amended to reflect the changing health care industry. As a result of the changes, SCAHR became the School of Public and Allied Health (SPAHE). Next it became the School of Community and Allied Health (SCAH) and later the School of Health Related Professions (SHRP). During this time, the school added several new areas of study including a nationally ranked program in Nutrition Sciences. Through the leadership and guidance of early visionaries, the school experienced unparalleled success, which continues to date.

Today, the School of Health Professions is comprised of more than 30 programs – at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels – across five academic departments: Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, Health Services Administration, Nutrition Sciences, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. The school is housed in three buildings, the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building, the Learning Resource Center Building (LRC), and the School of Health Professions Building (SHPB).

With more than 2,200 faculty, staff, and students, SHP is one of six schools comprising the world-renowned UAB Academic Health Center. Students have access to vast academic resources, state-of-the-art facilities, and progressive research.

SHP is proud of many accomplishments including:

- U.S. News & World Report ranks SHP programs in the nation's top 25.
- Research funding is over \$14 million and growing.
- The school is at the top of the list in research funding from the National Institutes of Health for schools of its type and has been either first or second in funding received since 1969.

Under the current leadership of Dean Andrew Butler, the school has never been stronger or better positioned as a national leader in health professions education.

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS CONTACT INFORMATION

In addition to your program director and program faculty, the following individuals may be able to provide assistance with questions and issues related to your school and program activities.

**Kristin Chapleau, Director of Student Services and Advising**

(205) 996-4721; [kjohnsto@uab.edu](mailto:kjohnsto@uab.edu)

**Jennifer Christy, PhD, Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs**

(205) 934-5903; [jbraswel@uab.edu](mailto:jbraswel@uab.edu)

**Samantha Giordano-Mooga, PhD, Director of Undergraduate Honors Program**

(205) 996-1399; [sgiordan@uab.edu](mailto:sgiordan@uab.edu)

**Melanie Hart, PhD, Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs**

(205) 934-7528; [mhart2@uab.edu](mailto:mhart2@uab.edu)

**Kevin Storr, Director of Communications**

(205) 934-4159; [storr@uab.edu](mailto:storr@uab.edu)

**Lee Test, Director of Academic and Faculty Operations**

(205) 975-8034; [ltest@uab.edu](mailto:ltest@uab.edu)

**Marci Willis, Director, Learning Resource Center**

(205) 934-9472; [mbattles@uab.edu](mailto:mbattles@uab.edu)

## SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

### ACADEMIC CALENDAR

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

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

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

### ADVISING

Undergraduate student advising is provided through the Student Services and Advising unit, which is housed in the School of Health Professions Building (SHPB) 230 suite of offices, near the elevators on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Walk-ins are accepted, but appointments are preferred. Contact information for individual advisors is listed below.

Andrea Bennett, Academic Advisor III, (205) 996-1689; [arbennett@uab.edu](mailto:arbennett@uab.edu)

Eileen Hatfield, Academic Advisor II, (205) 934-4185; [mehatfie@uab.edu](mailto:mehatfie@uab.edu)

Chris Smith, Academic Advisor III, (205) 934-5974; [cjsmith1@uab.edu](mailto:cjsmith1@uab.edu)

Adam Pinson, Academic Advisor III, (205) 996-6789; [apinson@uab.edu](mailto:apinson@uab.edu)

Graduate student advising is provided through the SHP graduate programs.

### AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors help to spread awareness of the School of Health Professions and its multifaceted undergraduate and graduate programs, serve as liaisons between the department and university-wide student organizations, and serve as a student voice in school and university committees. The SHP Ambassadors help to support the programs within the school that will impact recruitment and retention initiatives.

### ASKIT

AskIT is the technology help desk for faculty, staff, and students. They provide free support via telephone, email, or in-person. You will be asked to supply your BlazerID when you request assistance.

## ATTENDANCE

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

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

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

- Absences due to jury or military duty, provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
- Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for “a reasonable number of disability-related absences” provided students give their instructors notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.
- Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the university in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:
  - Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.
  - If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.
- Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students.
- Absences due to religious observances provided that students give faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.

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

## BACKGROUND CHECK

Students in SHP programs are required by policy to undergo a background check using the school's approved vendor, [CastleBranch](#), at the time of program admission, and again, prior to placement in a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.). Additional checks may be required by the individual sites therefore, students should work with the program to ensure compliance requirements are met. Instructions for requesting the background check are provided to students by their programs.

**The Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs is responsible for ensuring student compliance throughout the program. Students found to be non-compliant will not be allowed to matriculate in the program (orientation, attend class, fieldwork placement, etc.) until all requirements are met. Program Directors, Fieldwork Coordinators, and students will be notified of non-compliance and a hold will be placed on the student's account.**

- **The initial background check must be completed prior to the first day of class.**
- **Subsequent background checks must be completed prior to the first day of the semester of a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.).**

## BLAZERID / BLAZERNET / EMAIL

**BlazerID:** All students receive a unique identifier, the BlazerID, established at: [www.uab.edu/blazerid](http://www.uab.edu/blazerid). Your BlazerID is required for accessing BlazerNET and other campus resources. To activate one's BlazerID, select "Activate Accounts."

**BlazerNET** is the official portal of the UAB information network and is accessible from any Internet-accessible computer, on- or off-campus. Access BlazerNET from UAB home page [www.uab.edu](http://www.uab.edu) then choose UAB Quicklinks.

**Email: uab.edu** UAB student email is provided through Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based system. Students have 50 GB of email space and 25 GB of free file 1 TB storage. Monitor your email regularly. Your UAB email is the official communication medium for courses, news, information, and announcements. Do not forward your UAB account to a personal email account. UAB is not responsible for information not received by the student due to the 'redirecting' of a UAB account to another email server.

## BLAZER EXPRESS

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

## BOOKSTORE

There is one bookstore located on the UAB campus, offering a wide variety of products and services to students, including online purchasing and shipping. The bookstore stocks UAB memorabilia and college wear in addition to all required textbooks and course material.

### UAB Barnes and Noble Bookstore

Location: 1400 University Blvd, Hill Student Center, Birmingham, AL. 35233

Hours: M – F 8:00am – 5:00pm | Sat 10:00am – 2:00pm | Sun Closed

Telephone: (205) 996-2665      Website: <https://uab.bncollege.com/shop/uab/home>

## CAMPUS ONECARD

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

## CAMPUS MAP

UAB's campus map can be found at the following: [www.uab.edu/map/](http://www.uab.edu/map/)

## CAMPUS SAFETY

Campus safety procedures and resources can be accessed at <https://www.uab.edu/students/home/safety>.

## CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Canvas Learning Management System is the platform used for managing instructional materials online. Canvas course sites are accessed through BlazerNET or at [www.uab.edu/elearning/canvas](http://www.uab.edu/elearning/canvas). Students should monitor their course sites routinely for communication from faculty and to manage course assignments.

## CATALOG

The UAB Catalog is published annually and includes UAB's courses, policies, and curricula. Students can link to the Undergraduate or Graduate catalog at [www.uab.edu/catalog](http://www.uab.edu/catalog).

## COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

[Community Standards and Accountability](#) is responsible for upholding the integrity and purpose of the university through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures to students' behavior to ensure a community that respects the dignity and right of all persons to reach their highest potential. SARC delivers programs and services in order to promote student safety and success, the pursuit of

knowledge, respect for self and others, global citizenship, personal accountability and integrity, and ethical development. More information can be found here: [UAB Student Advocacy, Rights & Conduct](#). The UAB student conduct code may be accessed online: [UAB Student Conduct Code](#).

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Student Counseling Services offers no cost, confidential counseling for UAB students related to physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual concerns. Student Counseling Services is located in the Student Health and Wellness Center at 1714 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), Birmingham, AL. 35233. For more information, call (205) 934-5816 or <https://www.uab.edu/students/counseling/>.

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)**

Collaboration, integrity, respect, and excellence are shared values of our institution and are the core of what it means to be a UAB community member. And a key foundation at UAB is diversity, equity, and inclusion. At UAB, everybody counts every day. UAB is committed to fostering a diverse, respectful, and inclusive campus environment that values all community members regardless of background and embraces individual differences. UAB values and cultivates equity, diversity, and inclusion in our research, learning, clinical and work environments. Our students, faculty, and staff add diversity to our community through life experiences, perspectives and viewpoints that are enriching for the learning and work environment and are reflective of the students and communities we serve. Because UAB serves a diverse population, ODEI, along with our School of Health Professions initiatives, aims to create an inclusive environment for all UAB faculty, staff, students, and patients through education, training, and awareness programs.

[UAB Office of the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[SHP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Site](#)

## **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)**

Accessible Learning: UAB is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and you require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures. Requests for reasonable accommodations involve an interactive process and consist of a collaborative effort among the student, DSS, faculty, and staff. If you have a disability but have not contacted Disability Support Services, please call (205) 934-4205 or visit [Disability Support Services](#).

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



## DRUG SCREEN

Students in SHP programs are required by policy to undergo a drug screen using the school's approved vendor, [CastleBranch](#), at the time of program admission, and again, prior to placement in a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.). Additional screens may be required by the individual sites therefore, students should work with the program to ensure compliance requirements are met. Instructions for requesting the drug screens are provided to students by their programs.

