



**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT HANDBOOK
2019-2020**

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PREFACE

The University of South Alabama (USA) Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program Student Handbook outlines university and program specific policies and regulations for students enrolled in the University of South Alabama's Physician Assistant Studies Program. The Student Handbook is designed to supplement existing university policies and procedures, including those contained in the Graduate School Bulletin and the USA Student Handbook, the "Lowdown," which can be accessed online at <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

This Handbook should be used as a guide for students and faculty regarding day to day procedural activities in the PA Program. Specific guidelines and additional regulations for the clinical year can be found in a separate Clinical Year Handbook with additional policies specific to the clinical year.

The University of South Alabama Physician Assistant Studies Program reserves the right to amend policies. Therefore, the Student Handbook is subject to continuous review and improvement. Students will be notified in writing of any changes to this handbook if and when they occur. Students are subject to all guidelines, procedures and regulations of the most recent version of the handbook, and will be provided the most current version of the Handbook as it becomes available, May, of each year. The 2017-2018 revised edition of the handbook supplants any previous version of the Handbook.

We hope this Handbook will be useful for you during your 27-month professional education program. Please feel free to contact the University of South Alabama PA department Chair or your program faculty advisor if you have any questions.

WELCOME FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND CHAIR

Dear Matriculating PA Student,

We are so glad you are here! Thank you for entrusting your medical education to the Faculty at the University of South Alabama. There is no doubt you have made an informed decision about attending the Physician Assistant Studies program at USA, and we are excited to illustrate to you how passionate we are about making you future clinicians and our colleagues. Our program has experienced tremendous growth since inauguration in 1996. The curriculum consists of a didactic phase, lasting 15 months and clinical phase, lasting 12 months which is intensive and inclusive. There continues to be numerous changes to healthcare in the United States. There are many rural and underserved populations who continue to lack access to healthcare and as part of our mission, we hope to aid in limiting this deficit. The program here at USA continues to foster educational innovations in response to the changing requirements for PA education to include interprofessional team-based practice and patient-centered care. The goal of our program is to produce competent, culturally and emotionally intelligent PAs in an emphasis in primary care medicine.

Our program offers experienced and motivated PA Faculty who are committed to providing you with a myriad of pedagogical methodologies to include early clinical experiences in the didactic phase of training, simulations, standardized patients encounters, and lectures from subject matter experts. The curriculum includes a multitude of classes based in clinical science which also focus on the social aspects of medicine. This allows our students to integrate, synthesize, apply and communicate an appropriate understanding of both normal and abnormal physiological processes while understanding the social contexts and patterns that underline disease and illness. The PA faculty here are strongly committed to mentor you through our demanding program, and our staff are dedicated to assisting you as you progress through the program.

The Student Handbook has been developed to provide the PA student with essential information regarding the academic policies and procedures adopted by the USA PA Program and the University. It serves to clarify the administrative and logistic aspect of both the didactic and clinical phase of the program. Students are highly encouraged to read the handbook carefully and in its entirety, as well as refer back to it during your training to service any questions you may have. An additional Clinical Rotation Manual (CRM) for the clinical year will be provided during your clinical orientation week. The USA PA Program has been awarded full accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) with our next accreditation review is scheduled for 2024. The USA PA program is a graduate level program. Thus, the handbook will contain fundamental information regarding the requirements from the graduate school.

Upon receipt and review of this Handbook, each student is required to sign and return the form provided acknowledging the receipt and review of the Handbook. Your signature further denotes your understanding of its content. On behalf of the faculty and staff, thank you for allowing us to further your medical education. You have made an excellent decision!

Sincerely,

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PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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PAT CAPPS COVEY COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions is dedicated to the provision of the highest quality in basic medical sciences and health professional education to meet health care needs and to contribute to new knowledge through research

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

The University of South Alabama, with a global reach and special focus on the Gulf Coast, strives to make a difference in the lives of those it serves through promoting discovery, health and learning.

Vision Statement

The University of South Alabama will be a leading comprehensive public university internationally recognized for educational, research, and health care excellence as well as for its positive intellectual, cultural and economic impact on those it serves.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission Statement:

The mission of the University of South Alabama Physician Assistant Program is to educate compassionate and competent individuals from diverse backgrounds to become highly qualified physician assistants in accordance with the highest professional standards to provide a broad spectrum of preventative and curative healthcare to patients in various communities and clinical settings with physician supervision including underserved populations in Alabama both rural and urban. The emphasis of the program is one of primary care, including a broad foundation in the medical and surgical specialties.

