



MASTER OF HEALTH SCIENCES
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

STUDENT
HANDBOOK

2024

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This student handbook serves as the policy manual for the Division of Physician Assistant Studies. It contains policies and procedures specific to the Division and is distributed initially to students they begin their educational experience at the UNC Physician Assistant Program. Footnotes in this document correlate with ARC-PA accreditation standards.

WELCOME

Welcome to the University of North Carolina Physician Assistant Program! We are excited that you are including us in your journey to become a PA. At UNC, we are dedicated to improving access to healthcare for North Carolinians and beyond. Our primary mission is to meet this pressing need by educating our graduates to be highly trained and autonomous healthcare providers. Our program seeks to fill the gap in providers by adding PAs to a diversified, team-based practice environment. This program has a special, though not exclusive, goal to recruit nontraditional students and veterans. We are also seeking committed traditional students who have followed a more direct path to becoming PAs. We strongly believe that a diverse student body will allow us to better serve the diverse population of the people of the state of North Carolina.

In this handbook, you will find information regarding the program, including policies and procedures, as well as requirements for admission, matriculation, progression through the program and graduation. Please also see our website, [UNC Physician Assistant Studies](#), for more information.

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ACCREDITATION¹

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation – Continued status to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Physician Assistant Program sponsored by the University of North Carolina. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be in March 2030. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

ACADEMIC PLAN OF STUDY AND DEGREE CONFERRED²

The UNC Physician Assistant Studies program is a 24-month cohort-based curriculum. The program consists of two twelve-month phases: the Preclinical Phase and the Clinical Phase. Each cohort begins in January. Graduates of the program will be conferred a Master of Health Sciences degree and will be eligible to apply for the certification examination after graduation sponsored by the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

SPONSORSHIP AND PHILOSOPHY

The UNC Physician Assistant program is the product of an exceptional public, private and military partnership. We are grateful to our partners, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, the Kenan Trust and the US military, for their vision and support. The program embodies the mission of service of UNC-Chapel Hill and is honored to be part of the University's leadership in solving our state's most pressing problems. The spirit of collaboration and commitment to excellence are hallmarks to the educational process that will ultimately improve the health and well-being of the citizens of North Carolina.

MISSION AND GOALS

The UNC Physician Assistant Studies program is housed within the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine and the Department of Health Sciences.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of North Carolinians and others whom we serve. We accomplish this by providing leadership and excellence in the interrelated areas of patient care, education and research. We strive to promote faculty, staff and learner development in a diverse, respectful

¹ A3.12a

² A1.02e

environment where our colleagues demonstrate professionalism, enhance learning and create personal and professional sustainability. We optimize our partnership with the UNC Health Care System through close collaboration and a commitment to service.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The UNC Physician Assistant Program is honored to serve the mission of the UNC School of Medicine. We are dedicated to promoting high-quality, accessible, patient-centered health care for the people of North Carolina and the nation through excellence in education, scholarship and clinical service. The UNC PA Program is committed to the healthcare and workforce needs of North Carolinians and will use an interprofessional approach to prepare skilled and compassionate health care practitioners across the continuum of life.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM GOALS AND OUTCOMES³

The UNC Division of Physician Assistant Studies has identified programmatic goals which allow further support of the mission of the program, School of Medicine and University:

- 1) Recruit and enroll non-traditional students with special attention to veterans and North Carolina residents.
 - The UNC-CH PA Program classifies non-traditional status to applicants with two or more years of an alternative career trajectory prior to preparation for PA school and/or greater than 29 years of age.
 - UNC specifically recruits veterans who served in a medical capacity.
- 2) Provide an interprofessional learning environment that prepares students to work collaboratively in interprofessional teams.
- 3) Graduate medical learners who possess the knowledge and skills required to practice as physician assistants.
- 4) Prepare students for practice in rural and urban medically underserved populations.

PANCE PERFORMANCE⁴

A graduate from an accredited physician assistant program must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) to become a certified physician assistant (PA-C). The PANCE is provided by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) and is the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States.

³ A3.12b

⁴ A3.12c

FIVE-YEAR FIRST-TIME PANCE PASS RATES

CLASS OF	UNC PASS RATE	NATIONAL PASS RATE
2019	94%	93%
2020	94%	95%
2021	100%	93%
2022	100%	92%
2023	100%	92%

UNC Master of Health Sciences in Physician Assistant Studies Program Five-Year First-Time PANCE Pass Rate. View [Detailed Report](#).

ATTRITION RATES⁵

	GRADUATED CLASSES		
	CLASS OF 2021	CLASS OF 2022	CLASS OF 2023
Maximum entering class size (as approved by ARC-PA)	20	20	20
Entering class size	20	20	20
Graduates	17	19	17
Attrition rate*	15%	5%	15%
Graduation rate**	85%	95%	85%

*UNC MHSPAS Program Attrition Rate: *Attrition rate calculation: Number of students who attritted from cohort divided by the entering class size. **Graduation rate calculation: Number of cohort graduates divided by the entering class size.*

⁵ A3.12i

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COMPETENCIES

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION

Physician Assistants are state-licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. PAs diagnose illnesses, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications and often serve as a patient's principal healthcare providers in collaboration with physicians. With thousands of hours of medical training, PAs are versatile and collaborative.

AAPA.ORG

Competencies for the PA profession have been published by the American Academy of Physician Assistants and are designed to capture the breadth and complexity of modern PA practice. These domains are:

- Knowledge for practice
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Person-centered care
- Interprofessional collaboration
- Professionalism and ethics
- Practice-based learning and quality improvement
- Society and population health

UNC PA PROGRAM-DEFINED COMPETENCIES⁶

Given that PAs develop greater competency with time and experience, the UNC PA Program has utilized the profession's competencies, the new graduate competencies published by the Physician Assistant Educational Association (PAEA) and mission and goals of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to develop program-specific competencies for the UNC PA graduate.

To successfully complete the course of study for the degree of Master of Health Sciences in Physician Assistant Studies at the UNC PA Program, candidates for graduation must possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgement to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and render a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates must also demonstrate the capacity to develop academic and emotional maturity, as well as leadership skills to function in a medical team. These competencies are:

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

⁶ A3.12g

Acquire and demonstrate medical knowledge.

Student learning experiences include basic science skills such as normal anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology and mechanisms of disease. Through a variety of learning modalities, including lectures, case-based learning and experiential activities, learners will utilize critical thinking and reasoning to evaluate patients, develop a sound differential diagnosis and provide competent patient management. Health promotion, maintenance and disease prevention are prioritized to improve health outcomes.

PATIENT CARE

Develop and demonstrate patient care skills.

Demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills of primary care practice.

Students will be exposed to patients representative of the cultures and diversity of North Carolina. Students will learn to care for patients of all ages and gain experience in age-appropriate patient assessment, evaluation and management, as well as acquire skills for caring for patients in a variety of settings. Patient and provider safety is emphasized through training.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND HUMILITY

Demonstrate and model professionalism and ethical behavior.

Demonstrate respect and awareness of the impact of cultural considerations in the provision of healthcare delivery.

Professional and ethical behavior in the classroom and clinic is demonstrated through role modeling of the faculty and staff, in lectures and workshops and during clinical clerkships. Learners will acquire skills which support collaboration with patients, their families and other healthcare professionals, emphasizing the team approach to patient-centered care.

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Develop effective interpersonal and communication skills.

Communicate effectively through telehealth modalities.

Learners will be presented with opportunities to develop their communication skills, encompassing verbal, nonverbal and written exchanges of information in a culturally and ethnically sensitive manner and among diverse communities of patients.

SYSTEMS-BASED PRACTICE

Develop knowledge of healthcare delivery systems and health policy.

Students will be exposed to the current trends in healthcare delivery, including methods of coding and reimbursement, North Carolina healthcare systems, North Carolina laws and regulations surrounding the PA profession and both national and local PA organizations.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Acquire practice-based learning and life-long improvement skills.

Learners will be exposed to and demonstrate skills in the elements of using peer-reviewed evidence to evaluate the best practices of health care. Students will learn to search, interpret and evaluate medical literature and to apply this knowledge to individualized patient care.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS⁷

Technical standards are defined as personal attributes and capabilities essential for admission, promotion and graduation of a UNC Physician Assistant student. All UNC PA students must have the knowledge, skills and competency required to master the didactic and clinical requirements of the curriculum.

The following technical standards describe the non-academic qualifications required which, in addition to the program-defined competencies, the UNC PA Program considers essential for successful completion of its curriculum.

ATTITUDINAL, BEHAVIORAL, INTERPERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL ATTRIBUTES

The student should have the capacity to learn and understand the ethical principles and state and federal laws that govern medical practice and to perform within these guidelines. The candidate should be able to relate to colleagues, staff and patients with honesty, integrity, non-discrimination, self-sacrifice and dedication.

The student should be able to understand and use the power, special privileges and trust inherent to the PA-patient relationship for the patient's benefit, and to know and avoid the behaviors that constitute misuse of this power. UNC PA students should possess the interpersonal skills necessary to interact respectfully and appropriately with all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, belief systems and socioeconomic status.

The student must be of sufficient emotional health to fully utilize their intellectual ability, to exercise good judgment, complete patient care responsibilities promptly and to relate to patients, families and colleagues with courtesy, compassion, maturity and respect for their dignity.

⁷ A3.13e

The ability to participate collaboratively and with flexibility as a professional team member is essential. The student must display this emotional health in the face of stressful work, changing environments and clinical uncertainties. The student must be able to modify behavior in response to constructive criticism, as well as be open to examining personal attitudes, perceptions and biases, including those which may negatively affect patient care and professional relationships.

STAMINA

The study and ongoing practice of medicine often involves taxing workloads and stressful situations. A candidate must have the physical and emotional stamina to maintain a high level of function in the face of these working conditions.

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

The student must possess a range of intellectual skills which allow them to master the broad and complex body of knowledge that comprises the PA curriculum. The student's learning style must be effective and efficient with the ultimate goal of solving difficult problems and making diagnostic and therapeutic decisions. The student must be able to memorize, perform scientific measurement and calculation and understand and cognitively manipulate three-dimensional models.

Reasoning abilities must be sophisticated enough to analyze and synthesize information from a wide variety of sources. It is expected that the candidate is able to learn effectively through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction, small group discussion, individual study of materials, preparation and presentation of written and oral reports and use of computer-based technology.

The student must be of sufficient emotional health to fully utilize their intellectual ability, to exercise good judgment, complete patient care responsibilities promptly and to relate to patients, families and colleagues with courtesy, compassion, maturity and respect for their dignity.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The student must be able to ask questions, receive answers perceptively, record information about patients and educate patients. They must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with patients, their families and other members of the healthcare team. This includes spoken and non-verbal communication. Mastery of both written and spoken English is required.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to the education of all qualified individuals, including persons with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodations, can perform the essential functions of the educational program in which they are enrolled and the profession they pursue.

It is the policy of UNC to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding students and applicants with disabilities. Under

these laws, no otherwise qualified and competent individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in services, programs and activities based solely on the disability.

In accordance with federal regulations established by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the above technical standards are described to assist each candidate and student in evaluating their prospect for academic and clinical success. General standards for the UNC PA Program are followed by standards which apply to the professional discipline. When a student's ability to perform is compromised, the student must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to perform the essential functions described.

It is important that prospective and current students read each technical standard carefully. Each applicant is provided the opportunity to read and acknowledge their understanding of the technical standards prior to matriculation, as addressed in their offer of admission and acceptance of admission to the program by indicating their intent to enroll and payment of the admissions deposit.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The UNC PA Program is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of disability. We adhere to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's policies and applicable federal and state law regarding disability accommodations ([Accessibility Resources & Service Policies & Procedures](#)). The UNC PA Program collaborates with the Accessibility Resources & Service (ARS) Office in order to provide reasonable accommodations for PA students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, temporarily disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. Students who seek reasonable accommodations for a disability must contact ARS. ARS is the only body that approves requested accommodations.

ACADEMIC ADMISSIONS AND MATRICULATION

ADMISSIONS OVERVIEW

The UNC Physician Assistant program matriculates 20 students annually in January. The program accepts applications from April – October of each year on the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants ([CASPA](#)). The program does not offer rolling admissions. All applications are reviewed by program faculty and staff for minimum qualifications and specific program-defined applicant attributes to determine selections for interview and admissions.

Applicants must complete a CASPA application and submit a UNC supplemental application, along with a non-refundable application fee of \$95. Applicants should carefully read over CASPA's application instructions early in the application period to familiarize themselves with the application process and requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet the required established deadlines.

Only applications in CASPA with a verified status by the close of the application cycle and a completed UNC supplemental application and fee paid by the posted deadline will be considered. A verified status is

given when an application is electronically submitted and all transcripts, payments and at least three letters of reference have been received and verified by CASPA and attached to the application. Documents should be sent several weeks prior to the deadline dates to ensure items arrive on time.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS⁸

GPA

Applicants must meet the following GPA threshold without exception:

- Minimum cumulative GPA (all courses taken at all levels) OR last 60 credit hours >3.0.
- Minimum cumulative prerequisite GPA ≥ 3.2

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States, to be completed by the date of submission of application and all application materials on CASPA, is required. Applicants with a baccalaureate degree from a non-US institution may apply for admission if their prerequisite courses were completed at a regionally accredited US institution.

⁸ A3.13b, A3.13d

PREREQUISITES

	SEMESTER HOURS	QUARTER HOURS	UNC CHAPEL HILL EQUIVALENCIES	NC COMMUNITY COLLEGE EQUIVALENCIES
ANATOMY*	3	5	EXSS 155; EXSS 175 OR BIO 252 & BIO 253*	BIO 168 & BIO 169
PHYSIOLOGY	3	5	EXSS 256; EXSS 276 OR PHYI 292	
BIOCHEMISTRY OR ORGANIC CHEMISTRY	3	5	CHEM 261 OR CHEM 430	CHM 251 OR CHM 271
MICROBIOLOGY	3	5	BIO 422 OR MCRO 251	BIO 175 OR BIO 275
SOCIOLOGY OR PSYCHOLOGY	3	5	PSYC 101 OR HIGHER OR SOCI 101 OR HIGHER	PSY OR SOC PREFIX COURSE
STATISTICS OR BIOSTATISTICS	3	5	STOR 151; STOR 155 OR PSYCH 201	BUS 228, MAT 152 OR PSY 285
MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY**			CLAS 126	MED 121 & MED 122

*Prerequisite Courses & Equivalencies. *A&P Human-based highly preferred. Applicants completing A&P I are required to take A&P II. Completion of A&P I&II do not require additional physiology coursework. **A certification of completion may be accepted in lieu of course credit.*

All prerequisite work must be done at a regionally accredited college or university in the United States. The program will not accept transfer credit from other physician assistant programs. Prerequisite courses must be completed with grades “C” or better. It is strongly recommended, but not required, that all prerequisite courses be taken within the last seven years. Students with prerequisite courses older than seven years are encouraged to audit or retake courses to refresh their understanding of the subject matter. AP/IB/CLEP credits, PASS/FAIL or survey level courses cannot be used to fulfill prerequisite requirements. Please note, the UNC Division of Physician Assistant Studies does accept prerequisite work graded as PASS/FAIL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional documentation to support this may be requested of the student.