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

- **The initial background check must be completed prior to the first day of class.**
- **Subsequent background checks must be completed prior to the first day of the semester of a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.).**

## EMERGENCIES

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

**UAB Police:** Dial 911 *from a campus phone*

or call: (205) 934-3535 | (205) 934-HELP (4357) | (205) 934-4434

Emergencies affecting campus are communicated via the following:

- UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline: (205) 934-2165
- University home web page: [www.uab.edu](http://www.uab.edu)
- Webpage: [www.uab.edu/emergency](http://www.uab.edu/emergency)
- Announcements on BlazerNET
- Cell phone messages and SMS text – register for B-ALERT notices via <https://idm.uab.edu/ens/b-alert>

## FERPA TRAINING

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 provides protection for all educational records related to students enrolled in an educational program. Information about your rights and protection of your records is available at the following site: [FERPA](#). If you have questions or concerns about FERPA issues, you may email [FERPA@uab.edu](mailto:FERPA@uab.edu). All SHP students are required to complete [FERPA Training](#). Compliance with the training requirement is monitored monthly.

## FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Counselors are available each day in the One Stop Student Services Office located in the Hill Student Center, 1400 University Blvd. Suite 103, Birmingham, AL 35233. If you have general questions, you can call the Office of Student Financial Aid at (205) 934-8223 or send an email to [finaid@uab.edu](mailto:finaid@uab.edu). For additional financial aid information: [Cost & Aid](#).

## FOOD SERVICES

Dining facilities available on campus closest to the SHP buildings include the Commons on the Green – located on the Campus Green, south of 9th Avenue and the Campus Recreation Center. For additional information about meal plans and campus dining facilities: [Student Dining](#).

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

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

## GRADUATION

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

## HEALTH INSURANCE

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

## HIPAA TRAINING

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) includes significant requirements for protecting individual privacy of health information. All students in the School of Health Professions must complete an online tutorial and be tested on HIPAA regulations at the time of program admission.

A BlazerID is required to access the training site, located at [HIPAA](#). Compliance with the training requirement is monitored monthly.

## HONOR SOCIETIES

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for the following society memberships.

- Alpha Eta Society – The UAB Chapter of this Society recognizes students registered in the final term of a baccalaureate or graduate health professions program. Inductees must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (4.0 = A) and be in the upper 10% of their program. Nominations are made by program directors in spring and summer terms.
- Phi Kappa Phi – This is the oldest, and most selective, all-discipline honor society in the nation. Membership is by invitation to the top 7.5% of junior students and the top 10% of seniors and graduate students. Nominations are made by program directors.

## IMMUNIZATION POLICY

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, faculty, and staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), first-time entering students, international students and scholars, and students in clinical & non-clinical programs, provide proof of immunization against certain diseases: [Student Immunizations](#).

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN USE (IRB)

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

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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

## LACTATION CENTERS

Through the work of the UAB Commission on the Status of Women, the University has provided several lactation centers for students, faculty, and staff across the campus. [Center locations](#). The School of Health Professions' lactation room is in the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building at 1675 University Blvd, Room 219A, Birmingham, AL 35233. Female students enrolled in the School of Health

Professions have access to the room via their student ID/OneCard. If you cannot access the room, contact the building administrator, Julia Tolbert-Jackson at (205) 934-4133.

## **LIBRARIES AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER**

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

### **SHP Learning Resource Center (LRC)**

The School of Health Professions Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides a unique set of enterprise solutions that promote an exciting, intriguing, and innovative learning environment. It provides a state-of-the-art media studio; audio/visual support; and information technology management of public, classroom, and testing labs.

Location: 1714 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor), Birmingham, AL. 35233.

Phone: (205) 934-5146

Email: [shplrc@uab.edu](mailto:shplrc@uab.edu)

### **Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences**

This is the largest biomedical library in Alabama, and one of the largest in the south. Located across the crosswalk from the School, the LHL has extension libraries in University Hospital and The Kirklin Clinic. Dedicated librarians hold "office hours" in the Learning Resource Center weekly.

Location: 1700 University Blvd. Birmingham, AL. 35233

Website: <https://library.uab.edu/locations/lister-hill>

Phone: (205) 975-4821

### **Mervyn H. Sterne Library**

A collection of more than one million items supporting teaching and research in the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences.

Location: 917 13<sup>th</sup> Street South, Birmingham, AL. 35233

Website: <https://library.uab.edu/locations/sterne>

Phone: (205) 934-6364 (Reference) | (205) 934-4338 (User Services)

## **NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY**

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

encouraging, or covering up the violation, appropriate response will occur with respect to the individual(s) and/or group involved.

[Undergraduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

[Graduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

## **ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES**

If you have questions or need assistance with an academic or administrative process, the UAB One Stop is where to go! Advisors will help you solve your problem or do the legwork for you if another UAB resource is needed. One Stop is located in the Hill Student Center, 1400 University Blvd. Suite 103, Birmingham, AL 35233. You may contact the [One Stop](#) office by phone or email at (205) 934-4300; (855) UAB-1STP [(855) 822-1787]; [onestop@uab.edu](mailto:onestop@uab.edu).

## **PARKING**

Student vehicles must be registered with UAB Parking and Transportation Services, located at 608 8<sup>th</sup> Street South, Birmingham AL. 35294. The office is open Monday – Friday from 7:30am – 5:00pm. Parking is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking fees are established by location, payable by semester or year, and are billed to the student’s account. For additional information: [UAB Student Parking](#).

## **PLAGIARISM AND TURNITIN**

Plagiarism is academic misconduct that will result in a grade of zero and may result in dismissal from the School of Health Professions and UAB (see Academic Integrity Policy). All papers submitted for grading in any SHP program may be reviewed using the online plagiarism monitoring software. Please note that all documents submitted to [Turnitin.com](#) are added to their database of papers that is used to screen future assignments for plagiarism.

## **RECREATION CENTER**

The [Campus Recreation Center](#), located at 1501 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233, is open to faculty, staff, students, and their families. A valid student identification card or membership card is required for access. Facilities include basketball courts, racquetball courts, weight rooms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, and indoor track.

## **SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AWARDS**

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for the following awards.

- Alfred W. Sangster Award for Outstanding International Student – This award is presented annually to an international student in recognition of their academic and non-academic achievements.

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

For more information: [UAB School of Health Professions Student Awards and Scholarships](#). Please refer to the program section of this handbook for awards available to students in individual programs.

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

The SHP has several scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in SHP programs. The Scholarship Committee, comprised of faculty from each department, reviews and, selects awardees.

Scholarships available to students in any SHP program are the following:

The *Carol E. Medders Endowed Scholarship in Health Professions* was established by Carol Medders, former Director of Admissions for the School of Health Professions Student Services. Applicants must be currently enrolled in a full-time, degree-granting program in the School of Health Professions and should demonstrate academic excellence and financial need. The award recipient should be enrolled in a program that has a competitive application process and academic course load that prohibits them from holding full-time employment. This scholarship is awarded for the Spring Semester.

The *Ethel M. and Jesse D. Smith Endowed Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship* is an endowment that provides scholarships for both the School of Health Professions and School of Nursing. Applicants must be enrolled in a School of Health Professions undergraduate program and be a resident of the state of Alabama. Applicants should demonstrate academic excellence and financial need. This scholarship is awarded in the Fall.

The *Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation* provides funding for scholarships focused on the foundation’s founding mission—to provide financial assistance to women who express financial need in nine southeastern states. At the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholarships are awarded to women who, in addition to financial need, have an interest in pursuing studies in nursing or other health-related professions. Both undergraduate and graduate students within the Schools of Nursing and Health Professions are eligible. This scholarship is awarded each semester.

The *Dr. Edward D. and Sandra Dunning Huechtker Endowed Memorial Award* provides assistance to deserving students in need of financial support to continue in the pursuit of their goal of a career in the health professions. This award is open to undergraduate and graduate

students enrolled in one of the School of Health Professions majors. Applicants should demonstrate academic excellence and financial need. This scholarship is awarded in the Spring Semester.

The *School of Health Professions Junior Advisory Board Endowed Scholarship* was established to provide financial awards assisting students with the completion of professional licensure and certification exams necessary to practice in their fields and/or the costs associated with professional development and job preparation. This scholarship is awarded in the Spring semester.

For more information: [UAB School of Health Professions Student Awards and Scholarships](#). Application announcements are made by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. Many programs in SHP also have scholarships available to currently enrolled students in those programs. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for more information.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can serve as useful communication tools. However, health professions students should use the forums judiciously. The school's official sites are the following:

- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/UAB\\_SHP](https://twitter.com/UAB_SHP)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/UABSHP](http://www.facebook.com/UABSHP)
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/uabshp](http://www.youtube.com/uabshp)
- Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/uabshp>
- LinkedIn: [UAB SHP LinkedIn](#)
- Website: [www.uab.edu/shp](http://www.uab.edu/shp)

For more information: [UAB Social Media Guidelines](#).

## STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The University provides prevention, counseling, and treatment services to students through Student Health Services (SHS) located at 1714 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), Birmingham, AL. 35233. The clinic is open from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday – Thursday; 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday. They are closed for lunch between 12:00pm – 1:00 pm weekdays. For more information: [Student Health Services](#). Appointments may be scheduled by calling (205) 934-3580.

## TITLE IX

In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama at Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of gender in any of its programs or services. The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on gender and expects individuals who live, work, teach, and study within this community to contribute positively to the environment and to refrain from behaviors that threaten the freedom or respect that every member of our community deserves. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources and supports, please visit the UAB Title IX webpage for UAB's Title IX Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Violence Policy; UAB's Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy; and the Duty to Report and Non-Retaliation Policy. For more information: [UAB Title IX](#).

## TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees for the University are published annually under the “Students” tab of the UAB website. They may be paid through BlazerNET. SHP programs have specific fees attached to programs, courses, and/ or laboratories. For more information: [Tuition & Fees](#).