Vision

The Physician Assistant Studies program curriculum is closely related to the goals of the University of South Alabama as well as to the degree. The program fosters an environment that promotes the acquisition and application of culturally sensitive, patient-oriented clinical knowledge and skills to produce a diverse workforce of primary care physician assistants who practice medicine with competence, professionalism, and compassion driven by academic excellence and a spirit of service to the community.

Program Goals

The goals of the program are to:

1. Emphasize primary care and a desire among physician assistants toward service in rural and medically underserved communities, especially in Alabama.
2. Promote excellence in healthcare by preparing competent physician assistants to practice evidence-based medicine in all clinical settings;
3. Ensure opportunities for placement of qualified military veterans through participation as a PAEA Member Program offering assistance for veteran entry into physician assistant programs;

4. To recruit, select, and educate a highly qualified diverse student body, (to include underrepresented minorities, environmentally or economically disadvantaged, rural, racially, ethnically, culturally, etc.), and provide fair and equitable admission criteria;
5. Prepare physician assistant students to provide patient-centered healthcare services as part of an inter-professional, collaborative team in a variety of clinical settings;
6. Charge physician assistant students to become graduates who reflect high standards of legal, ethical, and moral conduct;
7. Foster the growth and development of PA education by preparing physician assistant graduates who possess depth of knowledge, clinical skills and abilities for excellence in practice;
8. Promote in our physician assistant students the importance of life-long learning skills and ongoing professional development to meet and/or exceed contemporary performance standards within their area(s) of clinical practice.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The USA PA Program is committed to preparing and graduating students who are competent in the sciences; culturally, professionally, and ethically conscientious and dedicated health care providers. The faculty and students collaborate in an environment producing a curriculum that embodies a modularized approach to the basic and clinical sciences and integration of the social sciences and their impact on patient care. The emphasis of the program is one of primary care medicine, in particular, rural and medically underserved populations. Students develop skills by progressing through didactic and clinical encounters that incorporate academic, professional and short-term early experiential learning. The combination of using the highest quality educational approaches and faculty/student collaboration provides a cutting edge entry portal to health care provision as a physician assistant. We are committed to instill self-directed, lifelong learning proficiency that is integral for the practice of excellence in the health care workforce. Suggestions from all stakeholders for new or alternate approaches that will enrich and enhance the program's educational approach are most welcome.

PROGRAM HISTORY

The USA PA Program matriculated its inaugural class of 36 PA students in May, 1996 in hopes of increasing the number of healthcare providers in rural and medically underserved areas. The program received its original accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) April 1, 1996. To date the program has graduated 600+ students. The 27 month curriculum leads to a Master of Health Science degree and Certificate of PA Program completion. This allows the graduate to sit for the national certification examination and become licensed to practice medicine in conjunction with his/her physician supervisor in any state. In May 2009, the PA Program moved to new, state-of-the-art facilities on the third floor of the Health Sciences Building, located on the university's main campus. As demand for PAs increased and the program experienced a growing interest in qualified applicants, class size increased. In 2011, the first class of 40 students matriculated. There are now over 600+ USA PA program graduates working in primary care, rural and medically underserved areas, and subspecialty medicine across the United States.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS STATEMENT OF VALUES OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION

The Statement of Values of the Physician Assistant Profession defines the fundamental values that the PA profession strives to uphold. While these guidelines do not represent all actual and potential ethical responsibilities, they serve as an invaluable foundation that epitomizes the ethical and moral demeanor expected within the profession.

- Physician assistants hold as their primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings.
- Physician assistants uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.
- Physician assistants recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- Physician assistants treat equally all persons who seek their care.
- Physician assistants hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- Physician assistants assess their personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve their medical practice.
- Physician assistants actively seek to expand their knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- Physician assistants work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- Physician assistants use their knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- Physician assistants respect their professional relationship with physicians.
- Physician assistants share and expand knowledge within the profession.

COMPETENCIES OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION

The PA profession defines the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes required and provide educational experiences as needed in order for physician assistants to acquire and demonstrate these competencies.