For course equivalencies from other institutions, please refer to [Transfer Equivalencies](#).

Courses can be taken at regionally accredited four-year institutions or community colleges (online or in-person) and are considered equally. Coursework completed after application deadline will not be considered as part of the application.

Additionally, work experience may not be used as a substitute for prerequisite course requirements.

PATIENT CARE EXPERIENCE

A minimum of 1,000 hours of direct, hands-on patient care experience is required. Examples include experiences in which an applicant has been directly involved in patient care such as scribing, assisting in procedures, providing care specified in protocols, working as an active licensed or certified health provider such as nurse, EMT, paramedic, pharmacist, pharmacy technician, nurse aide, etc. These required hours must be completed no later than the date of closure of the CASPA application cycle. Additional documentation will be required to confirm an applicant's patient care experiences - [Patient Care Experience Verification Form](#).

STANDARDIZED EXAMINATIONS

The UNC PA Program no longer requires standardized examinations as a component of the application. Scores from examinations such as the GRE or PA-CAT may be uploaded and will be accepted by the University, however, will not be viewed until after admissions decisions are determined. These scores will be used for data analysis only and will have no bearing on an applicant's consideration and standing in the application process.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Three letters of recommendation are required. Two of the three letters must be from experienced health care professionals who observed or supervised the applicant in a clinical setting. It is highly recommended that at least one letter of recommendation comes from a practicing physician assistant and one from a professor or educator who can speak to the applicant's educational aptitude. Personal letters of recommendation are not accepted.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS⁹

Students must meet the [Technical Standards](#) outlined previously in this document for admission, progression and graduation from the UNC PA Program.

PERSONAL STATEMENT AND ESSAY QUESTIONS

The personal statement and essay questions are important components of the application. They allow the Admissions Committee insight into the applicant beyond academic metrics. The UNC PA Program employs a holistic approach to admissions and considers each applicant beyond the required minimums to acquire a sense of who each applicant is and their ability to contribute positively to the cohort, program, University, profession and community at large. Evidence of maturity, self-motivation, academic potential, interpersonal and communication skills, knowledge of the PA progression and specific mission of the UNC PA Program are strongly considered during the admissions process.

⁹ A3.13e

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

INTERVIEWS

The UNC PA Program conducts interviews for selected applicants based on the information obtained through the CASPA application system. Interviews may be virtual, in-person or a combination thereof. Selection of candidates for interview are based upon program-defined applicant attributes developed from the program-defined competencies.

PREFERENCE¹⁰

The UNC PA Program gives preference to veterans who served in a medical capacity while serving in the military with special consideration of Special Forces Medical Sergeants. Preference is also given to applicants who meet the mission and goals of the program.

In alignment with the UNC mission to educate residents to meet the workforce needs of the state of North Carolina, the UNC PA Program has collaborated with NC A&T to create the Aggies to Tar Heels PA Pathway. This pathway ensures that UNC will admit two qualified applicants who have graduated from NC A&T each application cycle. These students must meet all current requirements, as published on the UNC PA Program website, and participate in the interview process.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND TRANSFER STUDENTS¹¹

The UNC PA Program does not waive curriculum requirements or accept transfer of credit from other PA programs or other graduate degree programs. Admitted students, regardless of level of education, are required to complete all curricular requirements. All relevant coursework required for graduation must be completed in the UNC PA Program.

OFFERS OF ADMISSION AND WAITLISTS

The UNC PA Program notifies selected applicants by phone with offers of admission followed by written notification via email. Applicants will have the opportunity to accept or decline their offer of admissions through Slate. Upon acceptance of an offer of admissions, a \$1,000 non-refundable deposit is required to be paid through Slate to reserve the applicant's seat in the program. Paid deposits will be applied to matriculated student accounts upon the University's student census date approximately two weeks after the first day of class.

Due to the competitiveness of the program and limited available seats each year, the program utilizes a waitlist for highly qualified applicants. Waitlisted applicants will receive notification by email of their status. The program notifies waitlisted applicants by phone and/or email of offers of acceptance.

¹⁰ A3.13a

¹¹ A3.13c

Waitlisted applicants may be offered a seat within the program up until the first day of classes in January. Acceptance rates from the waitlist vary from year to year and are unpredictable.

MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants accepted into the UNC PA Program will receive communication from the program detailing all information matriculating students will need to begin establishing their status as a student with the University and program.

Matriculating students will be required to review all materials and communication sent by the program and complete various tasks including:

- Account setups and activation
- Submission of University and program required immunizations.
- Computer requirement acknowledgement

Students are required to have a personal computing device for use on campus. Students may decide to purchase a laptop through the [Carolina Computing Initiative](#) or bring a device of their own. Students wishing to bring their own device should review the [Computer Requirements](#) for more information. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they have a compatible computing device for use on campus.

- Required medical equipment and supplies:
 - Stethoscope
 - Reflex hammer
 - Tuning fork (frequency 256 or 512)
 - Diagnostic kit (otoscope, ophthalmoscope)
 - Sphygmomanometer (adult sized)
 - Tape measure
 - Handheld eye chart
- White coat orders
- Instructions for establishment of CastleBranch account and on-boarding tasks. Please note, there are additional fees associated with these tasks.
- Waiver or enrollment in UNC-CH provided student health insurance.

All students enrolled in the UNC System Colleges and Universities, including the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill are required to have health insurance coverage. The UNC System endorses a [cost-effective Student Health Insurance Plan](#) to cover most health care expenses not covered by the [Campus Health Fee](#).

Students are automatically enrolled in and billed for the UNC System-Wide Student Health Insurance Plan unless the student completes a waiver to demonstrate an alternative health

insurance plan. A completed, verified and accepted waiver is required each semester if the student does not wish to participate in the UNC System-Wide Student Health Insurance Plan. Please visit the Campus Health Services website for information on the [waiver process](#).

Students are also provided information regarding orientation, textbooks, financial aid and scholarships, residency status and additional resources regarding campus and the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area.

CASTLEBRANCH COMPLIANCE TRACKER¹²

[CastleBranch](#) is a third-party vendor contracted by the UNC PA Program to provide matriculating and current students a centralized hub to submit and verify program and clinical site records for accuracy and compliance. Students are responsible for all costs associated with the creation and maintenance of their accounts. Please refer to the tuition and fees section for current CastleBranch costs.

Students will receive an email from CastleBranch to establish their accounts. Applicants who do not receive this should monitor their junk and/or spam folders.

Students are required to complete all UNC PA Program components, background check and urine drug screen by December 1 prior to matriculation to the program as outlined in their CastleBranch checklist. A student's acceptance to the UNC PA Program is contingent upon successful completion of immunization requirements and submission of required documentation by the stated deadline. Students who are noncompliant by the stated deadline may forfeit their seat within the program. Students admitted after November 15 prior to matriculation to the program will be allowed an extended deadline, which will be communicated by the program.

It is essential that matriculating students begin working on their CastleBranch checklists as soon as possible. Particular attention should be paid to items that will require additional time for processing such as:

- Criminal background check
- Immunizations
- Drug test

Students will be required to repeat all annual trainings, criminal background checks, drug tests and immunizations requirements at interval to retain UNC PA Program and clinical site compliance. Additional costs may be associated with this.

CastleBranch Bridges serves as a repository for uploading required clinical site credentialing documentation and instructions. Contracted clinical sites will be able to review required materials to credential students prior to their Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences and as needed for compliance reporting.

¹² A3.17b, A3.19

Prior to students entering the clinical phase of the program, the Director of Clinical Education will provide students with a schedule of their Supervised Clinical Practice Experience assignments. Students will receive notification one month prior to the start of the SCPE (or within one business day of a change in schedule, if the change occurs within one month of the start of the SCPE) to complete all clinical site-specific compliance trainings, immunizations, background checks, drug screens and documentation. Students must review the clinical site-specific instructions and documentation to determine the clinical site-specific deadline for compliance prior to the start of the SCPE. Students must be fully credentialed by the clinical site prior to engaging in any instructional activities. Students not credentialed by a clinical site by the sites established deadline may have a delayed start to their SCPE, which may result in a delay of graduation.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS¹³

Matriculating students are required to be current on all immunizations as outlined by the [NC Required Immunizations](#) requirement and those required of all [Health Sciences students](#) and the CDC. It is the responsibility of all matriculating students to provide appropriate documentation via their [ConnectCarolina Student Portal](#) and to the UNC PA Program through CastleBranch to demonstrate compliance prior to entering the program.

Applicants interested in applying to the UNC PA Program should review the immunization requirements and prepare well in advanced to ensure they are compliant by the deadline.

COURSE REGISTRATION

The Program Coordinator for the UNC PA Program will register matriculating students for their first semester. It will be the responsibility of the student to register for all courses in subsequent semesters. Registration deadlines are set by the University and will be communicated to students with ample time to complete registration. Please note that failure of the student to register for courses by the stated deadlines may result in disruption of financial aid and/or inability to progress through the program.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Students are strongly discouraged from maintaining employment while enrolled. No exceptions or alterations will be made to required course work, scheduling or rotation assignments to individual students due to employment.

Students must not work for the program, nor are students to serve as substitutes for clinical, instructional or administrative staff.¹⁴ For more information, please refer to the [Student Employment Policy](#).

FINANCIAL AND ACADEMIC SERVICES

¹³ A3.07a, A3.17b, A3.19

¹⁴ A3.04, A3.05

Below is an estimate of the entire two-year program costs for the Class of 2025. Tuition and fees are subject to change and the most current information can be found online: [UNC PA Program Tuition](#).

TUITION AND FEES*¹⁵

	NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENT	NON-NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENT
TUITION	\$61,718	\$107,880
INSTITUTION FEES	\$6,050	
PROGRAM FEES	\$500	

**Tuition and fees are costs directly charged to the student by the University Cashier and may be changed each year by the UNC Board of Governors. Students are billed at the beginning of each semester upon enrollment. This reflects [tuition and fees](#) for the duration of the program, as of Spring 2024.*

ACADEMIC-RELATED COST ESTIMATES	
CASTLEBRANCH	\$150
CPR/BLS, ACLS, PALS TRAINING	\$110
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS & DRUG SCREENINGS	\$150
PANCE PREP BOARD REVIEW COURSE	\$95
LAPTOP	\$1,500
MEDICAL TOOLS & TEXTBOOKS*	\$2,650
AAPA/NCAPA STUDENT DUES	\$250
CLINICAL EDUCATION TRAVEL**	\$1,200
CLINICAL EDUCATION HOUSING COSTS**	\$3,000

**Please refer to the [UNC PA Program textbook list](#) on the Health Sciences Library website for more information. Many selected texts are available online at no additional cost to students through the UNC Library System.*

***SCPE travel and housing occur in the second phase of the program. It is the responsibility of the student to have adequate housing and travel accommodations for each SCPE. More information regarding housing during the clinical phase can be found later in this document.*

PERSONAL COST ESTIMATES	
ROOM	\$25,888
BOARD	\$10,072
HEALTH INSURANCE*	\$2,896

All eligible students enrolled in the UNC System Colleges and Universities, including UNC-CH, are required to have health insurance coverage.

REFUNDS¹⁶

¹⁵ A3.12f

¹⁶ A1.02k

The process for initiating a cancellation or Withdrawal from the University and UNC PA Program is handled through the registrar's office. Please see the University's [Tuition Refund Policy](#) for more information.

CANCELLATIONS

Cancellation occurs when all enrollment is ceased prior to the first official day of classes for the term. No tuition or fees are charged but other charges related to attending the University are the responsibility of the student.

DROPS

A drop is withdrawing from a course while remaining registered for other courses in the term. The UNC PA Program charges flat rates for tuition and fees each semester. Should a student choose to drop a course during their enrollment, no tuition or fee refunds will be issued. Students should note that, at this time, all courses offered by the UNC PA Program are required for academic progression through the curriculum. Dropping of a course will affect the student's ability to progress, may delay graduation or result in the dismissal of the student for failure to complete required components.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

All students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in degree-seeking programs. There may be instances where a student requests a leave of absence. A leave of absence is not the same as the Official Withdrawals or Registration Cancellation and follows different policies and procedures within the program. A student in good academic standing may request a leave of absence from the program for a definite, stated period of time during which the student does not plan to make academic progress.

Detailed information can be found in the [Leave of Absence Policy](#).

WITHDRAWALS

Students wishing to withdraw from the program may receive a refund. A withdrawal is dropping of all courses after the term has begun. If the withdrawal is effective during the withdrawal refund period, tuition and fees will be reduced according to the [withdrawal refund schedule](#).

Note: In the event that the withdrawing student has financial aid, some or all of the awards may have to be returned. Contact aidinfo@unc.edu for more information.

DISMISSAL

Students dismissed from the program for professional and/or academic reasons will forfeit all tuition and fees and will not receive a refund from the program or University.

FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES

FAFSA

Graduate students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) using code 002974 prior to matriculation and as soon as possible after January 1 of each year. For more information regarding the financial aid process, estimated costs and types of aid available, please visit the [Office of Scholarships and Student Aid](#).

DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SCIENCES

For information regarding departmental aid opportunities, visit the [Department of Health Sciences' Financial Resources](#) website.

DIVISION OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

The program occasionally has funding available for scholarship opportunities. Admitted students will receive an invitation upon acceptance to apply for any scholarship opportunities available. All UNC-CH PA students are invited to apply for consideration.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS

The National Health Service Corps has three Loan Repayment Programs:

- The National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program
- The National Health Service Corps Substance Use Disorder Workforce
- The National Health Service Corps Rural Community Loan Repayment Program

Interested students should refer to [The National Health Service Loan Repayment Program](#) for more information.