Payment deadlines for each semester are published on the official academic calendar. Please note that failure to meet payment deadlines can result in being administratively withdrawn from courses.

## WEATHER

Severe weather situations that may affect the safety of students, faculty, and staff are communicated through the same channels as other emergencies. For more information: [Emergency Management](#).

Other information sources include:

- [B-ALERT System](#) (contact information must be setup and current)
- UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline: (205) 934-2165
- WBHM Radio (90.3 FM)

## WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE / PROGRAM

Withdrawal from a course or from your program is an official process and should be discussed with your academic advisor and / or program director. Most programs in the School of Health Professions are full-time and the curricula specifically sequenced. Withdrawal from a course may risk your wait time to register for the class again. You might have to wait for a full year before resuming enrollment in the program. Withdrawals are made through the UAB registration system via the Student Resources tab in BlazerNET. Notice of program withdrawal should be given in writing to the program director. For more information: [UAB Add/Drop and Withdrawal Policy](#).



## SECTION 2 – SHP AND UAB POLICIES

### SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES

#### BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY

With the exceptions noted below, students admitted to clinical and non-clinical programs in the School of Health Professions (SHP) will complete a routine criminal background check and drug screen using the approved vendor ([CastleBranch](#)). These screenings should be completed prior the first term of enrollment. Subsequent routine criminal background checks and drug screens using the approved school vendor will be completed prior to fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.).

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

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

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

Administration Health Services, PhD  
Biomedical Sciences to Biotechnology Fast Track  
Biomedical Sciences to Clinical Laboratory Science Fast Track  
Biomedical Sciences to Health Physics Fast Track  
Biomedical Sciences to Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences Fast Track  
Biomedical and Health Sciences, MS  
Biotechnology, MS  
Biotechnology, PhD  
Dietitian Education Program, Graduate Certificate  
Genetic Counseling, MS  
Health Administration (Residential), MSHA  
Health Care Management to Healthcare Quality and Safety Fast Track  
Health Care Management to Health Informatics Fast Track

Health Care Management to Occupational Therapy Doctorate Fast Track  
Health Physics, MS  
Medical Laboratory Science, MS  
Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences, MS  
Nutrition Sciences, MS  
– Dietetic Internship Clinical Track  
– Dietitian Education Program  
– Research Track  
Nutrition Sciences, PhD  
Occupational Therapy, OTD – (entry level)  
Physical Therapy, DPT  
Physician Associate Studies, MSPAS  
Rehabilitation Science, PhD

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

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

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

Applied Mixed Methods Research, Graduate Certificate  
Biotechnology Regulatory Affairs, Graduate Certificate  
Clinical Informatics, Graduate Certificate  
Health Administration (International and Executive tracks), MSHA  
Health Informatics, MSHI  
Healthcare Finance Management, Graduate Certificate  
Healthcare Leadership, DSc  
Healthcare Leadership, Graduate Certificate  
Healthcare Quality and Safety, MS  
Healthcare Quality and Safety, Graduate Certificate  
Health Services Research, MS  
Healthcare Simulation, MS  
Healthcare Simulation, Graduate Certificate  
Nutrition for Community Health, Graduate Certificate  
Nutrition Sciences, MS  
– Clinical Track-Prior Learning  
– Lifestyle Management and Disease Prevention Track

Low Vision Rehabilitation, Graduate Certificate  
Multi-Tiered Approach to Trauma, Graduate Certificate  
Occupational Therapy Doctorate (Post Professional)  
Physical Therapy Residencies (Neurologic, Orthopedic)  
Primary Care Physical Therapy for Underserved Populations, Graduate Certificate

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



## STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

### About CastleBranch.com

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

### Order Summary

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#### Required Personal Information

- o In addition to entering your full name and date of birth, you will be asked for your Social Security Number, current address, phone number, and e-mail address.

#### Drug Test (LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics)

- o Within 24-48 hours after you place your order, the electronic chain of custody form e-chain will be placed directly into your CastleBranch account. This e-chain will explain where you need to go to complete your drug test.

#### Payment Information

- o At the end of the online order process, you will be prompted to enter your Visa or MasterCard information. Money orders are also accepted, but will result in a \$10 fee and additional turn-around-time.

### Place Your Order

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Go to: [www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com) and enter package code:

AH01 - Background Check and Drug Test

You will be required to enter your program under "Student Information" classification

You will then be directed to set up your CastleBranch profile account.

### View Your Results

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Your results will be posted directly to your CastleBranch profile account. You will be notified if there is any missing information needed in order to process your order. Although 95% of background check results are completed within 3-5 business days, some results may take longer. Your order will show as "In Process" until it has been completed in its entirety. Your school's administrator can also securely view your results online with their unique username and password. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Service Desk at 888.723.4263 x 7196 or visit the website to submit your question at: <https://www.castlebranch.com/contact-us>.

## **DISMISSAL OF STUDENT FOR FAILURE TO MAKE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

[Dismissal of Student and Appeal Process](#)

## **EMERGENCY PLAN – SHPB/LRC/WEBB**

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

# UAB POLICIES

## ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[GRADUATE](#)

[UNDERGRADUATE](#)

## HEALTH

[IMMUNIZATIONS](#)

[NEEDLE STICKS AND EXPOSURES](#)

## INCLUSIVENESS

[EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT](#)

## POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

[CAMPUS SAFETY](#)

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

## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

[ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE](#)

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

[PATENT](#)

## SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE

[ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, USE AND CONSUMPTION](#)

[DRUG FREE CAMPUS](#)

[NON-SMOKING](#)

## TECHNOLOGY

[TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES](#)

## SECTION 3 – PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES PROGRAM INFORMATION

### OVERVIEW OF THE PROFESSION

Physician Associates (PAs) are healthcare professionals licensed to practice medicine under the supervision of a physician. Individual state laws define the scope of practice and prescribing authority of Physician Associates. In general, most states authorize PAs to prescribe controlled and non-controlled substances and perform any task delegated to them by a supervising physician. To be eligible for licensure, PAs must graduate from an Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Associate, Inc. (ARC-PA), accredited Physician Associate program, and pass the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE).

The Physician Associate, functioning under the supervision of the physician, is expected to perform appropriately delegated tasks autonomously. Yet, the Physician Associate will always remain under the guidance and counsel of a physician.

### DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES PROGRAM

The UAB Physician Associate Studies Program is a 115 credit-hour, 27-month, Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies Program. It was founded in 1967 and accepted its first class of Master's degree students in 2005.

The Mission of the PA program is to attract and train culturally diverse individuals with the knowledge, skills, and judgment needed to provide *competent and compassionate* healthcare to all. The program faculty and students are champions of diversity and inclusivity, and our commitment to these values are at the core of who we are.

#### Accreditation

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

#### Term of Enrollment

Fall semester

#### Degree Conferred

Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies (MSPAS) degree

#### Professional Certification

Graduates are eligible to apply for the certification examination sponsored by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM**

The UAB Physician Associate Studies Program is a graduate-level program located within the Department of Clinical & Diagnostic Sciences (CDS), in the School of Health Professions (SHP).

#### **School of Health Professions**

Dean: Andrew J. Butler, PhD, MPT, MBA

#### **Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences**

Department Chair: Kathy Nugent, PhD

#### **Physician Associate Studies Program**

Program Director: M. Tosi Gilford, MD, PA-C

Associate Program Director: W. Cody Black, MHS, PA-C

Medical Director: Donald Reiff, MD

Associate Medical Director: Rowell S. Ashford, II, MD



## PA PROGRAM PRINCIPAL FACULTY



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Program Director  
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**Heather F. Neighbors, MSPAS, PA-C**  
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## PA PROGRAM STAFF



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## PA PROGRAM POLICIES

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

### IMMUNIZATION AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Prior to matriculation, students will be required to complete a background check, drug screen, and provide documentation that the following vaccines are current and up-to-date: MMR, Tdap, Hepatitis B series, varicella, meningococcal, and tuberculosis screening. A complete list of immunization requirements can be found at: <https://www.uab.edu/students/health/medical-clearance/immunizations/level-3b>. PA students are not required to have a physical examination prior to matriculation.

### ADMISSION POLICIES

#### Admission with Contingencies

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

#### Advanced Placement Policy

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

#### Credit for Prior Learning Experiences

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

### ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

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

## TECHNICAL STANDARDS

### UAB PA Technical (Performance) Standards

*(Revised 2018, 2023)*

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

Students who are not able to demonstrate the required technical skills needed to successfully complete the PA may be dismissed from the program until such time that they can demonstrate technical skill proficiency. *A reasonable attempt will be made by the PA program to accommodate students with disabilities.*

### Minimum Technical (Performance) Standards

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

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

**Communication Skills:** Students must be able to communicate clearly and effectively, to elicit and relay medical information.

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

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

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

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

## REGISTRATION

It is the responsibility of the student to register for the appropriate courses each semester. No student will be able to attend classes or clinical sites without being properly registered.

### Web Registration

Students may register via the web, any time after their assigned time, up to, and prior to the last working day before classes begin. BlazerNET is available 24/7; however, the Add/Drop function within Registration Tools will end when the open registration period closes. Students having trouble with BlazerNET should call the Registrar's Office or email [registrar@uab.edu](mailto:registrar@uab.edu).