Medical Knowledge

Medical knowledge includes an understanding of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. Physician assistants must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigatory and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Understand etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- Identify signs and symptoms of medical conditions
- Select and interpret appropriate diagnostic or lab studies

- Manage general medical and surgical conditions to include understanding the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities
- Identify the appropriate site of care for presenting conditions, including identifying emergent cases and those requiring referral or admission
- Identify appropriate interventions for prevention of conditions
- Identify the appropriate methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- Differentiate between the normal and the abnormal in anatomy, physiology, laboratory findings, and other diagnostic data
- Appropriately use history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate a differential diagnosis
- Provide appropriate care to patients with chronic conditions.

Interpersonal & Interprofessional Communication Skills

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass verbal, nonverbal, and written exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, their patients' families, physicians, professional associates, and the health care system. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information
- Appropriately adapt communication style and messages to the context of the individual patient interaction.
- Work effectively with physician and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group
- Apply an understanding of human behavior
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- Accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the care process for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

Patient Care

Patient care includes age appropriate assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, patient-centered, culturally sensitive, timely, efficient, and equitable for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of wellness. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- Gather essential and accurate information about their patients
- Make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence, and clinical judgment
- Develop and carry out patient management plans
- Counsel and educate patients and their families
- Competently perform medical and surgical procedures considered essential in the area of practice
- Provide health care services and education aimed at preventing health problems or maintaining health.

Professionalism

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one's own. Physician assistants must know their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires that PAs practice without impairment from substance abuse or mental health conditions and cognitive deficiency. Physician assistants must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Physician assistants are expected to demonstrate:

- Understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- Professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers
- Respect, compassion, and integrity
- Responsiveness to the needs of patients and society
- Accountability to patients, society, and the profession
- Commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development
- Commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- Sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and disabilities
- Self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative.

Practice-based Learning and Improvement

Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which clinicians engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
- Locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health problems
- Obtain and apply information about their own population of patients and the larger population from which their patients are drawn
- Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- Apply information technology to manage information, access online medical information, and support their own education
- Facilitate the learning of students and/or other health care professionals
- Recognize and appropriately address gender, cultural, cognitive, emotional, and other biases; gaps in medical knowledge; and physical limitations in themselves and others.

Systems-based Practice

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Physician assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that is of optimal value. PAs should work to improve the larger health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:

- Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education
- Effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- Understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care

- Practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- Advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- Partner with supervising physicians, health care managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery of health care and patient outcomes
- Accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- Use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education
- Apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide more effective, efficient patient care and utilize the systems responsible for the appropriate payment of services.

ACADEMIC, DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Academic Disciplinary Actions refers to penalties or sanctions imposed for violation of academic regulations against cheating, plagiarism or other behavior indicative of inappropriate academic conduct. Incidents of suspected academic disciplinary violations shall be handled initially at the level at which the incident occurs (e.g., didactic/clinical course, research project) and at the department level, reported immediately to the department chair.

Initial review, decision and action(s) shall remain local, and may involve the instructor(s), academic supervisor(s) of clinical students, faculty advisor, director of clinical education and chair. Instructors are free to discuss alleged violations informally with the student(s) thought to be involved, but should avoid revealing the identity of other students involved, if at all possible. Suspected violations that would result in a penalty should be handled by the appropriate instructor(s), student's faculty advisor, department chair and associate dean, in direct communication with the student(s) involved, within one week of the discovery of the suspected infraction and before the imposition of a penalty.

After discussion with the student(s) involved and their response, the appropriate instructor(s), in conjunction with the student's faculty advisor, department chair and associate dean shall conclude, within one week (5 days) after the initial meeting with the student shall review the available evidence, whether the suspected violation(s) occurred, the nature of the suspected violations, the nature of the evidence of these violations and the range of penalties under consideration. They may also choose to consult with the dean or associate dean of the college, and/or the Office of the Senior Vice President for academic affairs. If the conclusion is that the suspected violation(s) did occur, the instructor(s), faculty advisor, and department chair shall also choose an appropriate penalty.

The most severe penalty available at this level of review and action shall be failure in the course, dismissal from a project, or repeat of a clinical rotation. The department retains the option to impose more severe penalties (e.g., dismissal from the program) at this level. Elements to consider include prior incidents of academic disciplinary action in a student's record. The department chair may discuss the issue with a student and choose to convene a disciplinary hearing according to the procedures of the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions Academic Standards Committee.