NORTH CAROLINA FORGIVABLE EDUCATION LOAN FOR SERVICE

The North Carolina Forgivable Education Loans for Service program provides financial assistance to qualified students who are committed to working in critical employment shortage professions in North Carolina. Interested students should refer to [NC Forgivable Education Loans for Service](#) for more information.

US PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program forgives the remaining balance on your Federal Direct Loan after you've met their requirements in terms of payments and employment.

Interested students should refer to [Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#) for more information.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Indian Health Service Scholarship Program provides qualified American Indian and Alaska Native health professions students with funding for education. Interested students should refer to [Indian Health Service Scholarship Program](#) for more information.

VETERAN FINANCIAL AID

For more information regarding the GI Bill or other VA benefits, please visit the [Carolina Veterans Resource Center](#).

PA FOUNDATION

The PA Foundation offers scholarships to qualified PA students, based on availability of funds provided through contributions from AAPA members, other individuals and corporate partners. Interested students should refer to [PA Foundation Student Scholarships](#) for more information.

Additional scholarships and funding resources: [PAEA: Paying for PA School](#).

NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

Under North Carolina state law, a person who wants to be classified as an in-state resident for tuition purposes must have established and maintained legal residence in North Carolina for at least twelve months with the intent of making a permanent home in North Carolina. Applicants must show a preponderance of evidence demonstrating North Carolina as their domicile and sole legal residence.

RESIDENCY APPLICATION

[Residency status](#) is initially determined at the time of submission of the UNC supplemental application in Slate through the [Residency Determination Service \(RDS\)](#).

DECISION NOTIFICATION

Upon completion of the RDS interview process, RDS communicates the student's residency status immediately. This determination is contingent upon verification of required information.

- Additional documentation may be required – failure to submit this documentation by the stated deadline may result in changing of residency status from resident to non-resident.
- RDS validates information provided by students with federal and state agencies. Should the information provided not validate, residency status may change from resident to non-resident.

In addition to residency determination status, RDS provides students with a Residency Certification Number (RCN) and a summary of information entered. Each student must enter their RCN in their ConnectCarolina Student Center (after the student receives their ONYEN) in order for their residency status to be updated.

For reconsideration and appeal requests, RDS staff must review the request in full prior to providing a residency status. RDS may review the request only after all required documents are provided by the student. If the required documents are not submitted by the stated deadline, the request is canceled, and the student's residency status remains non-resident.

APPEAL PROCESS

A student may request an appeal if they believe the RDS process has failed to accurately consider important information regarding the residency claim. There are two types of appeal:

1. RDS Appeal
 - This appeal is for students who believe their active residency determination is incorrect, either from an initial consideration or a reconsideration. Students have the ability to request the RDS appeal online, submit additional information and documentation to support their claim and meet in person or virtually to review their appeal.
2. SEAA Appeal
 - The SEAA appeal is the final administrative step in the residency process. The appeal is conducted by a statewide committee comprised of representatives from the North Carolina Community College System, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, State Education Assistance Authority and The University of North Carolina System. No additional documentation or information is permitted by RDS or student in this appeal.

Both the RDS and SEAA appeals require submitting a notification of appeal within ten calendar days of the determination the student is appealing. Requests for appeal after ten calendar days are not permitted. Students should refer to the [Residency Guidelines](#) section for more information regarding appeals.

MATRICULATED ONLINE RESIDENCY APPLICATION

All students who are currently in a graduate degree program and listed as non-residents and wish to be considered for in-state residency may submit requests for reconsideration. The NC Residency Reconsideration or Appeal link is found in the ConnectCarolina Student Center under the Personal Information tab. Once the RDS process is completed, the student must enter their Residency Certification Number in their Student Center. It is through this mechanism that the University will be aware of the updated status. It is the student's responsibility to notify the University that their residency status has changed. Contact Student Services if there is no change to the status greater than ten days after submission.

To access RDS directly, please visit www.ncresidency.org.

Anyone found to purposely present false and/or misleading information will be subject to the conditions of the University Honor Code.

ACADEMICS: PROGRAM CURRICULUM¹⁷

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

<u>PRECLINICAL PHASE</u>			<u>CLINICAL PHASE</u>		
COURSE NO.	COURSE NAME	CREDIT HOURS	COURSE NO.	COURSE NAME	CREDIT HOURS
PASC 701	HUMAN ANATOMY	4	PASC 800	SCPE: FAMILY MEDICINE	4
PASC 702	PHYSIOLOGY	2	PASC 801	SCPE: INTERNAL MEDICINE	4
PASC 703	FOUNDATIONS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE	2	PASC 802	SCPE: SURGERY	4
PASC 704	HISTORY & PHYSICAL EXAMINATION	4	PASC 803	SCPE: PEDIATRICS	4
PASC 705	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & THE HEALTH SYSTEM I	1	PASC 804	SCPE: WOMEN'S HEALTH & PRENATAL CARE	4
PASC 710	CLINICAL MEDICINE I	4	PASC 805	SCPE: PSYCHIATRY & BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE	4
PASC 711	PHARMACOLOGY & THERAPEUTICS II	2	PASC 807	SCPE: EMERGENCY MEDICINE	4
PASC 713	DIAGNOSTIC METHODS I	2	PASC 808	SCPE: MEDICINE CORE ELECTIVE I	4
PASC 720	CLINICAL MEDICINE II	8	PASC 809	SCPE: MEDICINE CORE ELECTIVE II	4
PASC 721	PHARMACOLOGY & CLINICAL THERAPEUTICS II	3	PASC 810	SCPE: MEDICINE CORE ELECTIVE III	4
PASC 722	PATIENT ASSESSMENT I	3	PASC 820	CLINICAL SEMINAR I	1
PASC 723	DIAGNOSTIC METHODS II	1	PASC 821	CLINICAL SEMINAR II	1
PASC 730	CLINICAL MEDICINE III	5	PASC 822	CLINICAL SEMINAR III	1
PASC 731	PHARMACOLOGY & THERAPEUTICS III	3			
PASC 732	PATIENT ASSESSMENT II	3			
PASC 733	DIAGNOSTIC METHODS III	2			
PASC 734	FUNDAMENTALS OF SURGERY	3			
PASC 735	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM II	1			
PASC 736	EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE	2			

TOTAL HOURS: 104

¹⁷ A3.12d, A3.12e

PRECLINICAL PHASE

The preclinical phase of the UNC MHSPAS Program functions to lay the foundation for students in their achievement of all program-defined competencies. The competency domains of Medical Knowledge, Patient Care, Professionalism and Cultural Sensitivity and Humility, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Systems-Based Practice and Self-Assessment and Ongoing Professional Development are introduced and expanded upon throughout the preclinical phase with intentionality and the ultimate goal of preparing students for the clinical phase of the curriculum.

The UNC MHSPAS utilizes multiple teaching and educational modalities to deliver content associated with the competencies, cultivate critical thinking skills and assist with the development of a student's professional identity. The diversity in pedagogical approaches allows for learners to be well-rounded and prepared for the clinical phase. Teaching methods may include, but are not limited to, traditional lecture, case-based learning, problem-based learning, simulations, asynchronous modules and readings, projects and student-guided review of literature.

The preclinical phase begins with two six-week courses in foundational sciences, Physiology and Foundations of Medical Sciences, to ensure all students are prepared to begin the bulk of the preclinical curriculum. This begins after the first six weeks with the start of the Clinical Medicine course series. This course series covers disease processes and pathophysiology in an organ system-based approach and serves as the cornerstone for the curriculum in the preclinical phase. Courses designed to augment topics presented in the Clinical Medicine course series are the Pharmacology and Therapeutics and Diagnostic Methods course series and Behavioral Medicine.

Additionally, clinical skills are taught, including oral and written communication, physical exam assessment and medical decision-making and procedural skills, in a longitudinal design across all semesters in the preclinical phase. The courses which address these skills are History and Physical Examination, Fundamentals of Surgery and the Patient Assessment course series. Concepts are built upon previously covered content in an intentional curricular design.

To adequately prepare students for the clinical phase of the curriculum, the Professional Practice and Health System course series provides an introduction to the social, regulatory, ethical and professional aspects of the PA profession.

The content is taught by qualified core faculty, adjunct faculty, clinical instructors, healthcare professionals at the University and in the community.

PRECLINICAL PHASE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SPRING SEMESTER

PASC 701 – HUMAN ANATOMY¹⁸

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

This one semester clinical anatomy unit prepares the student for clinical practice with an understanding of the functional and applied anatomy stressing the normal landmarks and common clinical findings. Cadaver gross dissections and prosections, anatomical models, lectures and electronic resources are utilized in this course. The point-of-care ultrasound curriculum is introduced in this course as an adjunct.

PASC 702 – PHYSIOLOGY¹⁹

CREDIT: 2 HOURS

This foundation course for the clinical medicine courses will provide an understanding of human physiology at the cellular, tissue and organ levels. The importance of physiology and pathophysiology to the study of clinical medicine will be reinforced. This course lays the foundation foundations for disease etiology, management and prevention.

PASC 703 – FOUNDATIONS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE²⁰

CREDIT: 2 HOURS

An introduction to the genetic and molecular mechanisms of disease; biochemistry; microbiology. Instruction in the genetic basis of disease and clinical genetic disorders will serve as a foundation for the Clinical Medicine courses (PASC 710,720, 730) to understand genotypic specific diagnoses, prevention, and therapy. The biochemistry and microbiology modules will additionally prepare students to apply the knowledge and principles to gain an improved understanding of organ systems and related diseases in the Clinical Medicine courses (PASC 710,720, 730).

PASC 704 – HISTORY & PHYSICAL EXAMINATION²¹

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

This semester long course introduces the student to the art of acquiring a patient history and performing the physical examination. Instruction in interpersonal and communication skills resulting in effective acquiring of patient history and collaboration with patients, families and other health professionals will be incorporated. Using weekly lecture and laboratory format the course will detail how to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination. The small group labs will allow the student to learn history taking and physical examination skills, after they are demonstrated by the faculty. Simulated patient encounters will provide the student with the opportunity to practice their clinical skills. At the conclusion of each lab students will perform a case-based clinical scenario exercise with their lab partner and receive faculty feedback on their performance. A summative physical exam will be performed and graded.

¹⁸ B1.02, B2.02

¹⁹ B1.01, B1.02, B2.02

²⁰ B2.02, B2.18

²¹ B2.02, B2.04-2.07, B2.12, B2.14

PASC 705 – PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM I²²

CREDIT: 1 HOUR

This is part one of a two-part course provides an introduction to the social, regulatory, ethical and professional aspects of the PA profession. The history, development and current status of the PA profession within the context of the US health care system including professional conduct, legal issues, scope of PA practice, and economic aspects. Instruction in intellectual honesty, academic and professional conduct will be covered.

PASC 710 – CLINICAL MEDICINE I²³

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

This is the first of three didactic Clinical Medicine courses presented in the first year and will cover hematology/oncology, cardiology and pulmonology. The course will concentrate on the etiology, pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of disease across the human life span; organized into an organ system approach. Clinical information will be correlated with information taught in Diagnostic Methods I (PASC 713) and Pharmacology and Therapeutics I (PASC 711). Course format includes lectures, small group case studies, assessment of standardized patients. Small group cases and assessment of standardized patients will be selected to provide understanding of disease presentation, opportunities for prevention, medical ethics, interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families and other health professionals. Problem solving and medical decision-making skills will be emphasized.

PASC 711 – PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS I²⁴

CREDIT: 3 HOURS

This first in a series of three courses begins with an introduction to the principles of pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics, drug metabolism, drug interactions, adverse reactions and human behavior impacting adherence and therapeutics. Patient safety will be addressed through understanding of the risks and benefits of drug treatment, drug interactions and adverse reactions. The student will also be introduced to the drug reference resources. Drugs will be introduced in conjunction with the clinical medicine units that are taught this semester and students will learn to individualize pharmacologic regimens based on drug specific parameters, clinical evidence, drug safety and cost.

PASC 713 DIAGNOSTIC METHODS I²⁵

CREDIT: 2 HOURS

This course provides instruction in the essentials of ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic studies used in the screening, diagnosis, management, and monitoring of disease. Topics for this course

²² B1.01, B1.03, B2.04, B2.06-2.08, B2.10-2.11, B2.14-2.20

²³ B1.01-1.03, B2.02-2.05, B2.07-2.08, B2.12

²⁴ B1.01-1.03, B2.02, B2.04, B2.05, B2.19

²⁵ B2.02, B2.03, B2.05, B2.07, B2.09, B2.16

are congruent with Clinical Medicine I (PASC 710) and Pharmacology I (PASC 711). The course format is intended to provide case-based and/ or problem-based learning, utilizing lectures and in-class group discussion.

SUMMER SEMESTER

PASC 720 – CLINICAL MEDICINE II²⁶

CREDIT: 8 HOURS

This is the second of three didactic Clinical Medicine courses presented in the first year and will cover Nephrology, Gastroenterology, Neurology, Endocrinology, Dermatology, Ophthalmology, ENT and Urology. The course will concentrate on the etiology, pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of disease across the human life span; organized into an organ system approach. Clinical information will be correlated with information taught in Patient Assessment I (PASC 722), Diagnostic Methods II (PASC 723) and Pharmacology and Therapeutics II (PASC 721). Course format includes lectures, small group case studies, assessment of standardized patients. Small group cases and assessment of standardized patients will be selected to provide understanding of disease presentation, opportunities for prevention, medical ethics, interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families and other health professionals. Problem solving and medical decision-making skills will be emphasized.

PASC 721 – PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS II²⁷

CREDIT: 2 HOURS

This second in a series of three courses will build on the principles in PASC 711. The course will concentrate on therapeutic applications of drugs for various organ systems integrated with the clinical medicine (PASC 720) units being taught during this semester. Patient safety will be addressed through understanding of the risks and benefits of drug treatment, drug interactions and adverse reactions. The course format includes lecture, case studies and small group sessions.

PASC 722 – PATIENT ASSESSMENT I²⁸

CREDIT: 6 HOURS

Building on knowledge gained in History and Physical Exam (PASC 704), Patient Assessment I is designed to develop the knowledge and skills required to obtain and record the complete medical history; use the appropriate equipment, techniques, and medical terminology to document findings; develop a differential diagnosis and diagnostic work-up; and suggest a treatment plan. Working in various settings, students will be exposed to patients from diverse populations. Formal history and physical write-ups and oral presentations will be evaluated by program faculty. Professional conduct will be an important component of this course. Clinical use of point-of-care ultrasound is explored in this course.