### Follow these steps to register using BlazerNET:

1. Access BlazerNET with your web browser, then log in with your BlazerID and strong password.
2. Click on the Student Resources tab.
3. View the Registration Tools channel. Select either Look Up Classes to gather CRNs or Add or Drop Classes if you already have the course reference numbers.
4. Register for the appropriate course by clicking the checkbox to the left of the course on the Look Up Classes screen or by submitting the CRNs in the blocks on the Add or Drop Classes page.
5. Please make sure your course schedule states "Web Registered" and that you can view all classes on the Student Detail Schedule page. A BlazerNET Registration Guide is available on the Student Resources tab if you need more assistance.

### Late Registration (Add/Drop Classes)

Starting with the first day of regular classes, a late registration fee will be charged. If you begin registration during the late registration period, additional steps are necessary.

## CLASSROOM AND LAB SUPPLIES

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

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS

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

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

### Federal Scholarships and Loans

Some of the educational loans and grants available from the federal government can be found on this website: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans>

### National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

Information can be found at: <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/>

### Indian Health Service (IHS)

Information can be found at: <http://www.ihs.gov/>

### Military

Check with appropriate military website for more information on their scholarship programs.

Please consult the UAB Financial Aid Office website for more information regarding student loans at: <https://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/financial-aid>.

### PA Program Scholarships

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

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



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

**William John Gill PA-C Sponsored Scholarship:** Established in 2021. Applicants must be admitted to or enrolled in the UAB Physician Associate Studies Program and must demonstrate an interest in practicing in a rural/underserved or health professional shortage area upon completion of their studies.

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### **The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA)**

AAPA is the national organization that represents Physician Associates in all specialties and all employment settings. Founded in 1968, the Academy has a federated structure of 58 chartered chapters representing PAs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, US territories, and the uniformed services. Membership also includes PA students and supporters of the profession. For more information contact AAPA at:

2318 Mill Road, Suite 1300  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
[www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org) | (703) 836-2272

### **The Alabama Society of Physician Assistants (ASPA)**

ASPA was founded in 1975. Members are located throughout the state, and membership includes access to the ASPA newsletter/journal, special rates for ASPA CME conferences, invitations to CME dinner meetings, as well as other networking opportunities. For more information contact ASPA at:

P.O. Box 550274  
Birmingham, AL 35255-0274  
[www.myaspa.org](http://www.myaspa.org) | (334) 954-2575

### **The PA Education Association (PAEA)**

PAEA was founded in 1972 and is the only national organization representing PA educational programs in the United States. Currently, all accredited programs in the country are members of the Association. PAEA provides services for faculty at its member programs, as well as to applicants, students, and other stakeholders. For more information contact PAEA at:

300 N. Washington Street, Suite 710  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2544  
[www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org) | (703) 548-5538

### **The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)**

NCCPA was founded in 1974 and is the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States. NCCPA provides certification programs that reflect standards for clinical knowledge, clinical reasoning, and other medical skills and professional behaviors required upon entry into practice and throughout the careers of PAs. For more information contact NCCPA at:

12000 Findley Road, Suite 1000  
Johns Creek, GA 30097-1409  
[www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net) | (678) 417-8100

### **CURRICULUM**

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

Students attend classes on the UAB campus during the first 4 semesters of enrollment. The didactic phase of the curriculum consists of both biological sciences and clinically-related courses. All courses are required and must be successfully completed with a minimum grade of “C” (70%) in all PA courses AND an overall cumulative 3.0 GPA in all PA program course work, prior to beginning the clinical phase of training.

### **ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS**

#### **Grading Scale for the Didactic Year**

The PA program utilizes the following grading scale for all didactic courses:

A = 90 - 100%

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79%

F = ≤ 69% \* *The program does not award a grade of “D”*

#### **Grading Scheme for the Clinical Year**

The PA program utilizes a pass/fail grading scheme for all clinical courses, which is outlined in the Clinical Year Academic/Grading Policies section of the Student Handbook.

## DIDACTIC CURRICULUM

<b>Fall I</b>	<b>Semester Hours (18)</b>
PA 601 Human Gross Anatomy and Lab	4
PA 602 Medical Physiology	4
PA 605 Clinical Pathology	4
PA 610 Clinical Laboratory Medicine	3
PA 615 Introduction to the Profession	1
CDS 505 Professional Skills Development	1
GC 535 Medical Genetics Across the Lifespan	1
<b>Spring I</b>	<b>Semester Hours (16)</b>
PA 603 Pharmacology I	3
PA 606 Clinical Medicine I	6
PA 608 Surgical Disease I	3
PA 611 History and Physical Examination	3
PA 616 Electrocardiography	1
<b>Summer I</b>	<b>Semester Hours (18)</b>
PA 604 Pharmacology II	3
PA 607 Clinical Medicine II	6
PA 609 Surgical Disease II	3
PA 613 Surgical Techniques	3
PA 618 Risk Management	1
PA 619 Fundamentals of Clinical Research	2
<b>Fall II</b>	<b>Semester Hours (13)</b>
PA 614 Operating Room Techniques	2
PA 617 Applied Behavioral Medicine	3
PA 620 Analysis of Professional Literature	2
PA 633 Navigating Healthcare Delivery and Reimbursement Systems for Physician Assistants	2
PA 634 Simulated Clinical Concepts	2
PA 635 Special Populations in Medicine	2
<b>TOTAL DIDACTIC YEAR</b>	<b>65 Hours</b>

### Didactic Course Prerequisites

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

Course	Prerequisite Course Completion
PA 604 Pharmacology II	PA 603 Pharmacology I
PA 606 Clinical Medicine I	PA 601, PA 602, PA 605, PA 610
PA 607 Clinical Medicine II	PA 606 Clinical Medicine I
PA 608 Surgical Disease I	PA 601 Human Gross Anatomy and Lab
PA 609 Surgical Disease II	PA 608 Surgical Disease I
PA 613 Surgical Techniques I	PA 601 Human Gross Anatomy and Lab
PA 614 Operating Room Techniques	PA 613 Surgical Techniques
PA 620 Analysis of Professional Literature	PA 619 Fundamentals of Clinical Research
PA 698 Presentation of Research Project	PA 620 Analysis of Professional Literature

### Didactic-Year Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of human anatomy, physiology, and pathology of disease and their application in clinical practice.
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and manage common diseases encountered in general medicine, emergency medicine, surgery, pediatrics, women’s health, and behavioral medicine.
- Demonstrate proficiency in performing a complete and problem-focused history and physical examination.
- Demonstrate competency in the technical skills needed to perform as a surgical and primary care PA.
- Demonstrate an ability to order and interpret laboratory tests, imaging, electrocardiograms, and other diagnostic studies utilized in primary care and surgery.
- Demonstrate proficiency in CPR and ACLS management of acutely ill patients.
- Demonstrate knowledge of medical literature databases, literature review, clinical research designs, basic medical statistics, and interpretation of medical literature.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the PA profession, medical malpractice, medical practice guidelines, and medical ethics.
- Consider cultural and human rights issues, including religion, ethnicity/race, disability, special healthcare needs, socioeconomic level, social determinants of health, gender identity, and human sexuality, as students provide medical care to patients in clinical practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements in the PA profession.
- Develop clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

## CLINICAL CURRICULUM

<b>Spring II</b>	<b>Semester Hours (17)</b>
PA 621 Clinical Service I	4
PA 622 Clinical Service II	4
PA 623 Clinical Service III	4
PA 624 Clinical Service IV	4
PA 643 Senior Seminar I	1
<b>Summer II</b>	<b>Semester Hours (18)</b>
PA 625 Clinical Service V	4
PA 626 Clinical Service VI	4
PA 627 Clinical Service VII	4
PA 629 Clinical Service IX	4
PA 644 Senior Seminar II	1
PA 698 Presentation of Research Project	1
<b>Fall III</b>	<b>Semester Hours (15)</b>
PA 630 Clinical Service X	4
PA 631 Clinical Service XI	4
PA 632 Clinical Service XII	4
PA 645 Senior Seminar III	3
<b>TOTAL CLINICAL YEAR</b>	<b>50 Hours</b>
<b>TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS</b>	<b>115 Hours</b>

## CLINICAL YEAR COURSES

To maximize the students' experience during their clinical rotation, we feel it necessary to complete the entire rotation without disruption.

### Required Core Rotations

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

### Required Elective Surgical Rotation

One, 4-week rotation is required in a surgical elective. Students who are enrolled in the dual degree MSPAS/MPH program will be required to complete their internship hours during their elective rotation.

### Additional Required Elective Rotations

Three, 4-week rotations of the student's choice are allowed based on rotation availability. Possible elective rotations include but are not limited to: Additional core rotation (at a different site),

Orthopedics, Cardiovascular Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Neurosurgery, Trauma Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Urology, Inpatient Medicine, Dermatology, Oncology, Endocrinology, Neonatology, Cardiology, Palliative Medicine, or other approved specialty area.

### **Clinical Year Prerequisites**

To enter the clinical year, students must have obtained the following:

- A minimum grade of a “C” in all PA didactic courses AND an overall 3.0 GPA in all PA program course work. No graduate school course work other than that obtained in the PA program will be considered and factored into the GPA.
- Students will not be able to enter the clinical year on academic probation.
- Maintain enrollment in a comprehensive health insurance program while matriculating through the PA program.
- Prior to entering the clinical year, students will be required to provide documentation that the following vaccines are current and up-to-date: MMR, Tdap, Hepatitis B, Varicella, meningococcal, and tuberculosis. A complete list of immunization requirements can be found at: <https://www.uab.edu/students/health/medical-clearance/immunizations/level-3b>.
- Prior to entering the clinical year, students will be required to complete a background check and drug screen. This MUST be completed by the end of the prior semester (fall term). If it is not completed, students will not be allowed to begin their clinical rotations.
- Must have a current BLS and ACLS Certification that does not expire until after graduation.