The student shall be notified immediately, and in writing within one week (5 days), of this decision, the basis for this decision and (when applicable) the penalty imposed. This notification will come from the instructor(s) and department chair. Students whose penalty is failure in the course in question will not be allowed to drop the course and should be so informed. Students should also be informed at this time of their right (and attendant procedures) for appeal. See the USA Student Handbook at <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

Reporting of Initial Action(s)

A copy of the letter outlining the initial decision and action to the student(s) involved in cases of academic disciplinary violations should also be directed to the following parties:

- Student (s)
- Dean's office of the student's college
- Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

The department will follow USA guidelines for grade grievances as outlined in the USA Student Handbook <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

GRIEVANCES

General Complaints

If a student has a complaint, the student must provide a written description of the complaint, including the date and time of the event, the person or group with whom the student has the complaint, and the names of any witnesses. The written complaint must be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students within 30 days of the event. Complaints about academic matters also may be submitted to the deans and department chairs.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Complaints

Students are protected by the University of South Alabama's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy. Students may submit a written complaint to the compliance officer as described above or to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

Final Grade Grievances

A final grade grievance is defined as a student complaint regarding an academic action taken by instructional personnel in assigning a final grade for a course, qualifying exam or comprehensive exam. In addition to complaints against a particular instructor, students may also file complaints against a committee concerning academic evaluations that adversely affect them. Normally, such complaints can be resolved quickly through discussions with the faculty member involved. In some situations, the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at that level. For such cases, a student may file a formal final grade grievance using the procedures outline in the Lowdown.

For a complaint about a final course grade or other academic evaluation to be considered, the complaint must be based on one or more of the following grounds and upon allegation that the ground(s) cited influenced the grade assignment to the student's detriment:

1. Arithmetical or clerical error
2. Arbitrary or capricious evaluation on the part of the instructor
3. Substantial failure on the part of the instructor to follow the course syllabus or other announced grading policies
4. Extraordinary mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control

Students may not file a grade grievance until a final grade is received in a course. This procedure may not be used to complain about an instructor's grading policy, assignments, the difficulty of a course, or other comparable matters. Finally, students may not file a grievance about a final course grade that was assigned as the result of an academic misconduct procedure.

Additional review and proceedings for grievances will follow the policies outline in the Lowdown on pages 175-180.

See the USA Student Handbook at

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

STUDENT ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY

Overview

Any dishonesty related to academic work or records constitutes academic misconduct. This includes --- but is not limited to --- activities such as giving or receiving unauthorized aid in tests and examinations; improperly obtaining a copy of an examination; plagiarism; unauthorized submission of the same work in separate courses; misrepresentation of information; and the alteration of transcripts or university records.

All matters related to academic misconduct are the responsibility of the academic units involved and the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Faculty are expected to report suspected cases of academic misconduct.

Procedures

1. Initial reporting

When evidence suggests that academic misconduct has occurred, the instructor of record will assign a penalty, and the involved student will be informed. The incident and the assigned penalty will be reported into the official case record by the initial reporter. In most cases, the initial reporter will be the instructor of record, although department chairs, deans, or other involved parties may also do so.

- a. The initial reporter should gather and submit into the official case record all material related to the case, including the course syllabus, the work in question, and any other documentation.
- b. The initial reporter should clearly detail the alleged offense and any prescribed penalties.
- c. Upon receiving the initial report, the College in which the offense is alleged to have occurred is responsible for processing the incident. Notification will then be sent to the student, instructing the student to access the charges. Notification will also be sent to involved instructors, department chairs, deans, and the Office of the Provost.
- d. A hold will be placed on the student's account, preventing withdrawal from the course(s) in question. If the charges are dismissed at any point, the hold will be lifted.
- e. Once the charges have been accessed, a student who wishes to dispute an academic misconduct charge has seventy-two (72) hours to submit a written response. Failure to respond within seventy-two (72) hours will be considered agreement with the charge, acceptance of the penalty, and forfeiture of the right of appeal.
- f. If the student has not accessed the charges within seventy-two (72) hours of the initial notification being sent, a second notification will be sent. The student has an additional seventy-two (72) hours to access the charges. Thereafter, failure to access the charges will be considered agreement with the charge, acceptance of the penalty, and forfeiture of the right of appeal.

2. Departmental Conference

On receipt of a student's written response, the chair of the department in which the infraction is alleged to have occurred will arrange for a conference, the purpose of which is to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution. The chair should schedule and hold the conference as soon as practicable, ensuring there is not delay that might unfairly penalize the student.