²⁶ B1.01-1.03, B2.02-2.05, B2.07-2.08, B2.12

²⁸ B2.04-2.09, B2.11-2.12, B2.14, B2.6, B2.19

²⁷ B1.01-1.03, B2.02, B2.04-2.05

PASC 723 DIAGNOSTIC METHODS II²⁹

CREDIT: 1 HOUR

This course provides instruction in the essentials of ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic studies used in the screening, diagnosis, management, and monitoring of disease. Topics for this course are congruent with Clinical Medicine II (PASC 720) and Pharmacology II (PASC 721). The course format is intended to provide case-based and/or problem-based learning, utilizing lectures and in-class group discussion.

PASC 727 – BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE³⁰

CREDIT: 2 HOURS

This course is an introduction to psychiatric disorders and behavioral medicine. Presented in lecture and seminar format the major psychiatric disorders are studied. DSM-V classification is covered, as is interviewing and office counseling. Clinical reasoning exercises include small-group clinical case study discussions, led by experienced clinicians, which are utilized to develop problem solving skills. Through standardized patients and/or objective structured clinical examinations the student will learn basic counseling and patient education skills and become prepared for clinical patient interactions in the clinical phase of the curriculum.

FALL SEMESTER

PASC 730 – CLINICAL MEDICINE III³¹

CREDIT: 5 HOURS

This is the third didactic Clinical Medicine course presented in the first year and will cover Gastroenterology, Orthopedics, Obstetrics, Rheumatology, Orthopedics, Gynecology, Pediatrics, Infectious Diseases and Geriatrics. The course will concentrate on the etiology, pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of disease; organized into an organ system approach. Clinical information will be correlated with information taught in Pharmacology and Therapeutics (PASC 731) and Patient Assessment II (PASC 732). Course format includes lectures, small group case studies, assessment of standardized patients. Small group cases and assessment of standardized patients will be selected to provide understanding of disease presentation, opportunities for prevention, medical ethics, interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families and other health professionals. Problem solving and medical decision-making skills will be emphasized. This course series will culminate in a written Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA), which is a must-pass element of the program to allow learners to progress to the clinical phase of the curriculum.

²⁹ B2.02-2.03, B2.05, B2.07, B2.09, B2.16

³¹ B1.01-1.03, B2.02-2.05, B2.07-2.08, B2.12

³⁰ B2.04-2.08, B2.11, B2.12

PASC 731 – PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS III³²

CREDIT: 3 HOURS

This is the third didactic Pharmacology course will build on the principles in PASC 711 and PASC 721. The course will concentrate on therapeutic applications of drugs for various organ systems integrated with the clinical medicine (PASC 730) unit being taught during this semester. Patient safety will be addressed through understanding of the risks and benefits of drug treatment, drug interactions and adverse reactions. The course format includes lecture, case studies and small group sessions.

PASC 732 – PATIENT ASSESSMENT II³³

CREDIT: 3 HOURS.

Building on knowledge gained in History and Physical Exam (PASC 704) and Patient Assessment I (PASC 722), this course is designed to develop the knowledge and skills required to obtain and record the complete medical history, use the appropriate equipment, techniques, and medical terminology to document findings; develop a differential diagnosis and diagnostic work-up and suggest a treatment plan. Formal history and physical write-ups and oral patient presentations will be evaluated by program faculty. Sessions will include lectures, focused physical examination practice, patient case workshops, a hospital patient encounter, and standardized patient experiences. Professional conduct is an important component of this course. Clinical application of point-of-care ultrasound is explored in this course. This course series will culminate in an experiential Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA), which is a must-pass element of the program to allow learners to progress to the clinical phase of the curriculum.

PASC 733-DIAGNOSTIC METHODS III³⁴

CREDIT: 3 HOURS

This course provides instruction in the essentials of ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic studies used in the screening, diagnosis, management, and monitoring of disease. Topics for this course are congruent with Clinical Medicine III (PASC 730) and Pharmacology III (PASC 731). The course format is intended to provide case-based and/ or problem-based learning, utilizing lectures and in-class group discussion.

PASC 734 – FUNDAMENTALS OF SURGERY³⁵

CREDIT: 3 HOURS

This course is designed to orient the student to the fundamentals of surgical practice including basic clinical procedures, sterile procedure, anesthesia, suturing, and common office procedures. Pre-operative and post-operative patient care is presented. Hands-on-laboratory training of surgical skills required for performing minor procedures is a component of this course. Clinical application of point-of-care ultrasound is explored in this course.

³² B1.01-1.03, B2.02, B2.04-2.05

³³ B2.04-2.12, B2.14-2.16

³⁴ B2.02-2.03, B2.05, B2.07, B2.09, B2.16

³⁵ B2.02, B2.05, B2.07-2.10

PASC 735 – PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM II³⁶

CREDIT: 1 HOUR

This second part of a two-part course will introduce the students to providing medical care to racial, ethnic and socioeconomically diverse patients in a fluid and changing health care system. This course continues the discussion on professional development topics pertinent to employment and practice including medical ethics, licensing and credentialing, medical coding and billing, malpractice issues, career growth and leadership.

PASC 736 – EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE³⁷

CREDIT: 2 HOURS

This one semester course is an introduction to Evidence-based Medicine (EBM). It prepares the student for participation in Clinical Seminar I, II, and III and completion of the Capstone project. Evidence-based medicine provides tools to assist clinicians to make accurate diagnoses, select optimal treatment for their patients, and communicate these findings to both patients and other clinicians. This course will teach students to formulate clinical questions, search and critically appraise the medical literature, and incorporate the best evidence into their practice. To teach critical appraisal, the course will review statistical concepts as well as clinical epidemiology.

CLINICAL PHASE

The clinical phase of the curriculum enables students to build upon the knowledge acquired in the preclinical phase and develop skills to apply that knowledge in a variety of real-world healthcare environments and experiences. To achieve this, students rotate through core and elective Structured Clinical Professional Experiences (SCPEs). During these experiences and under the supervision of a qualified preceptor, students assess patients, establish diagnoses, present patient information to healthcare team members and work within the team to develop and enact a plan of care. The primary goal of the clinical phase is for the student to gain practical experience, further develop skills as a healthcare practitioner and learn the role of the physician assistant, as well as other members of the healthcare team.

CLINICAL PHASE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PASC 800 – FAMILY MEDICINE³⁸

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

³⁶ B1.01, B1.03, B2.04, B2.06-2.08, B2.10-2.11, B2.14-2.15, B2.17-2.20

³⁷ B2.04-2.06, B2.10, B2.13, B2.15, B2.19

³⁸ B3.03a-c,e, B3.04c, B3.07a

CORE ROTATION

Students are introduced to the principles of and practice of ambulatory care and family medicine with an emphasis on disease prevention and health maintenance across the lifespan. The learner will refine techniques in history taking, physical examination and health behavior counseling. Many of these sites provide care for disadvantaged and underserved populations, thus exposing students to the diversity of the community and family health needs, as well as the occupational and environmental issues which influence health and healthcare decision making.

PASC 801 – INTERNAL MEDICINE³⁹

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

CORE ROTATION

Students are introduced to the principles of general internal medicine. The learner will apply knowledge and skills developed in the pre-clinical year with regards to patient evaluation and begin to apply patient management strategies in an assigned clinical setting, either inpatient or outpatient. Under the direction of a preceptor, the learners analyze patients, monitor progress, perform history and physical examinations and plan therapeutic interventions. Learners will also participate in consultations, writing orders, discharge planning and disposition regarding home care and follow-up.

PASC 802 – SURGERY⁴⁰

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

CORE ROTATION

Learners are provided with an experience in the management of patients with surgical issues. Each student will participate with the pre-operative, intra-operative (including surgical assistance to the surgeons, as indicated) and post-operative care of surgical patients. Learners will work as part of a surgical team and respond to emergency situations in various settings (emergency department, medical wards and operating room) with the team, as well as assist in the management of the surgical patient and discharge planning.

PASC 803 – PEDIATRICS⁴¹

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

CORE ROTATION

Learners are provided with exposure to the care of neonates, infants, children and adolescents. Students further refine the skills of history taking and physical examination specific to the pediatric population. Learners assist with well-visits, evaluation of typical development and become familiar with disorders of growth and development, as well as the evaluation and management of common pediatric disorders. Emphasis is placed on preventative care and family dynamics.

³⁹ B3.03a,b,e, B3.04b,c, B3.07c

⁴⁰ B3.03a,b,d, B3.04d,b, B3.07d

⁴¹ B3.03a,b, B3.04a,c, B3.07e

PASC 804 – WOMEN’S HEALTH AND PRENATAL CARE⁴²

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

CORE ROTATION

Learners are provided the opportunity to gain exposure and experience with common obstetric and gynecologic conditions. Included in this is screening for breast and gynecologic malignancies, menstrual patterns, infectious disease and family planning. Additionally, the learner participates in providing routine prenatal and obstetric care.

PASC 805 – PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE⁴³

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

CORE ROTATION

The learner is exposed to and participates in the care of patients with psychiatric and psychosocial disorders. The student develops skill in counseling patients, communicating with family members of patients living with these conditions and management of common outpatient illnesses, including utilization of psychotropic therapeutics. Students will learn to identify and refer “at-risk” patients.

PASC 807 – EMERGENCY MEDICINE⁴⁴

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

CORE ROTATION

Learners are provided with an in-depth exposure to illnesses and injuries which necessitate emergent evaluation and intervention across the continuum of life. Students participate in all aspects of emergency medical care, including interviewing, examining and evaluating patients presenting to the emergency department. Emergent procedures and treatment will be guided by the clinical preceptor.

PASC 808/809 – MEDICINE ELECTIVE I & II

CREDIT: 4 HOURS EACH

In addition to the required core SCPEs, each learner completes two elective rotations. Students must work through appropriate programmatic channels for the identification of these sites. Students must *NOT* set up their own elective rotations. The UNC PA Program’s Academic Excellence Committee reserves the right to reassign a student’s elective SCPE(s) to place the student in an area of needed improvement as determined by the student’s performance during core SCPEs as below published standards for course outcomes and/or competencies.

PASC 810 – PRIMARY CARE/RURAL HEALTH

CREDIT: 4 HOURS

In accordance with the mission of the UNC PA Program, students are provided with a second primary care rotation with an emphasis on rural medicine and underserved patient populations.

⁴² B3.03a,b,c,d,e B3.04b,c, B3.07f

⁴⁴ B3.03a,b,c,d,e, B3.04a, B3.07b

⁴³ B3.03e, B3.04i,c, B3.07g

PASC 820 – CLINICAL SEMINAR I

CREDIT: 1 HOUR

Clinical Seminar I is designed to augment the learner's SCPEs by reinforcing acquisition of medical knowledge, supporting development of interpersonal communication skills, distinguishing traits to promote professional excellence, implementing improvements in practice performance by applying critically appraised medical literature and recognizing the impact of systems-based processes on individual care. Topics are presented in a sequence to prepare students to transition from the role of the learner to that of an autonomous member of a physician/physician assistant team. Spring term.

PASC 821 – CLINICAL SEMINAR II

CREDIT: 1 HOUR

Clinical Seminar II is designed to augment the learner's SCPEs by reinforcing acquisition of medical knowledge, supporting development of interpersonal communication skills, distinguishing traits to promote professional excellence, implementing improvements in practice performance by applying critically appraised medical literature and recognizing the impact of systems-based processes on individual care. Topics are presented in a sequence to prepare students to transition from the role of the learner to that of an autonomous member of a physician/physician assistant team. Summer term.

PASC 822 – CLINICAL SEMINAR III

CREDIT: 1 HOUR

Clinical Seminar III is designed to augment the learner's SCPEs by reinforcing acquisition of medical knowledge, supporting development of interpersonal communication skills, distinguishing traits to promote professional excellence, implementing improvements in practice performance by applying critically appraised medical literature and recognizing the impact of systems-based processes on individual care. Topics are presented in a sequence to prepare students to transition from the role of the learner to that of an autonomous member of a physician/physician assistant team. Fall term.

As a complement to the SCPEs, students must complete courses in Basic Life Sciences (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) prior to beginning the clinical phase of the curriculum.

Each core SCPE includes multiple assignments, including an End-of-Rotation Examination to allow for frequent, objective and ongoing evaluation of student performance in meeting the program's learning outcomes and instructional objectives⁴⁵.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The program, in general, follows the [University academic calendar](#). Start and end dates, as well as holidays and semester breaks, vary year by year.

⁴⁵ B4.01

PRECLINICAL PHASE

This phase of the curriculum requires students to attend classes, lectures, simulated patient experiences and procedural and clinical skills labs Monday-Friday. These classes vary in times and dates and this information is published to students prior to the beginning of each semester in the online learning management system, Canvas, as well as in the syllabi of each course. Specific dates regarding holidays, wellbeing days and breaks (such as spring break, fall break, etc.) are also published in Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to maintain an active calendar. The program recognizes that changes to the academic calendar may be necessary, given instructor availability, illness, etc. and will make every attempt to make these changes greater than 48 hours in advance and to publish any alterations to the students.

- Orientation to program: First and/or second week of January
- Start of spring semester classes: First or second week of January
- End of foundational science courses: Mid-February
- Beginning of clinical medicine curriculum: Mid-February
- End of spring semester: End of April/beginning of May
- Spring semester final exams: First or second week in May
- Start of summer semester classes: Second or third week in May
- End of summer semester: Third or fourth week in July
- Summer final exams: End of July/beginning of August
- Start of fall semester classes: third week in August
- End of fall semester: First week in December
- Fall final exams: Second and/or third week in December
- Preclinical Summative Assessment: Second or third week in December
- PACKRAT formative assessment: Second or third week in December

CLINICAL PHASE

In the clinical phase of the curriculum, the program follows the traditional calendar for winter commencement purposes only. Clinical rotations require students to participate in activities and learning experiences as assigned by the program and/or the preceptors. This may include weekends, varying shifts, on-call hours, etc. Often, these obligations mirror those of the preceptors and are necessary to meet the requirements of the assigned rotation.

- Clinical phase orientation: this begins in the fall semester of the preclinical phase of the curriculum and concludes in the first week of January of the clinical year
- Start of Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs): first or second week of January
- PANACE board review workshop: first or second week in October
- Last day of Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs): first week in November
- End of Curriculum Examination: second or third week in November
- Program Summative Examination OSCEs: third or fourth week in November

- Capstone Project presentations: third week in November
- PACKRAT formative assessment: fourth week in November
- Exit interviews & program completion activities: First and/or second week in December
- Graduation: Second week in December

More information regarding the summative evaluations and requirements to progress through the curriculum can be found in the Student Progression section of this document.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Each student is assigned an academic advisor within the Division of Physician Assistant Studies. This advisor functions to assist students in their academic and professional progress through the program. Students and advisors meet at a minimum of once a semester to establish and discuss progress towards academic goals and to discuss other concerns, as needed. Additionally, the advisor serves as a resource for students with regards to division, departmental and University policies and is the point of contact for students who require assistance with academic or professional concerns.