### **Clinical Year Learning Outcomes**

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

- Demonstrate proficiency in obtaining and documenting patient encounters in various clinical settings, across the lifespan.
- Demonstrate proficiency in the technical and surgical skills required of an entry-level PA in clinical practice.
- Demonstrate an appropriate level of professional behaviors, including a respectful and caring attitude toward patients and a willingness to function as a cooperative member of the healthcare team.
- Demonstrate the ability to utilize subjective and objective findings to formulate an appropriate differential diagnosis.
- Demonstrate the ability to select and interpret appropriate diagnostic studies to formulate a working diagnosis.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop a patient-centered treatment plan for common medical and surgical disorders, based on current guidelines and standard of care.
- Develop clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.
- Demonstrate an ability to interpret scientific literature and apply findings to the practice of evidence-based medicine.

## Program Competencies

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

## PA PROFESSION COMPETENCIES

### PA Education Association (PAEA) Competencies for the Physician Associate Profession

*(Originally adopted 2005; revised 2012; revised 2020)*

*(Adopted 2012 by ARC-PA, NCCPA, and PAEA; Adopted 2013 by AAPA)*

#### Introduction

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

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

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

## **Background**

The PA competencies were originally developed in response to the growing demand for accountability and assessment in clinical practice and reflected similar efforts conducted by other health care professions. In 2005, a collaborative effort among four national PA organizations produced the first Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession. These organizations are the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, the American Academy of PAs, and the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA, formerly the Association of Physician Assistant Programs). The same four organizations updated and approved this document in 2012.

## **Knowledge of Practice**

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

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

## **Interpersonal and Communication Skills**

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

- Establish meaningful therapeutic relationships with patients and families to ensure that patients' values and preferences are addressed and that needs and goals are met to deliver person-centered care.



- Provide effective, equitable, understandable, respectful, quality, and culturally competent care that is responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.
- Communicate effectively to elicit and provide information.
- Accurately and adequately document medical information for clinical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.
- Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in all conversations, including challenging discussions about death, end of life, adverse events, bad news, disclosure of errors, and other sensitive topics.
- Demonstrate emotional resilience, stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.
- Understand emotions, behaviors, and responses of others, which allows for effective interpersonal interactions.
- Recognize communication barriers and provide solutions.

### **Person-Centered Care**

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

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

### **Interprofessional Collaboration**

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

- Work effectively with other health professionals to provide collaborative, patient-centered care while maintaining a climate of mutual respect, dignity, diversity, ethical integrity, and trust.
- Communicate effectively with colleagues and other professionals to establish and enhance interprofessional teams.

- Engage the abilities of available health professionals and associated resources to complement the PA's professional expertise and develop optimal strategies to enhance patient care.
- Collaborate with other professionals to integrate clinical care and public health interventions.
- Recognize when to refer patients to other disciplines to ensure that patients receive optimal care at the right time and appropriate level.

### **Professionalism and Ethics**

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

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

### **Practice-Based Learning and Quality Improvement**

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

- Exhibit self-awareness to identify strengths, address deficiencies, and recognize limits in knowledge and expertise.
- Identify, analyze, and adopt new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.
- Identify improvement goals and perform learning activities that address gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Use practice performance data and metrics to identify areas for improvement.

- Develop a professional and organizational capacity for ongoing quality improvement.
- Analyze the use and allocation of resources to ensure the practice of cost-effective health care while maintaining quality of care.
- Understand of how practice decisions impact the finances of their organizations, while keeping the patient's needs foremost.
- Advocate for administrative systems that capture the productivity and value of PA practice.

### **Society and Population Health**

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

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

## **STUDENT GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Student Responsibilities to the Program**

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

## **DIDACTIC YEAR ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

### **ATTENDANCE DURING THE DIDACTIC YEAR**

- Attendance is mandatory for all classes, lectures, labs, program-related seminars, clinical practice, internships, etc.
- Absences are either excused (see below) or unexcused and both require timely notification to

the course instructor.

- For each unexcused absence, there will be a 1% overall grade reduction for that course or lab per absence.
- Two tardies will equal one unexcused absence. A tardy is considered being more than 15 min late to class.
- Absences due to religious observations will be recognized as an excused absence if the student gives faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.
- In instances resulting in an unavoidable absence or unforeseen event (car accident or breakdown, injury), students are expected to inform the course instructor in advance of the absence or at the earliest possible time.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES

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

- Absences due to jury or military duty provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
- Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for "a reasonable number of disability-related absences" provided students give their instructors notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.
- Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the university in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:
  - Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.
  - If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.
  - Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students. In these instances, instructors must devise a system for reasonable accommodation including, for example, policies allowing for dropped exams/quizzes, make-up exams, rescheduling of student classroom presentations or early or later submission of written assignments.

## PERSONAL DAY POLICY FOR THE DIDACTIC YEAR

Each student will be allotted 4 personal days while completing the didactic curriculum. The following policies govern the use of didactic-year personal days:

- Student must submit a Personal Day Form on the day of absence. The form can be found in Canvas.

- Forms must be emailed to [tkgunn@uab.edu](mailto:tkgunn@uab.edu), no later than 10 AM on the day of absence.
- Upon emailing the form, students must copy all course instructors and faculty advisors.
- Students are not expected to disclose the reason for which a personal day is being submitted.
- Students are free to utilize personal days at their discretion. However, personal days are not allowed when the following are scheduled:
  - Quiz, test, lab, case study, group discussion (including TBL activities), guest lecturer, simulation, SPE, OSCE.
  - First day in which the course is taught at the start of the semester.
  - If a personal day is submitted when any of the above are scheduled, the request will be denied, and the student will receive a zero (0) for any assignments/assessments that are missed on the date of absence.
- No more than 1 day can be used during a single didactic semester.
- Any request for a half-day will be counted as a full day.
- If a student chooses to use a personal day, no make-up days or make-up work will be required.
- Once 4 personal days have been utilized, subsequent absences may be deemed an “unexcused absence.” Per the PA Program Attendance Policy, a students’ overall grade will be reduced by 1%, for each unexcused absence (see didactic course syllabi).
- Students are not required to utilize a personal day for any unexpected illnesses, or an excused absence identified in the syllabus (see PA Program Attendance Policy) and Student Handbook (see pages 12-13).
- Students found to be in violation of any policy listed above, will forfeit the remainder of their personal days.

## ACADEMIC PROBATION, DISMISSAL, AND WITHDRAWAL

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

- Achieve a final grade of “C” or better in all didactic coursework within the MSPAS program AND
- Maintain an overall cumulative GPA of  $\geq 3.0$  in the MSPAS program AND
- Earn  $\leq 4$  final grades of “C” during the didactic phase of the MSPAS program AND
- Earn a passing grade in all clinical-year courses.

### Remediation Policy for Didactic Year

During the didactic year, failure to obtain at least 70% on any examination or assignment will necessitate remediation. The goal of remediation is to assist students in identifying areas of weakness or deficiencies in knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors, and provide a structured process in which these deficiencies can be addressed, prior to reassessment of the remediated material. Upon failure of an examination or assignment, students are required to meet with the course director to review material that was missed. Once identified, various measures including exam review, counseling, review of additional resources, and tutoring will be utilized to support the student as they work diligently to overcome the noted deficiencies. Upon completion of the remediation assignment/activity, the student is expected to meet with the course director a second time to reassess the subject matter, skills, or behaviors intervened. During this meeting, the student is expected to demonstrate competency of the

material in written or oral format. The failed grade will be recorded in the grade book. The remediation assignment will be documented; however, it will not be graded.

### **Academic Probation**

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

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

### **Course Failure and Competency Exams**

Students who earn a final grade of < 60% in any didactic course will be dismissed from the program due to failure of a course.

If a student receives more than one "F" at any time during the didactic curriculum or fails two rotations during the clinical curriculum, they will be dismissed from the program, regardless of the student's overall GPA. The Program Director will send an official letter notifying the student and Graduate School of their dismissal, and a copy will become part of the student file.

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

### **Remediation Policy for the Clinical Year**

If a student fails a rotation or an end-of-rotation exam, the student will have to repeat and pass the rotation or the end-of-rotation exam. Failure of the repeated end-of-rotation exam will necessitate a repeat of the rotation and retesting. Failure of two clinical rotations will result in dismissal from the program.

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

### **Deceleration**

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

### **Dismissal**

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

**Satisfactory academic progress** is defined as maintaining a final course grade of “C” or better in all courses, AND maintaining an overall cumulative GPA of  $\geq 3.0$ , AND earning  $\leq 4$  final grades of “C” during the didactic phase of the curriculum AND, earning a passing grade in all clinical-year courses.

**Academic misconduct** is defined as cheating, facilitation, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification/misrepresentation.

**Nonacademic misconduct** is defined as sexual misconduct, inappropriate behavior, disruption of university or classroom activities, or professional misconduct. [Student Conduct Code \(uab.edu\)](https://www.uab.edu/student-conduct-code).

### **Student Progress Committee**

Students who do not meet the academic performance standards outlined above will be reviewed by the Student Progress Committee. This committee will consider a student’s overall academic performance during each semester completed, and meeting of professionalism standards prior to formal dismissal of the student.

### **Full Term Withdrawal**

A student who wishes to voluntarily withdraw from the Physician Assistant Studies Program must notify the Program Director before the withdrawal is officially made. The student must submit a written statement in the form of an official business letter. The statement must include their intent to withdraw from the PA program, including an effective date of their withdrawal. The student must also schedule a face-to-face or phone meeting with the Program Director to discuss their plan to withdraw. Once the student meets with the Program Director, the official UAB withdrawal is made by the student through UAB One Stop Student Services, full-term withdrawal: <https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/registration-enrollment/add-drop-and-withdrawal-policy>.