Additional review and proceedings for student academic misconduct will follow the policies outline in the Lowdown on pages 181-184.

See the USA Student Handbook at

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR POLICY

Student Policies and Procedures: <http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/alliedhealth/links.html>

Students in the College of Allied Health Professions professional programs are expected to adhere to the general student behavior expectations as defined in the USA Lowdown and to display professional behavior, consistent with the standards set by the College, the individual's Department, and the applicable healthcare profession.

In order to develop the skills and professional characteristics necessary to function as a healthcare professional, it is important that the student be an active participant in the educational process.

I. College Expectation of Students

Consistent with the standards determined by the College and the individual academic department, students must demonstrate the attitudes, characteristics and behaviors described by the individual profession's Code of Ethics and Core Values (See departmental Student Handbook).

Some examples include:

- a.) Responsibility and dependability
- b.) Honesty, integrity and trustworthiness
- c.) Professional appearance and demeanor
- d.) Commitment to excellence
- e.) Respect
- f.) Communication and collaboration
- g.) Commitment to ethical principles
- h.) Accountability
- i.) Altruism
- j.) Compassion/Caring
- k.) Social responsibility
- l.) Cultural competence
- m.) Commitment to self-improvement and ongoing professional development

Access to the student's departmental file and the contents therein, including any documentation of either outstanding or unsatisfactory performance, will be granted consistent with the *Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act* ("FERPA") and the *Lowdown*.

The faculty may determine that any single incident may be sufficient cause for initiating the departmental professional behavior policy's review and remediation and/or disciplinary procedures which could lead to dismissal from the program.

II. Documentation of Exemplary Performance

The Department faculty, clinical instructor, or a fellow student may from time to time see evidence of student(s) performance in the Department that they find to be outstanding. Such outstanding performance may be documented using the "Professional Behavior Report" (PBR) form described below. While there is no requirement to document outstanding performance, should such be done, the positive PBR should be submitted to the Department Chair for review and approval. A copy of the document will be provided to the student and the original will be placed in the student's department file. The intent of the positive PBR is to encourage, recognize and document exemplary behavior.

III. Documentation of Unsatisfactory Performance

A faculty member who observes a student's behavior which is inconsistent with the Department's expectations is expected to document the incident of unsatisfactory performance using a PBR form.

IV. Procedure for Review of Documented Unsatisfactory Performance

A. The Department "Professional Behavior Review Committee" ("PBRC")

1. Each Department shall have a "Professional Behavior Review Committee" ("PBRC"). It shall be the duty of the PBRC to review all PBRs referred to the committee, complete the procedure outlined below, and recommend any appropriate remedial measures or discipline.
2. The PBRC will be comprised of the three (3) department faculty members and two (2) non-voting department student members. The three faculty members and one alternate shall be elected annually by the department faculty. The Department Chair may not serve as PBRC Chair. In order to avoid conflict of interest, the faculty alternate will serve in place of any committee member who files the PBR in question or is directly involved. If a department has insufficient numbers of faculty, the Department Chair will appoint faculty members from other departments within the College. The two student members and one alternate will be appointed by the Department Chair each fall semester for a one-year term. The student alternate will participate if a student member is unable to attend.
3. Consistent with IV. A. 2. Above, the faculty members serving on the PBRC will elect one of the committee faculty members as chair of the PBRC for the duration of the committee's one year term, with faculty alternate substituting in this role in cases where chair has a conflict as described above.

B. Filing of a PBR by faculty, clinical instructor, or student

1. A faculty member may report an incident of inappropriate professional behavior by completing the first page of the PBR form and submitting it to the Department Chair, or to the PBRC's Chair if the Department Chair is filing the PBR.
2. A student may report inappropriate behavior to the faculty member in whose class the behavior occurred (or to the Department Chair if the incident is not associated with a particular course or faculty). That faculty member will provide the student a PBR form on which to document the unprofessional behavior. The student will submit the completed PBR to the faculty member (or to the Department Chair if the incident is not associated with a particular class or faculty).
3. A clinical instructor who observes inappropriate professional behavior must notify the department clinical coordinator who will provide the clinical instructor a PBR form for documentation of the behavior.
4. If a faculty member receives a PBR completed by a student or clinical instructor, the faculty member will submit the PBR to the Department Chair, or the Chair of the PBRC if the faculty member is the Department Chair.