Academic advisors are expected to be reliable and provide appropriate advice. To that end, academic advisors are expected to do the following:

- Understand and provide factually accurate information regarding the program's curriculum requirements, academic policies and procedures.
- Monitor student academic progress and recommend, if necessary, strategies for improvement
- Assist students with development of academic and professional goals.
- Check in with students at appropriate intervals and as needed.
- Make appropriate referrals when necessary.
- Understand and adhere to the mandates of the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

The student is ultimately responsible for learning and satisfying all degree requirements for the Division of Physician Assistant Studies and are expected to do the following:

- Accept full ownership for all academic decisions.
- Prepare for advising sessions.
- Consult with their advisor, in a timely manner, when in need of assistance
- Follow through in a professional manner on all actions identified during advising sessions or other communications.
- Adhere to all institutional policies, procedures, requirements and important dates.

Please note, faculty and academic advisors MAY NOT provide medical or psychological care for students in the program, except in emergencies. Please refer to the [Faculty Provision of Medical Care for Students Policy](#) for more information.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GRADING – PRECLINICAL PHASE

The graduate grading scale in use at UNC-CH is unique in that it cannot be converted to the more traditional ABC grading scale. Graduate students do not carry a numerical grading scale. This grading scale applies to all Physician Assistant Studies coursework and examinations.

Students in the preclinical phase are frequently evaluated with an objective intentionality towards the program learning outcomes and competencies. The overall focus of the preclinical phase is to adequately prepare students for progression and success in the clinical phase of the curriculum.

Frequent assessments, both formative and summative, are utilized with feedback from instructors and faculty to monitor student performance and facilitate remediation during the preclinical phase. Timing of assessments are detailed in each individual course and published to the students.

PERMANENT GRADES

H	High Pass – Clear Excellence: $\geq 90\%$
P	Pass – Entirely Satisfactory Graduate Work: 80%-89.99%
L	Low Pass – Inadequate Graduate Work: 70%-79.99%
F	Fail: $< 70\%$

Coursework, examinations and/or final course grades will not be rounded.

SPECIAL PERMANENT GRADES

XF	Fail – Honor Court hearing outcome; equivalent to F
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A grade of XF indicates an Honor Court sanction of a failing grade in a course. Receiving a grade of XF results in the student becoming academically ineligible to continue studies in the Physician Assistant Studies program and/or the UNC Graduate School.

TEMPORARY GRADES

AB	Absent from final examination
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An AB grade must be given to a student who did not take a traditional/sit-down final examination, regardless of the reason, but might have passed the course had they done so. AB is a temporary grade that converts to F unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.*

If the exam absence is officially excused by the instructor or University, the student must take the final examination at a mutually reasonable time designated by the course instructor, in no case to exceed one year from the original examination.

Since the grade of AB is given after the deadline to change courses in that semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course where an AB was received. The student must complete the final examination in the timeframe expected or earn F.*

IN Work incomplete

A grade of IN is given when the course instructor determines that exceptional circumstances warrant extending the time for the student to complete the course. IN is a temporary grade that converts to F unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.*

The instructor should set clear expectations for course completion requirements and set the maximum allowable period for completing the course, but in no case will this extension exceed one year. If the time allowed is to be less than one year, this information should be transmitted in writing to the student and copied to the Graduate School. It is the sole responsibility of the student to complete the course and initiate the grade change prior to the one-year deadline.

Since the grade of IN is given after the deadline to change courses in that semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course when an IN was received. The student must complete the work in the timeframe expected or earn an F.*

NR Not recorded

A grade of NR is administratively assigned by the University when the deadline to assign grades in a given term passes and the instructor has not finalized the grade roster. NR is a temporary grade that converts to F unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later.*

Since the grade of NR is listed after the deadline to change courses in that semester, a student may not retroactively drop a course where an NR was received. The student must complete the work and work closely with their instructor to ensure a permanent grade is assigned.

A temporary grade of IN, AB and NR converts to F unless the grade is replaced with a permanent grade by the last day of classes for the same term one year later. Failure to remove temporary grades by the last day of classes of the term in which a student plans to graduate will prevent graduation.*

GRADING – CLINICAL PHASE

Throughout the clinical phase of the program, students are evaluated and expected to meet the highest standards of achievement in the established learning outcomes and defined competencies. The UNC PA Program adheres to a multi-method and longitudinal global assessment program during the clinical phase.

FINAL COURSE GRADES

Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences and the Clinical Seminar course series will result in final course grades representing either:

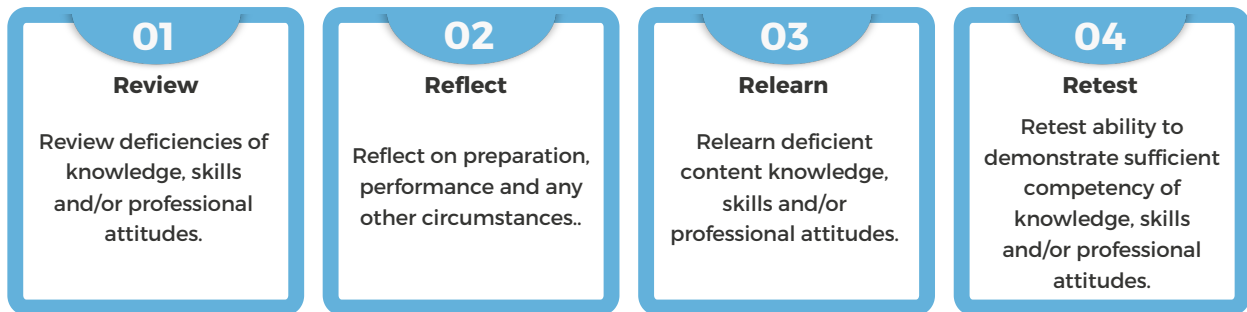
- P Pass – Satisfactory Graduate Work
 - F Fail – Failure to Meet Graduate Level Expectations
- Coursework, examinations and/or final course grades will not be rounded.*

The special permanent grades and temporary grades detailed may also be

REMEDiation AND THE INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLAN⁴⁶

The UNC PA Program faculty are committed to the ongoing success of all students in the program. On occasion, a student may require remediation when they are unable to demonstrate sufficient competency of course knowledge, skills and/or professional attitudes as defined by the program. When this occurs, an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) is developed by the course director or faculty liaison.

The Individualized Learning Plan is designed within the following framework:



ILPs may include additional examinations, assignments, advising and/or use of an elective SCPE in the clinical phase to address areas of needed improvement.

ILP triggers include:

- Assessment score < 80%
- Course and/or unit score < 80%
- Standardized patient score < 80%

⁴⁶ A3.15c

- Preclinical Summative Written Assessment score < 70%
- Preclinical Summative Observed Standardized Clinical Experience score < 70%
- End of Rotation examination score < 390
- End of Curriculum examination score < 1400
- Program Summative Observed Standardized Clinical Experience score < 70%
- Documented professionalism concerns

Failure or performance of inadequate graduate work of any assigned remediation or ILP may result in referral of student to the Academic Excellence Committee.

Remediation may occur within a given course or SCPE or may utilize breaks or other opportunities where more time would be available. Remediation is tailored to every unique experience and, as such, it is at the discretion of the course director and faculty. Depending on the situation, the student may be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee.

EXAMINATIONS⁴⁷

Students are assessed, with both formative and summative evaluations, at frequent intervals to ensure satisfactory progression through the curriculum and the program-defined competencies. Every effort is made by UNC MHSPAS program faculty to administer examinations that are fair, valid, and well-aligned with program competencies, instructional objectives, course goals, and national standards. Applicable preclinical assessments are reviewed by course directors of each individual course, and as needed, the Preclinical Academic Affairs Committee, for assessment item performance and analysis.

Attendance at examinations is mandatory. Students who will need to miss an examination should contact the Director of Preclinical Education or Director of Clinical Education (whichever is appropriate) prior to the examination. Failure to attend an examination due to an unexcused absence will result in a grade of zero. Students should review course syllabi for information on rescheduling an examination due to an excused absence. Students should refer to the attendance policies of both phases of the curriculum for the procedure on submission of an absence request: [Preclinical Phase Attendance Policy](#); [Clinical Phase Attendance Policy](#).

EXAMINATION REVIEW

Students may be afforded the opportunity to review examinations and assessments. This is at the discretion of the course director and the Director of Preclinical Education. Students can find more information regarding this in the course syllabi. Of note, examinations from third parties (such as the End of Rotation Examination, PACKRAT and End of Curricular Examinations) are not able to be reviewed by the student.

⁴⁷ B4.01

EXAMINATION QUESTION APPEAL⁴⁸

Students may appeal examination questions in the preclinical phase of the curriculum. This must be done, via email, to the course director, within two business days of the secure examination review, if offered, or within two business days of the examination if a secure examination review is not offered. Included in the appeal must be justification of the appeal (e.g. incorrect answer labeled as “correct,” ambiguous question, multiple correct answers, etc.). This will be reviewed by the course director and, if applicable, by the instructor and/or Director of Preclinical Education and/or the Preclinical Academic Affairs Committee.

If, after appeal to the course director, a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student may appeal the decision of the course director to the Director of Preclinical Education. The appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the Director of Preclinical Education, copying the course director and academic advisor. The appeal must describe how the disputed grade resulted from one or more of the grounds provided above. Appeals must be submitted no later than twenty calendar days after the grade is officially posted.

In the event that the course director who assigned the grade is also the Director of Preclinical Education, the student should reach out to their academic advisor and the Division Director for guidance on the next steps.

COURSE GRADE APPEAL⁴⁹

GROUNDS FOR A COURSE GRADE APPEAL

A petition for a grade appeal must set forth how the disputed grade resulted from one or more of the following:

- Arithmetic or clerical error,
- Arbitrariness, possibly including discrimination or harassment on the basis of an individual’s age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status,
- Personal malice, and/ or
- Student conduct cognizable under the [Instrument of Student Judicial Governance](#).

COURSE GRADE APPEAL

Prior to pursuing a grade appeal, the student should first address their concerns with the course director. In the event an arithmetic or clerical error, the course director will make steps to ensure the grade is changed to reflect the correct grade. A course director may not initiate a change of course grade as a

⁴⁸ A3.15g

⁴⁹ A3.15g

result of reevaluation of the quality of the student's performance or as a result of additional work performed by the student.

CONSULTATION WITH THE COURSE DIRECTOR

A student who is considering a grade appeal is advised to meet with the course director as soon as possible after the grade is posted. The appeal must be submitted no later than twenty calendar days after the grade is officially posted. If the student has difficulty scheduling a meeting with the course director, the student should contact the Division Director or the Division Director's designee. If a basis for the appeal is arbitrariness, discrimination, harassment or personal malice by a course instructor or course director, the student should submit the appeal directly to the Division Director without meeting with the course director.

APPEAL TO THE DIVISION DIRECTOR

If, after consultation with the course director, a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student may appeal the decision of the course director to the Division Director. The appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the Division Director, copying the course instructor and academic advisor. The appeal must describe how the disputed grade resulted from one or more of the grounds provided above. Appeals must be submitted no later than twenty calendar days after the grade is officially posted.

In the event that the course director who assigned the grade is also the Division Director, the student should reach out to their academic advisor for guidance on the next steps.

APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

In the event that the Division Director does not grant the student's appeal, the student may pursue a formal appeal to the Chair of the Department of Health Sciences. The appeal must be in writing no later than twenty calendar days after the student receives the Division Director's decision. The Department of Health Sciences Chair will refer the appeal to the Department of Health Sciences Appeals Committee for review.

The Appeals Committee will review the student's written appeal and will provide the course director with the opportunity to reply to the student's petition in writing. The Appeals Committee will share the course instructor's reply with the student. The student may request a meeting with the Appeals Committee. The student may bring a support person who is not an attorney to the meeting with the Appeals Committee. The Department of Health Sciences Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to the Chair. The decision of the Chair of the Department of Health Sciences is final, and no further appeals are available.

APPEAL OF A DISMISSAL DECISION BASED ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

If the Division Director, in consultation with the principal faculty, the Academic Excellence Committee, and in accordance with Divisional policies, determines a student's academic performance warrants dismissal, the student will be informed of the decision to dismiss in writing. If the student wishes to

appeal the dismissal decision, the student may appeal to the Chair of the Department of Health Sciences. The appeal must be submitted in writing within twenty calendar days of the date the student received the dismissal letter from the Division Director.

The appeal must consist of a written, signed statement by the student, stating the specific grounds with all supporting facts upon which the student bases the appeal. The appeal must cite evidence that the dismissal was not in accordance with the Division's policies. The Chair of the Department of Health Sciences will refer the appeal to the Department of Health Sciences Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will review the written appeal and may seek additional information as needed. The student may request a meeting with the Appeals Committee. The student may bring a support person who is not an attorney to the meeting with the Appeals Committee. The Department of Health Sciences Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to the Department of Health Sciences Chair. The Chair will make the final decision and inform the student in writing. No further appeals of this decision are available.

APPEAL OF A GRADE AND DISMISSAL DECISION BASED ON THAT GRADE

If a student submits a grade appeal and an appeal of a dismissal decision based on that grade at the same time, the grade appeal will be considered first. If the grade appeal is granted, the Appeals Committee of the Department of Health Sciences will then consider the appeal of the dismissal decision.

If the grade appeal is not granted, the Appeals Committee will consider the appeal of the dismissal decision if the student's appeal cites evidence that the dismissal was not in accordance with the Division's policies.

PROFESSIONALISM APPEAL⁵⁰

The UNC Division of Physician Assistant Studies adheres to the Department of Health Sciences and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's policies on Professional Behavior, Criminal Background Check and Drug Testing.

Students are informed of the Division of Physician Assistant Studies professional requirements. Prospective students can view the information on the website: [UNC PA Program Technical Standards](#). This information is also reviewed during the orientation process, prior to starting class.

Students who have questions about their ability to satisfy the stated requirements for professional conduct should meet with the Division Director to discuss their concerns. Students who have questions about their ability to meet the professional requirements and/or technical standards due to disabilities or medical conditions should contact the [UNC Accessibility Resources and Service](#) for evaluation of accommodations, resources and services.