### **Voluntary Medical Withdrawal**

If a student wishes to pursue a voluntary medical withdrawal, they will be required to follow the same process listed above. Once the student meets with the Program Director, the official UAB withdrawal is made by the student through UAB One Stop Student Services, full-term withdrawal: <https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/registration-enrollment/add-drop-and-withdrawal-policy>. Students

pursuing a voluntary medical withdrawal will be required to submit documentation from their medical provider, stating they recommend the student withdraws from the program.

Please note there is no difference between how a Full-Term Withdrawal and Voluntary Medical Withdrawal are noted on a student's transcript.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the program for any reason may only be considered for re-enrollment if they departed in good academic standing. Students who depart the program on academic probation will not be considered for re-enrollment. If a student is given the opportunity to re-enroll, they will be required to restart the program with the next cohort the following year. This will require students to register for courses taken during the previous year.

### **Institutional Refund Post-Withdrawal**

Students should refer to the Institutional Refund Policy for refunds on tuition and fees. The institutional refund policy may be found at the following website: <http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-FA-POL-0000091.aspx>.

Those who withdraw for medical reasons may appeal to the Provost to grant an exception to the Institutional Refund Policy. More details regarding the exceptions may be found at the following website: <http://www.uab.edu/students/one-stop/policies/exceptions-to-academic-policy/academic-policy-appeal>. NOTE: Failure to attend class does not constitute a formal notice of withdrawal.

## **STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES**

Wellness Promotion is located within the Student Health & Wellness Center. The mission of Wellness Promotion is to provide students and the UAB campus with programs, education, and resources toward personal wellness. Wellness Promotion is committed to equipping and empowering students with the information and resources needed to achieve healthy and balanced lifestyles, through the following:

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

## **LEAVE POLICY**

Didactic year students will be eligible for personal leave in the event of individual illness, death or severe illness in an *immediate* family member, jury duty, military duty, or a similar personal crisis resulting in more than three consecutive days of absence. With exception of an unexpected personal illness, students must obtain prior written approval for personal leave from the Program Director and the



course instructor. Students requesting a leave of absence must meet with the Program Director to discuss the leave. Students must complete a “Request for Personal Leave of Absence” form and when meeting with the Program Director, develop a leave plan to be signed by both parties. A copy of the signed form and the signed leave plan will become part of the student file.

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

1. Students may be granted up to one week of personal leave.
2. Absences greater than one week will require remediation and may require withdrawal from the term.
3. Remediation should be completed within the same semester. If this is not possible, an “I” will be reported to indicate that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all course requirements. Students who receive an “I” for a course should note that in many instances, the student will not be allowed to register for the following semester’s courses because many courses in the curriculum have pre-requisites that require successful completion of the previous semester’s courses. Students should also note that because of the limited resources of the program, many courses cannot be repeated until the following year when they are normally scheduled. Students are referred to this manual’s section on “Didactic Course Pre-requisites” for a listing of course pre-requisites.
4. Students who return to the program after remediation will have to demonstrate continued proficiency in the courses they have previously completed in the program. This may be accomplished by sitting-in on courses and passing a comprehensive exam with a grade of 70% or better. Exam content and timing will be determined by the course instructor.
5. To be re-admitted after dismissal from the PA program, students will have to present convincing evidence to the faculty and the Graduate School that the reason for the dismissal has been completely resolved and the student is now likely to perform at the level required by the PA program and the Graduate School. *The student will be required to register as a new student and will be required to complete the entire curriculum from the beginning.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

Students are discouraged from working during the didactic year and are PROHIBITED from working during the clinical year. Any student on academic probation may be prohibited from working during the didactic year. Students are not required to work for the program. Additionally, students must not substitute for or function as instructional faculty or clinical and administrative staff.

## **DRESS CODE DURING THE DIDACTIC YEAR**

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

## PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

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

1. Attend class and be attentive, engaged, and respectful.
2. Be on-time for all commitments (class, clinics, appointments, etc.).
3. Thoughtfully complete and submit all assignments by the due date.
4. Use proper grammar in written and oral assignments.
5. Use proper grammar and email etiquette in all emails to faculty, clinics, classmates, etc. Do not use "text speak."
6. Present an appearance that reflects a professional image.
7. Be courteous in the use of electronic devices: pagers, cell phones, and laptops. Your device should be on silent/vibrate when in lecture, lab, and clinic.
8. Treat individuals with respect, including while using social media. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated on social media or within the classroom.
9. Comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
10. Profanity is not allowed in any professional setting.
11. Use confidential information responsibly and do not violate a patient's rights.
12. Acknowledge and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.
13. Conduct and present yourself in such a manner that reflects the high professional standard set forth by the Department of Clinical & Diagnostic Sciences and the School of Health Professions.

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

## PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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

1. Maintains professionalism in dress and attire in all settings.
2. Attends required activities and arrives on time.
3. Demonstrates reliability, dependability and completes tasks fully and on time.
4. Conducts self in an ethical manner; demonstrates honesty, consideration and respect towards faculty, staff, and peers.
5. Displays a positive attitude, enthusiasm, and attentiveness in all academic settings.
6. Displays positive behavior and maintains composure during adverse interactions or situations.
7. Communicates effectively, and in a professional manner (including verbal and written forms).
8. Demonstrates good interpersonal skills, cooperation, and engagement in team settings.
9. Demonstrates self-awareness and accepts responsibility for educational challenges and self-learning.
10. Demonstrates the ability to receive, integrate and utilize feedback from faculty and instructors.

11. Recognizes and maintains appropriate boundaries with faculty.
12. Relates to peers, professors, and others in a manner consistent with stated professional standards outlined in the Student Handbook.
13. Demonstrates cooperation and collaboration when working with faculty and those in positions of authority.
14. Demonstrates appropriate self-control (such as anger control, impulse control) in interpersonal relationships with faculty, peers, and others.
15. Respects cultural or personal differences when interacting with peers, including those related to age, sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.

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

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

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

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

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

1. When posting content to social media sites, students must use good judgment and respect privacy laws.
2. Do not include confidential information about the University, including faculty, staff, other students, or patients, when posting content.
3. Do not post content that is unlawful, including material that is discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, threatening, or in violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws.
4. Representing your personal opinions as being endorsed by the University or any of its partners is strictly prohibited.

5. UAB, nor the PA program logo or name, may be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.
  - a. Should the UAB or PA program logo be present in any social media content, the content should reflect the ethics and standards that are upheld by the program, the University, and the PA profession.
6. Refrain from posting information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations.
  - a. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, you should contact your faculty advisor or the Program Director for clarification.
7. It is strongly advised to avoid participation in activities or special interest groups that may cause harm or have a negative impact on the reputation of UAB and the services it offers.
  - a. If you have questions regarding activities that may potentially violate this policy, please seek advisement from your faculty advisor or the Program Director.
8. Perusing through social media sites during didactic instruction or while completing clinical rotation hours is strictly forbidden (i.e., scrolling through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., when your attention should be completely focused on your academic experiences).
9. Personal identifiable information that can be used to locate someone offline, including but not limited to photographs, specific locations, patient identifiers, job setting or ID badges, phone numbers, home or local addresses, birth dates, and e-mail addresses, should not be posted.
10. To ensure student safety and protect their liability while rotating at clinical practice sites, it is recommended that students do not post information such as the following:
  - a. "I will be out of town ..." (Posts such as these notify others when your home will be vacant, leaving your residence vulnerable).
  - b. "I'm so tired I can't keep my eyes open ...," etc. (If a patient were to be injured during your care and the above post was discovered, serious legal ramifications may ensue, and you could also potentially be dismissed from the PA program secondary to non-academic misconduct).
11. Students are strictly forbidden from "friending" patients, preceptors, or caregivers on social media. Students in patient care roles should not initiate or accept friend requests except under preexisting circumstances such as a situation where a friendship pre-dates the professional relationship.
12. The UAB PA program discourages preceptors from initiating "friend" requests with students they oversee. Similarly, the PA program prohibits students from accepting "friend" requests from preceptors. Either of these activities have the potential to negatively impact the student's grade and can obscure the barrier between personal and professional boundaries.
13. The UAB PA program also strictly prohibits text messaging between students and patients. Texting is an abbreviated form of communication with great potential for miscommunication. More importantly, patient confidentiality may be compromised in this setting as well.

14. Do not disclose confidential information about any clinical rotation site, its professionals, or patients. It is also unprofessional to discuss personal opinions about a clinical site and/or its patients and staff.
15. Under current law, it is forbidden to disclose any personal health information, including images of patients, or discuss patient cases utilizing any social network or digital media.
  - a. Such conduct would be in direct violation of HIPAA guidelines.
  - b. All students receive HIPAA training while enrolled in the University and through their clinical practice sites as well.
16. We recommend being respectful and professional in your relationships with the clinical practice sites in which you rotate at. This includes employees, medical suppliers, other healthcare professionals, community health centers, community partners, alumni, patients, and their families.
17. When using social media, conduct and present yourself in such a manner that reflects the high professional standards set-forth by the PA Program.

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

Students are expected to follow all guidelines listed above, while posting on social media. Violation of any of the guidelines noted above may result in a verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or dismissal from the program. Interpretation of the above guidelines are *subjective* in nature. As such, the level of recourse will be at the discretion of the PA program faculty and Program Director. Remember, your posts are available for EVERYONE to see, PERMANENTLY!