⁵⁰ A3.15g

Behaviors that appear to be a violation of the UNC Honor Code will be referred to the UNC Honor System. Please refer to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's [Honor Code](#) for more information.

Behaviors that appear to constitute prohibited harassment or discrimination based upon a protected status (such as race, religion, sexual orientation, disability) will be referred to the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#). Please refer to the University's policy on [Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#), including a full list of the protected statuses to which the policy applies.

If a student demonstrates a violation of the applicable Technical Standards or professional requirements of the Division of Physician Assistant Studies that is not addressed by the Honor System or EOC Office, the student will receive written documentation of the behavioral or professional concerns from the Division. The student may be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee, as per the Academic Monitoring and Support Policy. If remediation is possible, the student may be placed on probation and given a professional improvement plan. The plan will include a timeline for completion of the remediation plan.

If remediation is not possible, or if the student does not successfully complete the remediation plan, the Division's Academic Excellence Committee will meet to consider the standing of the student in the program. A student who is in good academic standing may be dismissed based on the student's professional behavior. The dismissal decision may be reviewed by the entire faculty or by a faculty committee. The Division faculty or faculty committee, with the advice of University Counsel, may also meet to consider dismissing a student based on the results of the Honor System or EOC Office Investigation. The student may request a meeting with the faculty or faculty committee to present pertinent information. The student may bring a support person who is not an attorney to the meeting with the Department of Health Sciences Appeals Committee. If the Division faculty or faculty committee decides that a student should be dismissed from the program based on violations of the applicable Technical Standards or professional requirements of the Division of Physician Assistant Studies, the students will be notified in email and/or writing.

APPEAL OF A DISMISSAL DECISION BASED ON PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

If a student wishes to appeal the dismissal decision based on professional behavior, the student may appeal to the Chair of the Department of Health Sciences. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 20 calendar days of the date the student received the dismissal letter from the Division Director. The appeal must consist of a written, signed statement by the student, stating the specific grounds and all the supporting facts upon which the student bases the appeal. The Chair of the Department of Health Sciences will refer the appeal to the Department of Health Sciences Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will review the written appeal and may seek additional information as needed. The student may request a meeting with the Appeals Committee. The student may bring a support person who is not an attorney to the meeting with the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to the Chair of the Department of Health Sciences. The Chair will make the final decision and inform the student in writing. Any further right of appeal will be established by university policies and procedures.

ENROLLMENT DURING AN APPEAL PROCESS

During a grade appeal process, the Division of Physician Assistant Studies will determine whether or not the student may enroll in further program classes based on all the facts and circumstances. Factors which could be considered include prerequisite knowledge for the course(s) in which the student wishes to enroll and the student's overall performance in the program. The decision may be made in consultation with the UNC Graduate School, the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, Accessibility Resources and Service or other University offices depending on the grounds for the appeal.

ACADEMIC STANDING AND ELIGIBILITY

To remain in good academic standing, a student must meet the academic progression requirements of the UNC PA Program. If criteria for good standing are not met, the student will be considered to be "not in good standing" and will be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee. The student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the program. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor their academic status and progression standards.

Under certain circumstances, a student will not be allowed to continue in the UNC PA Program. A student may become academically ineligible to continue for the following reasons:

1. Final course grade resulting in failure to meet graduate level coursework, "Fail" or "F" as reported on a student's transcript.
2. Final course grade resulting in inadequate levels of graduate coursework, "Low Pass" or "L" as reported on a student's transcript for 9 or more UNC MHSPAS course credit hours accumulated in the preclinical phase of their enrollment in the UNC PA Program.
3. Fails a written or oral examination for the second time in a single UNC MHSPAS course.
4. Fails two or more written or oral course/rotation examinations in the UNC MHSPAS course.
5. Fails to successfully complete all components of their Individualized Learning Plan.

ATTIRE⁵¹

PRECLINICAL PHASE

Student professional dress and conduct should, at all times, reflect the dignity and standards of the medical profession. It is important that physician assistant students dress in a manner that is respectful to their professors, classmates, patients, and other interprofessional and administrative colleagues.

⁵¹ B2.19c

All students must wear clothing that is neat, clean, and not ripped, torn, stained. Clothing may not contain inappropriate wording, design, graphics, or pictures. Each course syllabus may outline specific requirements and dress code exceptions/ expectations for that particular course.

Failure to comply with attire policy is in conflict with the professional standards of the UNC MHSPAS program. Repeated offenses may result in disciplinary action.

For further information, please review the [UNC MHSPAS Attire Policy](#).

CLINICAL PHASE

Students in the Clinical Phase are expected to abide by the attire policy of their clinical course site and/ or the [Professional Business Attire](#) policy of the UNC Medical Center. For all clinical settings and during all Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), the Clinical Phase student should abide by the following regulations:

1. Identification – all UNC MHSPAS students will be clearly identified to distinguish themselves from physicians, medical students, and other health professions students by wearing an issued name tag.
2. White coats – all UNC MHSPAS students will wear the UNC PA Program embroidered short white coat with an issued name tag attached and centered below the embroidered Health Sciences title on the left chest pocket.
3. Scrubs – all UNC MHSPAS students, and, in general, all hospital personnel should not wear scrubs outside the hospital or clinic. Scrubs are expected to be clean when worn in a public area and should be covered with a white coat.

Failure to comply with attire policy is in conflict with the professional standards of the UNC MHSPAS program. Repeated offenses may result in disciplinary action.

For further information, please review the [UNC MHSPAS Attire Policy](#).

CLINICAL PHASE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CLINICAL SITE AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS⁵³

The UNC MHSPAS Program is committed to the continuous development of effective and high-quality clinical sites. The review, evaluation and approval of a Supervised Clinical Practical Experience (SCPE) site and clinical instructors is a process developed to ensure that the SCPE site provides sufficient clinical experiences to facilitate the achievement of the SCPE's instructional objectives, student safety and expected competencies. The program requires a current and fully executed written and signed affiliation agreement between all SCPE sites and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine.

⁵³ A3.03

These agreements are legal documents that address academic, physical, clinical and liability issues. The process of attaining SCPE sites is solely the responsibility of the program and is facilitated by the University of North Carolina legal counsel. Students should not engage with potential SCPE sites with the intention of developing the site. Failure to comply with this is a breach of professional behavior and may result in student referral to the Academic Excellence Committee for further review. Please refer to the [Clinical Site and Clinical Instructional Faculty Recruitment and Monitoring Policy](#) for more information.

ELECTIVE SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCES

Students in good academic and professional standing are provided the opportunity for three elective SCPEs. The UNC MHSPAS Program strives to honor a student's wishes whenever possible. Students earn the ability to select options for elective SCPEs (PASC 808, 809 and 810). Please note, many factors influence whether or not a student will have the opportunity to select their elective SCPE sites including, but not limited to, academic standing, clinical performance, compliance with UNC MHSPAS, UNC-CH and SCPE site policies and procedures and professional standing.

Students who are afforded the opportunity may request an elective SCPE in any area of allopathic or osteopathic medicine. These clinical electives are subject to availability of sites, development of affiliation agreements and are ultimately at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education. Efforts are made for elective SCPEs to be scheduled following successful completion of all core SCPEs.

The following are specific criteria that may require the Director of Clinical Education to assign or change an elective SCPE for the best interest of the student:

- Academic standing of Academic or Professionalism Probation at any time during enrollment in the UNC MHSPAS program.
- Inadequate graduate-level work, as reported by a "Low Pass" or "L" on a student's transcript in any final course grade while enrolled in the UNC MHSPAS Program.
- Documented unprofessional behavior.
- End of Rotation examination score < or otherwise demonstrated limited medical knowledge.
- Clinical Instructor Evaluation documenting concerns (academic or professional) or performance below program expectations (refer to Clinical Phase Grading)
- Availability of clinical sites and/or clinical instructors.

MEDICAL RECORDS AND PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Patient confidentiality is a cornerstone of medical practice and is essential for establishing and maintaining the patient-provider relationship, which is built on trust. PA students are privileged to learn information that patients share with only healthcare professionals and be present in very personal moments of patients' lives. Patients, in turn, trust the PA students will preserve their confidentiality; as a key component of medical professionalism, PA students must honor this trust.

Students are not to discuss a patient in any manner or situation that would disclose any information about that person to anyone not directly involved in the patient's healthcare. Students must refrain from discussing patients in public places (such as the cafeteria, elevators, etc) where conversations may be overheard. Students should remind those who may be inappropriately discussing patient information about confidentiality.

Students will adhere to ethical principles and use practical reasoning at all times when dealing with patients. No student should medically treat other PA students, PA program faculty, friends or family members while a student is in the UNC MHSPAS Program.

All students will receive formal instruction on the Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and must follow the rules set forth by this act when participating in clinical activities. HIPAA compliance includes maintaining confidentiality of paper and electronic health records.

When violations of HIPAA by a student are identified by faculty, a hospital, clinic, healthcare office etc, the violation will be reviewed by the Academic Excellence Committee with guidance from the institution where the violation occurred. Disciplinary actions may include remediation and/or sanctions, including the possibility of dismissal from the program.

STUDENT DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR PATIENT RECORDS

Students must read and observe the rule set forth by the Committee for Medicare and Medicaid (CMM) as it pertains to student documentation. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines state that physicians, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse midwives and certified registered nurse anesthetists) can review and verify (sign and date) rather than re-documenting notes made in the medical record by other physicians, residents, medical, physician assistant and APRN students, nurses or other members of the healthcare team.

PRESCRIPTION WRITING

Students may write or input electronic prescribing information for the clinical instructor, but the clinical instructor must sign and send all prescriptions. The student's name may not appear on the prescription. For SCPE sites which utilize electronic prescriptions, the clinical instructor MUST log into the system with their own password and personally sign and send all electronic prescriptions.

Students should practice handwriting prescriptions on SCPEs when the opportunity to input electronic prescriptions is not available.

In addition, students MUST notify the UNC MHSPAS clinical team immediately if they are asked by a clinical instructor or a member of their staff to write, sign or distribute medications without direct supervision by the qualified clinical instructor.

ANTI-NEPOTISM POLICY

Students may complete a SCPE in the same clinic or hospital setting as a family member ONLY if that family member is not the clinical instructor and the clinical instructor is not considered to be a subordinate of the family member on the healthcare team.

Similarly, SCPEs with a current personal healthcare provider are prohibited. If a student is scheduled for a SCPE with a previous healthcare provider, it must be >1 year to the start of the SCPE since the student was last a patient with that healthcare provider. The student may not seek medical advice or care from the clinical instructor or other providers at that clinical site during their SCPE. It is also highly discouraged for students to initiate a provider-patient relationship with any previous clinical instructors prior to graduation.

Students who do not comply with these policies will be withdrawn from the SCPE and may incur a delay in the progression of their clinical education. Decisions to withdraw the student from the SCPE are at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education. Failure to comply with the anti-nepotism policy, in addition to the above, may result in referral of the student to the Academic Excellence Committee if it is determined that there was a breach of professional behavior.

NORTH CAROLINA AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS (AHEC) HOUSING

AHEC housing may be available for some SCPEs on a first-come, first-served basis. It is the responsibility of each individual student to reserve housing. Students may reserve housing for SCPEs which are greater than 60 miles from the UNC School of Medicine within AHEC. The Department of Health Sciences will assume the costs for housing.

An AHEC housing informational session will be conducted as part of the information covered in sessions designed to prepare students for the clinical phase. For more information, please visit [NC AHEC Student Housing](#).

ATTENDANCE⁵⁴

PRECLINICAL PHASE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is required for all class sessions, lab sessions, class activities, and assessments during the Preclinical Phase of the UNC MHSPAS Program. As progression through the Preclinical curriculum requires passing performance in all courses, and course content covers a wide breadth of competencies required for physician assistant practice, absences can impact and impair student success. Nevertheless, the UNC MHSPAS program is aware that accommodations must be provided for specific exigent circumstances that prohibit student attendance from a scheduled class activity.

⁵⁴ A3.02

An absence is defined as missing a scheduled day of classes or missing any single class session, lab session, or class event for any course within the UNC MHSPAS Preclinical Phase. Absences may be excused or unexcused. An excused absence is defined as an absence that is approved by the UNC MHSPAS Program. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not approved by the UNC MHSPAS Program.

Some circumstances may result in a student arriving late to a class session or activity. A student is considered tardy if they arrive to any class session or activity after the activity start time.

ABSENCE POLICY

Students in the Preclinical Phase are allowed two excused absences per semester. If student has \geq two absences in a single semester, \geq five absences in the Preclinical Phase, or if, per the discretion of the course director or Director of Preclinical Education, the number of absences is deemed highly impactful with potential to limit the student's ability to achieve competency of course learning outcomes, the student will be referred to the UNC MHSPAS Academic Excellence Committee (AEC). All excused absences should be submitted as soon as possible to the Director of Preclinical Education using the Preclinical Absence Request Form. The Director of Preclinical Education is responsible for approving or denying all absence requests. All denied absence requests are considered unexcused absences.

Students in the Preclinical Phase are not allowed any unexcused absences. Any unexcused absences will result in referral of the student to the UNC MHSPAS Academic Excellence Committee for consideration of professionalism and/ or academic probation, a course grade of "incomplete," and/ or program dismissal based on the absence's impact on academic performance.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Students requesting an excused absence should submit their request as soon as possible to the Director of Preclinical Education. For all anticipated absences, the Preclinical Absence Request Form should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event. For absences due to emergency or unanticipated events, the student should inform the Director of Preclinical Education and their advisor as soon as possible.

Absences may be considered excused for the following circumstances:

1. Hospitalization, Emergency Room visit, and/ or medical illness,
2. Family or close friend emergency,
3. Professional meeting or conference,
4. Jury duty,
5. Religious holidays,
6. Weddings,
7. Required trainings, and
8. Military obligations

Of note, students who anticipate \geq two absences in any semester of the Preclinical Phase for observation of religious holidays should submit an Accommodations Form and review the [UNC Religious Accommodations Policy](#).

Students who anticipate a prolonged period of absence, \geq two days in a single semester or \geq 5 days cumulatively in the Preclinical Phase, should consider a leave of absence. The student may seek counseling from their advisor, the Director of Preclinical Education, and/ or the Program Director when considering a leave.

TARDINESS

The UNC MHSPAS Program is aware that unanticipated circumstances may result in late attendance to a class session or examination. Routine circumstances, such as issues with transportation, personal scheduling conflicts, or misunderstanding of the course calendar, will be excused only at the discretion of the course director for the first event. Repeat tardiness due to routine circumstances will not be excused and will be considered an unexcused absence. Attendance to any class session or examination \geq fifteen minutes from the activity start time will be considered an unexcused absence.

Students who are tardy to two class sessions, lab sessions, or class activities will be responsible for explanation and discussion with their advisor and the Director of Preclinical Education, with consideration for referral to the Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) based on described student circumstances. Students who are tardy to > two (2) class sessions will be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) for consideration of professionalism and/ or academic probation, a course grade of “incomplete,” and/ or program dismissal based on the absence’s impact on academic performance.

Please see the [UNC MHSPAS Preclinical Phase Attendance Policy](#) for further information.

CLINICAL PHASE ATTENDANCE POLICY

The professional standards and expectations of UNC Physician Assistant Program are similar to clinical practice expectations for practicing physician assistants. Attendance to clinical assignments and required clinical course activities is mandatory. Students must make every effort to attend all required activities in the Clinical Phase.

An absence is defined as missing any portion of a clinical shift or clinical course activity. Absences may be excused or unexcused. An excused absence is defined as an absence that is approved by the UNC MHSPAS Program. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not approved by the UNC MHSPAS Program.

Some circumstances may result in a student arriving late to an assigned shift. A student is considered tardy if they arrive to any shift after the shift start time.

ABSENCE POLICY

Students are required to obtain approval for all absences in the Clinical Phase from the Director of Clinical Education regardless of the length of the absence (i.e., one hour, half day, full day). A clinical site preceptor cannot grant excused absences or excuse a student from clinical duties. Students are required to make-up all time missed for excused absences. Students who accrue more than one excused absence in any four-week clinical course are at risk for receiving a grade of “incomplete” based on the quality of make-up work and level of competence in meeting the learning outcomes.

Students in the Clinical Phase are not allowed any unexcused absences. Failure to notify the Director of Clinical Education and preceptor of any absence from an assigned shift, regardless of the reason or length of the absence, will be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee for consideration of academic and/ or professionalism probation or program dismissal, based on severity.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Students requesting an excused absence should submit their request as soon as possible to the Director of Clinical Education and preceptor. For absences due to emergency or unanticipated events, the student should inform the Director of Clinical Education and their preceptor as soon as possible.

Absences may be considered excused for the following circumstances:

1. Hospitalization, Emergency Room visit, and/ or medical illness,
2. Family or close friend emergency,
3. Professional meeting or conference,
4. Jury duty,
5. Religious holidays,
6. Weddings,
7. Required trainings, and
8. Military obligations

Of note, students who anticipate \geq two absences in the Clinical Phase for observation of religious holidays should submit an Accommodations Form and review the [UNC Religious Accommodations Policy](#).

TARDINESS

Students should inform the Director of Clinical Education and their preceptor if and when they expect to be tardy to an assigned shift. Excessive tardiness during the Clinical Phase (defined as \geq three tardies) will be referred to the UNC MHSPAS Academic Excellence Committee. The student will be referred to the AEC even if all tardies were reported to the Director of Clinical Education and preceptor in advance.

Please see the [UNC MHSPAS Clinical Phase Attendance Policy](#) for further information.

STUDENT EXPOSURE AND INCIDENT REPORTING⁵⁵

STUDENT EXPOSURE

The practice of healthcare involves the care of individuals who may be ill or injured. Students enrolled in the Division of Physician Assistant Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will be expected to provide care to patients who may have known or unknown infections and/or communicable diseases.

PREVENTION OF EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE PATHOGENS

Exposure to blood-borne pathogens is a risk assumed by all healthcare providers. Students will receive training to minimize their risk during the preclinical phase and the clinical phase orientation. Individual clinical sites may also provide additional orientation sessions regarding blood-borne pathogens. Observing universal precautions is one method to reduce risk. Each clinical site presents different potential hazards.

The principle of universal precautions recognizes that any patient may be infected with microorganisms that could be transmitted to other persons. Of particular concern are the primarily blood-borne pathogens HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and HBV (hepatitis B virus). However, body fluids other than blood, secretions and excretions are included in universal precautions. Since infected patients may be asymptomatic, it becomes necessary to use basic precautions with every patient. Observance of universal precautions will aid in reducing risk of transmission of pathogens for every staff member.

In an effort to reduce the risk of UNC MHSPAS students to exposure to infectious and communicable diseases that may be encountered during the course of study, students are required to have immunizations as required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina law and UNC Health. This information is uploaded by the student to CastleBranch each year the student is enrolled in the program. As a professional task, students must remain in compliance with the immunizations required. Students are also required to undergo tuberculin skin testing (TST) or interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) blood testing, as well as perform N95 Fit Testing, prior to entering clinical environments.

In addition to required immunizations, UNC MHSPAS students are also required to complete trainings in infection prevention, bloodborne pathogens, tuberculosis awareness, emergency preparedness, hazard communication and safety and fire safety prior to matriculation and the start of the clinical phase of the program. These trainings are set forth by the UNC-CH Office of Environment, Health and Safety and the UNC MHSPAS.

Finally, practice to prevent COVID-19 may vary based policies pertinent to specific clinical environments. Students should review UNC MHSPAS Health Clearance Policy and [UNC Campus Health COVID-19 service](#)

⁵⁵ A3.08a,b,c

[details](#) regarding mask protection, self-isolation, or other requirements related to COVID-19 prevention. Students must understand the risks associated with the clinical care of patients in the time of COVID-19 and must take necessary and reasonable precautions, as well as follow prescribed protocols to prevent the spread of infection.

PROCEDURE FOR MEDICAL CARE AND REPORTING FOLLOWING EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE PATHOGENS

The components of care and treatment after exposure can be subdivided into three major areas:

1. Blood borne pathogen exposures,
2. Other communicable disease exposures, and
3. Conditions requiring special consideration like pregnancy and immunosuppressive conditions.

For detailed information about the protocols used for these exposures, please reference the [UNC School of Medicine Student Exposure Policy](#).

A blood borne pathogen exposure is defined as exposure to blood, infectious bodily fluid, serum or unfixed tissue by a sharp stick, cut or splash onto mucous membranes or non-intact skin. Students must immediately report any exposure to the clinical instructor, hospital or clinic, course director and the UNC MHSPAS Preclinical or Clinical team (whichever is appropriate for the situation). Students must also complete and submit a Student Incident Report (detailed below).

Exposure to other communicable diseases, including COVID-19, will require vigilant self-monitoring for development of associated symptoms. For student and patient safety, students who have been exposed to a contagious disease or are ill with symptoms of communicable or contagious diseases may need to avoid contact with patients. The student may require clearance from a healthcare provider to return to the classroom or clinical practice setting. Students who require evaluation of symptoms following exposure may have an initial evaluation by UNC for emergency services, UNC Campus Health, or occupational health. Students may also be evaluated by their own healthcare provider if preferred. Students who develop symptoms following exposure to COVID-19 must test at home or through UNC Campus Health prior to returning to the classroom or clinical environment. Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) following an exposure may be required. Use of PPE may include masking and/or use of other protective equipment.

Students in the Clinical Phase must notify the Director of Clinical Education and clinical year team or the Program Director within 24 hours of the exposure event. Any exposure to a communicable disease resulting in an absence from Preclinical or Clinical Phase work requires student reporting to the UNC MHSPAS Preclinical or Clinical team (whichever is appropriate for the situation).

PROCEDURE FOR CLEARANCE TO RETURN TO CLINICAL ACTIVITIES

Initial and subsequent care and follow-up activities, including recommendations related to counseling, prophylactic or treatment regimens and continued or restricted activities following a student's exposure,

illness or injury will be determined by the student's healthcare provider, in collaboration with the student and other appropriate healthcare professionals.

In the event the student requires reasonable accommodations as a result of the exposure, illness or injury, every effort will be made by the program to do so.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARE AND TREATMENT

The costs of the initial evaluation and management of a bloodborne pathogen exposure at UNC Health (UNCH) is covered by UNCH for the source patient and UNC MHSPAS for the student. For all evaluations of bloodborne pathogen exposure at UNC Campus Health Services (CHS), CHS providers will provide initial evaluation. However, UNC MHSPAS students' health insurance will be billed for all subsequent care, labs, and medications ordered on their behalf (see [CHS Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Mode of Operation](#)).

For further information, please see:

- [Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure](#)
- [Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure - Mode of Operation](#)
- [UNC School of Medicine Student Exposure Policy](#)

STUDENT INCIDENT REPORTING

Students should report incidents that occur while engaging in UNC MHSPAS Program activities promptly and as soon as possible. Student safety is of the utmost priority, however, and students should not delay seeking appropriate treatment, as indicated by each unique situation, to fill out paperwork or make notifications. Students must comply with all accident and injury protocols in place at the site the incident occurred (UNC-CH campus, UNC Health, SCPE site, etc).

Additionally, the student must notify either the Director of Preclinical Education or the Director of Clinical Education (whichever is appropriate for the situation) as promptly as possible. The Director of Preclinical Education or the Director of Clinical Education will then advise the student on programmatic procedures, as appropriate.

The [Student Incident Report](#) can be found online.

STUDENT PROGRESSION

SEMESTER PROGRESSION

Successful progression from one semester to the next requires students to perform levels of satisfactory graduate coursework, defined by the UNC-CH graduate school and UNC MHSPAS as "Pass" or "P" as reported on a student's transcript. Students with final course grades resulting in inadequate levels of

graduate coursework, “Low Pass” or “L,” as reported on a student’s transcript, may be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee.

The UNC MHSPAS program’s Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) will convene following each semester to review each student’s progress and performance both academically and professionally in each course to determine if the student is adequately prepared to proceed to the next semester of the program.

The AEC will review the following components:

- Course grades from current and previous semesters, as applicable
- Individual unit and course exams, including cumulative final exams, as applicable.
- Advising reports, as applicable
- Professionalism performance

Based on the committee’s findings, one or more of the following actions will result:

1. Progression clearance to the next semester.
2. Students may be required to enter into a learning contract as part of their academic plan to allow progression to the next semester. Students who are unsuccessful in fulfilling the requirements as defined within their learning contract will be brought to the Academic Excellence Committee for further review of standing in the program, which could include consideration of dismissal from the program.
3. Recommendation of deceleration.
4. Students may be placed on program academic and/or professional warning or probation.

In addition to the requirements of the UNC PA Program, the UNC-CH registrar’s office sets standards on the level of graduate coursework required for progression within the University. A student becomes academically ineligible to continue if they receive a course grade of F, F*, XF or nine or more credit hours of L.

Please see [The Graduate School Handbook](#) for more information.

The UNC MHSPAS program adheres to the principles set forth by the UNC-CH registrar office and students are expected to perform entirely satisfactory coursework, “Pass” or “P” as reported on a student’s transcript, for all coursework completed in the program. Accumulation of nine or more credit hours of inadequate graduate level work, “Low Pass” or “L” as reported on a student’s transcript, will result in the dismissal of the student from the UNC MHSPAS program.

Students with final course grades resulting in failure to meet graduate level coursework, “Fail” or “F” as reported on a student’s transcript will be dismissed from the program.

PROMOTION FROM PRECLINICAL TO CLINICAL PHASE

To successfully complete the preclinical phase of the curriculum, students must take the Written Preclinical Summative Assessment (PCSA) within the final week of the fall semester of the preclinical phase.

WRITTEN PCSA

The Written PCSA is multiple-choice examination which evaluates a student's preparedness to progress from the preclinical to the clinical phase of the UNC MHSPAS curriculum. Students must achieve a minimum of 70% or within 1 standard deviation of the mean (whichever benefits the student) on the exam for eligibility to progress to the clinical phase of the program.

If a student does not achieve the minimum threshold of 70% on the examination, the student may be considered for remediation. The student will also be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee. An Individualized Learning Plan will be developed and must be successfully completed prior to sitting for retest. Inability to attain a minimum score of 70% on the retest will result in referral again to the Academic Excellence Committee to determine the student's academic standing in the program. Please refer to the [PCSA Grading Policy](#) for further guidance.

OSCE PCSA

The second component of the Preclinical Summative Assessment is the Objective Structured Clinical Experience (OSCE PCSA). This assessment is comprised of two standardized patient encounters focusing on milestones and competencies addressed over the course of the preclinical curriculum with evidence-based medicine patient scenarios. Each include a clinical encounter, oral presentation and written documentation components. Performance is measured through a competency-based framework, structured after the program-defined competencies, including Medical Knowledge, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Patient Care, Practice-Based Learning and Improvement, Professionalism and Systems-Based Practice.

If a student does not achieve a minimum score of 70% on the total grade of either standardized patient encounter, the student will be considered for remediation. If remediation is granted, an Individualized Learning Plan will be developed and must be successfully completed prior to reassessment in a different version of the PCSA OSCE. The student will also be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee. If the student does not successfully complete the requirements of the Individualized Learning Plan or does not achieve a minimum grade of 70% on the second attempt, the student will again be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee to determine the student's academic standing in the program. Please refer to the [PCSA Grading Policy](#) for further guidance.

PACKRAT

In addition to the Preclinical Summative Assessments, the students are required to take the Physician Assistant Education Association nationally recognized Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT), a four-hour multiple choice formative examination. This information is

collected to assist in monitoring of student progression and with student advisement and is not used as a grade in any course in the program.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE AND STUDENT PROGRESSION

During the fall semester meeting of the AEC, the committee will review all components of a student's progress as previously outlined during semester progression with the addition of the Written PCSA, OSCE PCSA, PACKRAT and any summative examination remediation assignments, as applicable. Based on the committee's findings, one or more of the following actions will result:

1. Promotion clearance to the clinical phase of the curriculum.
2. Development of a learning contract as part of the student's academic plan to allow progression to the clinical phase of the program. Students who are unsuccessful in fulfilling the requirements as defined within their learning contract will be brought before the AEC for further review, which could result in academic probation or consideration of dismissal from the program.
3. Recommendation of deceleration.
4. Students may be placed on program academic and/or professional warning or probation.

STRUCTURED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE PROGRESSION

Given the cadence of the clinical phase of the curriculum, each rotation is four weeks long. In addition to the clinical duties inherent to each SCPE, as determined by the specialty, location, preceptor and patient population, each student will be required to complete various assignments and tasks within each SCPE. These assignments are published to students and include, but are not limited to, multiple choice questions, simulated patient case scenarios, reflections, communication with advisors and logging of clinical hours daily. Failure to complete any assigned tasks could result in a failing grade for the SCPE and referral to the Academic Excellence Committee. Additionally, the AEC may convene to address individual student progress and performance, both academically and professionally.