### **PA PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Policies and procedures set forth by the Physician Associate Studies Program are intended to facilitate learning and provide a working relationship based on trust, self-discipline, and respect for the rights of others. The program utilizes a "progressive disciplinary" process to address students found to be in violation of our programmatic policies. The goal of progressive discipline is to documenting efforts made by the program to address efforts made to improve student performance in areas of concern. The following is a summary of our progressive disciplinary process:

**ORAL WARNING:** The first step in most disciplinary actions is an oral warning. This may be given by a Course Director, Director of Academic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Program Director, or clinical preceptor for substandard performance, poor class attendance, and other types of minor offenses or misconduct that occur for the first time. Program staff will keep notes of oral warnings in the student file. These notes are official documents of the University of Alabama at Birmingham and may become part of the student's UAB record, based on need.

**WRITTEN WARNING:** A written warning may be given by a Course Director, Director of Academic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Program Director, or clinical preceptor for substandard performance, poor class attendance, misconduct, and other types of more serious offenses or events that occur after the first oral warning. *A written warning may be given instead of an oral warning for first-time gross misconduct or major offenses.* All written warnings will be addressed to the student in memorandum format. If there has been a prior oral warning given to the student, it will be referenced in the first written warning. The student will be asked to sign the written warning as proof of having received it. A signed copy of all written warnings will be placed in the student's official, permanent record. If the student refuses to sign the written warning, it will be noted, and the unsigned copy will be placed in the student file. A student who receives more than one written warning during a 24-month period (whether the initial warning(s) resulted in probation and/or suspension) may be academically dismissed from the program, without proceeding through the remaining steps in the disciplinary process.

**SUSPENSION:** *Continued* substandard performances, poor class attendance, insubordination, misconduct, and other serious offenses or behavioral problems may result in a suspension from the program. *Suspension may occur after the first written warning for any major offense or as the first step if the infraction is considered serious.* Students arrested and charged with a felony, if not discharged, may, at the option of the program, be suspended pending disposition of the case. All suspension notices will be given to the student in writing by the program and will be placed in the student's official, permanent record. Administrative suspension will be adopted when it is believed that normal performance or safety would be affected or when program staff needs time to gather information for determining the specific disciplinary action that needs to be taken.

**DISMISSAL:** *Continued* substandard performance, insubordination, misconduct, and other serious offenses or behavioral problems that continue after other disciplinary actions have been taken may result in dismissal from the Physician Associate Studies Program. The Program Director and Department Chair must approve the recommendation for dismissal. A student who receives one written warning during a 24-month period may be dismissed from the program without proceeding through all the remaining steps in the disciplinary process (that is, imposed probation and/or suspension). Dismissal will occur after a careful review of the case by the Program Director and Department Chair.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **COMPLAINT POLICY**

<https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/policies/complaint-policy>

### **REPORTING HARASSMENT**

[Harassment - SHP - Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences | UAB](#)

## **ACADEMIC APPEALS**

<https://www.uab.edu/graduate/students/current-students/academic-policies-progress/academic-appeals>

## **STUDENT RECORDS POLICY**

The PA program maintains electronic student records indefinitely.

## SECTION 4 – PROGRAM INFORMATION REGARDING THE CLINICAL YEAR

### GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION FOR CLINICAL PRECEPTORS

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

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

### PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Completed student evaluation forms should be electronically submitted via eValue. Forms can also be emailed or faxed to:

UAB Physician Associate Studies Program  
Attention: Heather Neighbors, PA-C, Co-Director of Clinical Education  
1720 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South SHPB 487  
Birmingham, AL 35294 - 1212  
Fax: (205) 975-3005



## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROGRAM

- To actively participate in rotational learning activities and seek-out additional learning opportunities when appropriate.
- To work towards realizing their full potential as a student and medical professional.
- To follow all policies and procedures defined by the preceptor, the program, and the clinical site.
- To develop a cooperative and constructive relationship with program faculty, students, clinical preceptors, and patients.
- To maintain the highest standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct.
- To notify the program in a timely manner of any problem that could potentially interfere with the student's academic performance.
- To schedule sufficient time to prepare for End-of-Rotation Exams (EOR) and the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE).
- To refine history and physical examination skills, as specified by the clinical preceptor.
- To enter pertinent data for each assigned patient daily, in the patient logging system.
- To enhance and reinforce theoretical knowledge and practical medical skills through:
  - Utilization of appropriate reading and reference materials.
  - Attendance at grand rounds, medical conferences, and other related seminars.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLINICAL PRECEPTORS

- Ensure attendance is timely.
- Attend clinical rotations as scheduled by the preceptor, in addition to grand rounds, lectures, and conferences, if made available to the student.
- Obtain detailed histories and physical exams, develop a differential diagnosis, formulate an assessment and plan through discussion with the preceptor and present findings through oral presentations and document findings in the EMR.
- Contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the preceptor's clinical practice by performing all delegated tasks in a timely and competent manner.
- Display professional behavior that enhances the preceptor's practice and reflects positively on the PA profession.
- Inform preceptors in a timely manner of individual needs, concerns, or problems that have the potential of interfering with the delivery of patient care or the effectiveness of the preceptor's practice.
- Maintain an open line of communication and meaningful dialogue between fellow students, program faculty, preceptors, and members of the medical team.
- Be sensitive to the demands placed on clinical preceptors, including complicated aspects of patient care, continuing education, community service, research, and the training of a wide range of students.

## PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

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

## CREDIT FOR PRIOR CLINICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Credit for prior clinical experience, including credit from another PA program, is not accepted.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from the Physician Associate Studies Program requires the following:

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

## CLINICAL YEAR SCHEDULE

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

## 2024 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR

Rotation	Course Title	Dates	Academic Term
1	PA 621	January 8 - February 2	Spring
2	PA 622	February 5 - March 1	Spring
3	PA 623	March 4 - March 29	Spring
4	PA 624	April 1 - April 26	Spring
5	PA 625	May 6 - May 31	Summer
6	PA 626	June 3 - June 28	Summer
7	PA 627	July 1 - July 26	Summer
8 *	PA 629	July 29 - August 23	Summer / Fall
9	PA 630	September 2 - September 27	Fall
10	PA 631	September 30 - October 25	Fall
11	PA 632	October 28 - November 22	Fall

\* Note: Rotation #8 (PA 629) is divided between the summer and fall semesters.

## 2025 CLINICAL YEAR ROTATION CALENDAR

Rotation	Course Title	Dates	Academic Term
1	PA 621	January 13 - February 7	Spring
2	PA 622	February 10 - March 7	Spring
3	PA 623	March 10 - April 4	Spring
4	PA 624	April 7 - May 2	Spring
5	PA 625	May 12 - June 6	Summer
6	PA 626	June 9 - July 4	Summer
7	PA 627	July 7 - August 1	Summer
8 *	PA 629	August 4 - August 29	Summer / Fall
9	PA 630	September 8 - October 3	Fall
10	PA 631	October 6 - October 31	Fall
11	PA 632	November 3 - November 28	Fall

\* Note: Rotation #8 (PA 629) is divided between the summer and fall semesters.

## CLINICAL YEAR PRINCIPLES AND RULES

### Rotation Schedule:

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

### Attendance:

1. Students must notify the Director of Clinical Education and preceptor of all absences during the rotation. This should include both the student's absence and preceptor's scheduled time off.
2. All absences must be approved by the Director of Clinical Education and by the preceptor.
3. Below is a list of excused absences recognized by the Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences and UAB:
  - a. Absences due to jury or military duty, provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
  - b. Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for "a reasonable number of disability-related absences," provided students give their instructors notice of a disability related absence in advance or as soon as possible.
  - c. Absences due to religious observations provided that students give faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.

### Expected Conduct:

1. Students should acquaint clinic staff and hospital officials of their schedule and expected duties. The preceptor will provide information about the degree to which this procedure is necessary.
2. Students should be actively engaged in clinical duties by the second week of the rotation. Failure to become actively engaged by the second week should prompt a call to the Director of Clinical Education for advice.

3. Students must work under the direct supervision of a licensed Physician, Physician Associate, Nurse Practitioner, or Nurse Mid-wife in all clinical settings.
4. Students are not allowed to independently evaluate patients, establish a diagnosis, order laboratory or special studies, or carry-out treatment plans without the direct supervision or oversight of their preceptor. No patient should be discharged without consultation with the preceptor.
5. Students are prohibited to receive compensation for the services they provide during their rotations.
6. Students are prohibited to represent themselves as employees of the facility during their clinical year.
7. PA students do not work for the program in any capacity.
8. Students cannot be used as a substitution for clinical or administrative staff in the program office or at clinical sites.
9. Students cannot be used as a medical scribe at any clinical site.
10. *The program has a strict policy against students being employed during their clinical year, this is PROHIBITED per PA program policy.*
11. Students must wear their supplemental badge while rotating at clinical sites, to clearly distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners.
12. Students must always represent themselves as a Physician Associate student and must never represent themselves as a Certified Physician Associate.
13. Off-duty socializing with preceptors and office staff is discouraged. It is considered unethical to develop a romantic or sexual relationship with a patient, preceptor, or office staff member, and sexual misconduct may result in dismissal from the program.
14. Students must immediately report all needle sticks and accidental exposures. See Bodily Fluid Exposure Guidelines on page 87.
15. Students have the right to refuse an order if they believe that it will jeopardize patient care. If an order is refused; however, the Director of Clinical Education should be immediately notified.
16. If a class is scheduled on campus during your rotation, attendance is mandatory. If the student is absent from class, this will count as a full personal day. All absences must be approved by the Director of Clinical Education.
17. Acceptance of gifts, trips, hospitality, or other items from any hospital or office personnel (including your preceptor) is prohibited.

**Responsibilities:**

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

## Evaluations:

1. Students should schedule a mid-rotation conference with the preceptor to review their progress and discuss potential concerns.
2. Students should schedule an end-of-rotation meeting with the preceptor to review their performance and fill-out the Student Performance Evaluation. Although the preceptor may prefer to complete the form in private, students should attempt to determine if a major problem exists prior to leaving the rotation site. This is the student's responsibility.

## STUDENT CONDUCT

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

No alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs are to be consumed during working hours or while on call. If a student is found intoxicated during working or call hours, they may be dismissed from the program. Students are reminded that the use of illicit drugs is a violation of university policy and will be addressed by university officials.

## ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER CHANGES

The Physician Associate Studies Program requires that each student provide the program with a copy of their current address and telephone number. Changes or corrections to a student's name, address, or telephone number must also be made through One Stop Student Services <https://www.uab.edu/students/one-stop/>.

## ASSIGNMENT OF CLINICAL ROTATIONS

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

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

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

### REQUESTS FOR ROTATION CHANGES

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

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

### CLINICAL ROTATION REASSIGNMENT

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

If a student is reassigned to another rotation, but the rotation schedule does not allow for an alternate rotation site, *the student will be given a grade of incomplete ("I") and will be required to complete the rotation requirements at the end of the clinical year* (the student will not be responsible for additional tuition in this situation).

### USE OF OUTSIDE ROTATIONS

At the program's discretion, students may participate in a clinical rotation with a preceptor who is not directly affiliated with the program. However, the following rules will apply:

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

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

1. Hospital credentialing requirements.
2. Verification of student immunizations.
3. Verification of instruction in universal precautions and blood-borne pathogens.

#### 4. Verification of CPR/ACLS training.

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

While attending an "outside rotation," students are responsible for completing all required coursework. This includes, but is not limited to, obtaining notes and lecture materials, switching assigned presentation time slots with peers, and making up any missed quizzes or assignments. Students must return to Birmingham, AL to take the end-of-rotation exam on its scheduled date or arrange with the Director of Clinical Education a proctor to oversee a make-up test using a secure computer.

### **ANTI-NEPOTISM POLICY**

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

### **FRATERNIZATION**

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

### **BACKGROUND AND DRUG SCREEN**

Students are required to complete a background check and drug screen prior to the start of the clinical year. This **MUST** be completed by the end of the prior semester (fall term). If it is not completed, the student will not be allowed to begin their clinical rotations.

### **RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

A "Release of Information Form" will be placed in the student's file for prospective employer use.



## **DRESS CODE FOR CLINICAL ROTATIONS**

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

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

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

To request verification of coverage, please email requests to: [INSURANCE@UABMC.EDU](mailto:INSURANCE@UABMC.EDU) or [PLTF@UABMC.EDU](mailto:PLTF@UABMC.EDU). Please note, we do not maintain claims history information on students.

## **LOCKERS**

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

## **LOUNGE (UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL)**

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

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

## **MEALS**

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

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

(Updated 8/22/2017)

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

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

### Definitions:

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

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

### Precautions:

An overview of infection, including how infections are spread, ways to prevent the spread of infections, and more detailed recommendations regarding precautions can be found on the CDC website via the following: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.html>

### Procedure:

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

1. **Remove and properly dispose of all contaminated personal protective equipment.** Wash the exposed area thoroughly with soap and running water. Use antibacterial soap if possible. If blood/body fluid was splashed in the eye(s) or mucous membrane, flush the affected area with running water for 15 minutes. Remove and dispose of contacts if worn.
2. **It is mandatory for students to report all exposures to the host institution and UAB Employee Health as soon as they occur.**
  - Contact UAB Employee Health, **Monday-Friday 7am-4:30pm (closed 12pm-1pm)** at **205-934-3675**.

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

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

1. For exposures occurring **on the UAB campus (UAB Hospital, Kirklin Clinic, UAB outpatient clinics, non-research labs) or at any institution within a 60-mile radius of the UAB campus. It is mandatory that the student or visiting scholar:**
  - a) Report to UAB Employee Health Monday-Friday **(7:00 am- 4:00 pm)**, located on the 1st floor, UAB Spain Wallace S123 **(205-934-3675)**. The department is **closed 12pm-1pm** for lunch.

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

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

For treatment costs incurred at or outside of a UAB facility, please forward all invoices/bills (**must be detailed/itemized**), documentation of exposure/incident report as soon as they are received to:

**UAB Hospital Employee Health**

Suite SW123  
 619 19th Street South  
 Birmingham, AL 35249  
 Phone: 205-934-3675  
 Fax: 205-975-6900

For questions, UAB Employee Health may be reached by phone at **205-934-3675** during normal business hours or by email at [employeehealth@uabmc.edu](mailto:employeehealth@uabmc.edu).

## CLINICAL YEAR ATTENDANCE POLICIES

### INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS

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

### ATTENDANCE DURING THE CLINICAL YEAR

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

### PERSONAL DAYS

Each student is allowed 5 personal days during the clinical year. The following policies govern the use of personal days:

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

Note: Students must obtain written permission from the Program Director prior to any absence from the program for more than five days.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES

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

Specific policies pertaining to excused absences include:

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

## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

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

- Deficiency of the missed time will result in forfeiting two personal days for each missed clinical day. Example: If you have one unexcused absence resulting in missing one clinical day, you will be docked a total of 3 personal days. One day for the absence and 2 penalty days in which you forfeit.
- Personal counseling by program faculty and a letter of reprimand will be placed in the student file.
- Depending on the nature of the absence and availability of clinical sites, the student will be assigned to complete the deficiency within the same specialty service as the absence.

- In the event a clinical site is not able to accommodate this time, the student may be assigned to another clinical site at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education.
- The student will receive a grade of “I” for the rotation. Once the preceptor has documented successful completion of the rotation, the grade will be changed to reflect the earned grade on the rotation. If this deficiency is not completed or the rotation is unsuccessfully completed, a grade of “F” will be earned, which may result in dismissal from the program.
- Deficiencies may be completed on weekends (if the clinical preceptor agrees and there is sufficient work to be done during the weekends). Otherwise, this time will be completed the next semester following the last scheduled rotation of the clinical year.
- In special circumstances, the program may arrange for completion of a deficiency during university breaks, with the approval of the Associate Dean.
- The second occurrence of an unexcused absence of any length will result in a faculty review of the student, and either rescheduling of clinical rotation days for the unexcused absence, repeating the clinical rotation, or dismissal from the program.

### PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Any absence of more than five consecutive days will require the student to take a personal leave from the program. Students will be eligible for a personal leave in the event of a severe illness or death/critical illness of an *immediate* family member. The following policies govern personal leaves of absence:

- It is the student’s responsibility to submit a signed “Personal Leave of Absence” form. This form must be approved by the Program Director.
- Personal leave more than 4 weeks may result in administrative withdrawal from the program. The decision to administratively withdraw a student will be made by the Program Director. If the student was in good standing prior to withdrawal, they may be given the option to re-enter the program. Credit for coursework completed prior to the leave will be determined at the discretion of the Program Director.
- If a student is granted a personal leave, no deduction in personal days will result.
- Days missed due to personal leave will be made up by the schedule established by the Director of Clinical Education.
- Make-up days for personal leave will extend into one additional semester of graduate school, to allow the student to complete the clinical year requirements. Students will receive a grade of “I” for all rotations affected by the leave of absence. Following successful completion of the deficient rotation(s), the grade will be changed to reflect the earned grade on the rotation without deduction.

### PRECEPTOR VACATIONS / ILLNESS

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

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

### **JURY DUTY / MILITARY DUTY**

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

### **OFF-ROTATION CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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

## **CLINICAL YEAR ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **GRADING POLICY**

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

### **SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

Summative evaluations will be given during the final semester of the clinical year and will consist of a summative OSCE, summative multiple-choice examination, and summative skills assessment. To be cleared for graduation, students will be required to earn a grade of 70% or better on all summative assessments. Failure to pass the summative exam or OSCE will require remediation until the student is able to successfully complete the assessments.

### **FACULTY SITE VISITS**

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



## **GRADUATION**

### **APPLICATION FOR DEGREE**

Students planning to graduate are required to file an application for their degree with the UAB Graduate School, at least six months prior to completion of their degree requirements. (Please see the University's website for deadline dates). There is a fee to cover the cost of the diploma.

## **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION EXAM (PANCE)**

### **INITIAL CERTIFICATION**

To obtain the PA-C designation (Physician Assistant-Certified), students must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). Administered several times during the year, the PANCE is a multiple-choice exam that is comprised of 360 questions that assesses basic medical knowledge. Preregistration is required and students are responsible for arranging a time to take the exam. The program encourages students to take the PANCE immediately after graduation, and students may choose from over 300 Sylvan Technology Center testing sites located throughout the country. Please note, there are several blackout dates for testing that are scheduled at the end of each year. Therefore, students are encouraged to check for available testing dates at the sites of their choosing. For additional information, please contact NCCPA at:

12000 Findley Road, Suite 100

Johns Creek, GA 30097-1409

Phone: (678) 417-8100 | Email: [info@nccpa.net](mailto:info@nccpa.net) | Website: [www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)

### **MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION**

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

### **STATE LICENSURE / REGISTRATION**

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

### **EVENT OF CLOSURE OR LOSS OF ACCREDITATION STATUS**

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