Each of the core rotations (Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Surgery, Emergency Medicine and Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine) include an End of Rotation examination on the final day of the rotation.

PAEA END OF ROTATION EXAMINATIONS⁵⁶

The PAEA End of Rotation examinations are scored with a scale score (300-500), similar to the PANCE. This unified scale eliminates variances between form versions established by PAEA each year. Scaled scores are translated into the following scale for the UNC PA Program:

<370	Fail
370-389	Low Pass
≥390	Pass

⁵⁶ B4.01

*For the purposes of course grades, scaled scores will be converted to a point value out of 100. A score conversion chart is available in each clinical course syllabi.

Please see the [End-of-Rotation Policy](#) for more information.

Should remediation include delay in starting SCPE, repeating a SCPE and/or delay of graduation, the student will incur a grade of Incomplete (IN) until remediation is successful. Additional costs may be incurred by the student should they need to extend their training beyond the standard 24-month program link. Please refer to [Tuition and Fees](#) for more information.

Please see the [Personal Health, Academic Performance Monitoring and Support Policy](#) for more information.

CLINICAL PHASE PROGRESSION

Successful progression through the clinical phase of the program from one semester to the next requires students to perform levels of satisfactory graduate level coursework, defined by the UNC-CH Graduate School and the UNC MHSPAS Program as “Pass” or “P”, as reported on a student’s transcript. Students with any assignment grade resulting in failure to meet graduate level coursework, “Fail” or “F” as reported on a student’s transcript or two or more low performing End of Rotation examinations, will be referred to the AEC.

Each semester, the UNC MHSPAS Program’s Academic Excellence Committee will convene to review each student’s progress and performance, both academically and professionally in each SCPE and/or course to determine if the student is adequately prepared to proceed to the next semester of the program.

The AEC will review the following components:

- Course or SCPE grades from the current and previous semesters, as appropriate
- End of Rotation examinations
- Feedback assessments, including, but not limited to, the Clinical Instructor Assessment of the Student, Mid-Point Feedback)
- Logs of patients, procedures and clinical hours
- Mock PANCE examinations
- Attainment of procedural skills and clinical competency
- Advising reports, as applicable
- Professionalism performance

Based on the committee’s findings, one or more of the following actions will result:

1. Progression clearance to the next semester.
2. Students may be required to enter into a learning contract as part of their academic plan to allow progression to the next semester. Students who are unsuccessful in fulfilling the requirements as

defined within their learning contract will be brought to the Academic Excellence Committee for further review, which could include consideration of dismissal from the program.

3. Recommendation of deceleration.
4. Students may be placed on program academic and/or professional warning or probation.

PROMOTION TO GRADUATE

Successful promotion to graduate from the UNC MHSPAS program requires students demonstrate competency of the program-defined competencies through successful completion of each course, semester and curricular phase as defined above while maintaining good academic and professional status within the program and the University.

Additional demonstrations of competency will be determined within the final six weeks of the program through the following required components:

PROGRAM SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

The Program Summative Assessments are comprised of a standardized multiple-choice examination and OSCE at the end of the clinical phase of the curriculum. This summative evaluation must be completed by every student and evaluates that each student meets the program-defined competencies.⁵⁷ Students must achieve a minimum score of 1400 on the written End-of-Curriculum Examination and 70% on the OSCE PSA for successful completion.

END OF CURRICULUM EXAMINATION

The End of Curriculum Examination is a 300-question multiple choice examination created by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) and is nationally validated. Student comprehension in the core competencies and task areas, to include patient-centered practice knowledge, health literacy and communication and professional and legal aspects of healthcare.

A minimum score of 1400 is required to pass the examination. In the event that a student does not achieve the minimum passing threshold, the student will be considered for remediation. If remediation is offered, an Individualized Learning Plan will be created by the Director of Clinical Education intended for remediation of knowledge gaps. The student will also be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee. Following successful completion of the Individualized Learning Plan and any associated assignments or tasks, the student will be afforded the opportunity to retest.

Please see the [End of Curriculum Examination](#) Policy for more information.

OSCE CUMULATE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

⁵⁷ B4.03a,b,c,d,e

The OSCE CSA is comprised of two standardized patient encounters to include the following patient encounters: acute/emergent, chronic/preventative and an encounter focused on learner utilization of skills developed in the practice of evidence-based medicine. Each encounter includes a clinical encounter, oral presentation to faculty and written documentation. Performance is measured through a competency-based framework, structured after the program-defined competencies, including Medical Knowledge, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Patient Care, Practice-Based Learning and Improvement, Professionalism and Systems-Based Practice.

If a student does not achieve a minimum score of 70% on the total grade of any of the standardized patient encounters, the student will be considered for remediation. If remediation is granted, an Individualized Learning Plan will be developed by the Director of Clinical Education. Students must successfully complete the components of the Individualized Learning Plan and, if applicable, successfully pass retesting with a minimum grade of 70%. If the student fails to meet the terms of the learning plan, they will be referred to the Academic Excellence Committee for further review of standing in the program.

Please refer to the [Program Summative Assessment Remediation Policy](#) for further guidance.

DIRECT OBSERVATION OF PROCEDURAL SKILLS AND CLINICAL COMPETENCY

Throughout the clinical phase of the curriculum, students are expected to demonstrate competency in clinical skills and procedures, as outlined by the program-defined learning outcomes for each SCPE. Expectations per SCPE are detailed in the syllabi for each rotation. It is the responsibility of the student to identify opportunities during their SCPEs to become exposed to the assigned clinical skills or clinical presentations they are lacking.

The student should seek constructive feedback intended to apply to ongoing self-development. Students are expected to perform clinical skills at the level of an entry-level PA to meet criteria of competency.⁵⁸

RECOMMENDATION FOR DEGREE CONFERMENT

The Academic Excellence Committee will convene following programmatic summative examinations and evaluations to review each graduate candidate. The committee reviews the following components:

- Course grades from current and previous semester
- Individual unit and course examinations
- End of Rotation examinations
- Clinical preceptor and instructor evaluations
- Advising reports, as applicable
- Professionalism reports
- Clinical skills and patient experiences

⁵⁸ B4.03a,b,c,d,e

- Capstone Project
- Preclinical Summative Assessment performance (Written and OSCE Examinations)
- Program Summative Assessment performance (OSCE and End of Curriculum Examination)

The overall purpose of this review by the committee is to comprehensively review each graduate candidate's academic and professional progress and performance in all courses and phases of the curriculum to determine if the student has adequately demonstrated the minimum competency threshold, as determined by the UNC MHSPAS Program, in the program-defined learning outcomes.

Based on the committee's findings, one or more of the following actions will result:

- 1) Committee recommendation for degree conferment and clearance for graduation
- 2) Students may be required to enter into a learning contract as part of their academic plan prior to recommendation for degree conferment and clearance for graduation. Students are expected to successfully fulfill the requirements defined within their learning contract. Those who fail to do so will be reviewed by the AEC for discussion of standing in the program, with the possibility of consideration of dismissal from the program.
- 3) Recommendation for deceleration.

Beyond the academic and professional requirements set forth by the UNC MHSPAS Program for degree conferment, students are also required to complete the following administrative components for clearance for graduation:

- Completion of PANCE board review course, arranged by the program.
- Completion of an exit interview with the Program Director and student services representative.
- Return of all borrowed or loaned program materials.

Beyond program requirements, UNC-CH requires all of the following University components be completed prior to clearance for graduation:

- Application submission for graduation within the first three weeks of the fall semester through the ConnectCarolina Student Portal.
- Successfully resolve all financial obligations and any pending "Holds" on their student accounts through the University within one week prior to graduation.

GRADUATION DISTINCTIONS

The UNC MHSPAS Program offers selective distinctions and awards to recognize outstanding student achievements during graduation ceremonies.

PI ALPHA NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENTS

Pi Alpha is the national PA honor society and is sponsored by PAEA. It recognizes students, alumni and faculty of significant academic achievement, leadership, research, community/professional service and related activities, and the encouragement of a high standard of conduct and character among both PA students and graduates.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 1) Physician assistant students who have excelled academically in research, publishing, community/professional service and leadership are eligible for nomination for membership.
- 2) Academic excellence is defined as having a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on 4.0 scale at the time of nomination. Please note, the UNC MHSPAS Program establishes “academic excellence” as those meeting scholastic achievement of honors with distinction as detailed below.
- 3) The GPA is a minimal requirement and is to be based on the GPA earned during the professional phase of the program only.
- 4) Demonstrated excellence in research, publishing, community/professional service or leadership activities is to be weighed in addition to the GPA. GPA alone is not an indication for induction.
- 5) The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chapter 1118 will nominate the election of new members. Each student will be approved by the Society.
- 6) The total number of nominees elected shall not exceed fifteen percent of the total number in the class expected to graduate.
- 7) Inductees receive a letter from the Pi Alpha National Honor Society for Physician Assistants, a certificate of recognition, cord and pin, which is presented at graduation.

SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HONORS WITH DISTINCTION OR HONORS WITH HIGHEST DISTINCTION

HONORS WITH DISTINCTION

The UNC MHSPAS Program awards the Scholastic Achievement of Honors with Distinction to students who have demonstrated outstanding scholastic ability throughout the program.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE AWARD

The Making a Difference Award recognizes an outstanding student who has demonstrated exemplary commitment to health, education and community engagement.

EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE AWARD

The Evidence-Based Medicine Award recognizes a student who has demonstrated outstanding scholarly work for their Capstone project and presentation.

APPENDIX A. POLICIES

Program policies apply to all students, program faculty and the program director, regardless of location except in circumstances where discrepancies exist at SCPE locations. SCPE policies may supersede those of the program.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

[University Policy on Non-Discrimination](#)⁵⁹

[University Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#)⁶⁰

[Procedure for Accommodations Observances](#)

[Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

[Tuition](#)

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES POLICIES

[Jurisdiction of Program Policies](#)⁶¹

[Student Mistreatment and Learning Environment Concern Policy and Process](#)⁶²

[Faculty Provisions for Medical Care of Students](#)⁶³

[Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#)

ACADEMIC, ASSESSMENT & GRADING POLICIES

[Preclinical Summative Assessment Remediation Policy](#)⁶⁴

[End of Rotation Examination Policy](#)⁶⁵

[Program Summative Assessment Remediation Policy](#)⁶⁶

[Student Advancement and Academic Excellence Committee](#)⁶⁷

[Personal Health, Academic Performance Monitoring and Support Policy](#)⁶⁸

[Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)⁶⁹

[UNC-Chapel Hill Care Team Referral](#)

PROFESSIONALISM

[Attendance Policy](#)⁷⁰

[UNC Honor System and Student Conduct](#)

[Classroom and Clinical Setting Dress Policy](#)⁷¹

[Email Etiquette Policy](#)⁷²

CLINICAL PHASE POLICIES

⁵⁹ A1.02j, A3.15g

⁶⁰ A1.02j, A3.15g

⁶¹ A3.01

⁶² A3.15f

⁶³ A3.09

⁶⁴ A2.05d, f; A3.02; A3.15a-d

⁶⁵ A2.05; A3.02; A3.15a-d; A3.17; B1.01; B4.01; B4.02

⁶⁶ A2.05d, f; A3.02, A3.15a-d; B4.03

⁶⁷ A3.10

⁶⁸ A3.10

⁶⁹ A3.10

⁷⁰ A3.01, A3.02, A3.15g

⁷¹ B4.02e

⁷² A3.02

[Student Duty Hour Guidelines](#)⁷³

[Student Identification in the Clinical Learning Environment](#)⁷⁴

[Student Role in Classroom and SCPEs](#)⁷⁵

[Clinical Site Recruitment Policy](#)⁷⁶

[Student Employment Policy](#)⁷⁷

HEALTH AND SAFETY

INCIDENTAL FINDINGS POLICY

It is possible that, during a student's course of study, incidental medical findings may be noted. These incidental findings may include previously known or previously unknown pathological findings or normal variants. These discoveries may occur in physical examination, point of care ultrasound, laboratory sessions or other educational settings. When an incidental finding is noted, faculty will maintain confidentiality and instruct the student to follow up with their primary care provider, student health or emergency services, as indicated for diagnosis and consideration of management. Any students privy to the incidental finding due to their engagement in the curricular activity that led to its finding shall maintain confidentiality as well.

In accordance with the [UNC PA Program Policy on Faculty Provision of Medical Care for Students](#), program faculty, Program Director and Medical Director are not permitted to provide the student medical care or access the student's health records unless in the event of an emergency.

[Student Exposures](#)⁷⁸

[UNC Campus Health: Blood Borne Exposure & Needlestick](#)⁷⁹

[Student Incident Report](#)

[Controlled Substance Abuse Policy](#)⁸⁰

[Student Urine Drug Screen Policy](#)

[Student Criminal Background Check Policy](#)⁸¹

[Personal Security Policy](#)⁸²

ADVERSE EVENTS

[Adverse Event Policy](#)⁸³

[Hostile Intruder Policy and Procedures for UNC Chapel Hill Campus and Clinical Sites](#)⁸⁴

⁷³ A3.01, A3.02

⁷⁴ A3.06

⁷⁵ A3.04; A3.05

⁷⁶ A1.02a; A1.10a; A2.16a; A2.17b; A3.02; A3.03; C2.01

⁷⁷ A3.15e

⁷⁸ A3.07, A3.08

⁷⁹ A3.08

⁸⁰ A3.02

⁸¹ A3.02

⁸² A1.02g

⁸³ A1.03g

⁸⁴ A1.03g

APPENDIX B. STUDENT RESOURCES AND SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SCIENCES

STUDENT SERVICES

[Office of Student Services](#)

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

[UNC ONE Card](#)

[School of Medicine Identification Badges](#)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

[School of Medicine Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)

[UNC Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#)

COUNSELING SERVICES

[UNC Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

[Writing Center](#)

[Learning Center](#)

[UNC Accessibility Resources and Service](#)

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

[UNC Health Sciences Library Physician Assistant](#)

[Resources: Textbooks](#)

[UNC PA Program Medical Supplies](#)

LIBRARY SERVICES

[UNC Libraries](#)

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES

[UNC School of Medicine Information Technology](#)

EMERGENCY SERVICES/CLOSING OF THE

UNIVERSITY

[UNC Campus Safety](#)

[Alert Carolina](#)

[Carolina Ready](#)

DINING SERVICES

[Carolina Dining Services](#)

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

[UNC Transportation and Parking](#)