C. Processing of a PBR for Unsatisfactory Performance

Note: The time frames described in this policy may be subjected to change if the events occur at times when classes are not in session.

1. Upon receipt of a PBR for unsatisfactory performance, the Department Chair (or Chair of the PBRC if faculty reporting is Department Chair) will forward a copy of the PBR to the student made the subject of the PBR (hereinafter "subject student") and to the subject student's faculty advisor. If the PBR is filed by a student, that student's name will be redacted before it is provided to the subject student and the advisor. If the charged student's faculty advisor is the person who completed the PBR, another faculty member, appointed by the Chair, will substitute for the faculty advisor in the initial process.
2. Within 3 business days, the Department Chair, or the Chair of the PBRC if the Department Chair is the complaining faculty member, will meet to discuss the issue with 1) the faculty advisor, 2) the faculty member or student who submitted the PBR, and 3) the subject student. The subject student will be encouraged to provide an explanation of the behavior and plan of action to address the behavior. Upon conclusion, the Department Chair/Chair of PBRC will document the resolution/action plan of the subject situation in the bottom section of page one of the PBR with a formative emphasis on improving the unsatisfactory behavior, and obtain the signatures of the complaining faculty/student and the subject student to document agreement with the action plan. The signed PBR will be placed in the student's file by the Department Chair, with a copy provided to the student. The faculty advisor will be responsible to assure that the action plan is implemented and completed.
3. If the subject student fails to comply with the agreed upon remedial/corrective actions, or the issue cannot be resolved by this informal procedure, the faculty advisor will turn the matter over to the PBRC for a full hearing as described below within 5 business days of determination of same.
4. Any subsequent PBR regarding this student on the same issue or another issue will not be submitted for informal resolution but will be submitted directly to the Department PBRC.

D. Subsequent PBR and/or Hearing by the PBRC

1. Upon receipt of an unresolved or subsequent PBR on a given student, the Department Chair/Chair of PBRC will distribute copies of the PBR to all Department PBRC members and the subject student within 24 hours. The Chair of the PBRC will schedule a PBRC hearing with the subject student within five (5) University business days, and the subject student may submit a written response to the Department Chair no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting for distribution to the committee.
2. At the hearing, the faculty member who wrote or received the PBR and the subject student will present pertinent information and/or relevant witnesses to the PBRC. Neither the faculty member nor the student may be represented or accompanied by anyone at the hearing, including, but not limited to legal counsel. Only members of the PBRC, the subject student, and the faculty who filed the PBR will be present throughout the hearing. If a student has filed the PBR, they will be present at the hearing as called by the PBRC only to provide their pertinent information. The PBRC

may call other individuals to provide information related to the charge. A witness shall attend the hearing only to the extent necessary for him/her to offer information.

3. The PBRC will have the right to ask questions of the complaining individual, the faculty member presenting the issue, the subject student, and/or any witnesses/pertinent individuals regarding the incident(s).
4. The PBRC will consider any prior unsatisfactory behavioral performance issues of the charged students in determining its recommendations.
5. At the conclusion of the hearing, the PBRC shall decide on remedial and/or corrective actions or sanctions, which may include immediate dismissal from the program. The decision of the PBRC will be recorded on PBR page 2 with signature of the PBRC Chair. Written notification of the decision will be hand delivered and signed for by the subject student or mailed by the Department to the subject student (U.S. Mail with Return Receipt Requested) not more than five (5) business days after the conclusion of the hearing, with a copy retained in the PBRC file, in the student's departmental file and a copy submitted to the Dean's office.
6. If the student does not comply with the corrective action plan within the specified time-frame, the PBRC may request the Dean's office or the Graduate School to dismiss the student.

E. Appeal of Decision

1. Within five (5) business days of the receipt of the PBRC's decision, the student may appeal by requesting the Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions to have the College Academic Standards Committee consider the appeal. The charged student may accompany the appeal with a written statement of his/her position.
2. The College of Allied Health Academic Standards Committee ("Standards Committee") will meet within ten (10) business days to consider the appeal.
3. In considering the appeal, the College Academic Standards Committee shall review the PBR and all relevant information. The Academic Standards Committee may interview the faculty/person filing the PBR, the Department Chair, and the subject student's faculty advisor, the Chair of the PBRC, the subject student and pertinent witnesses. The subject student shall be given no less than five (5) business days' notice of the aforementioned meeting. No one, including the subject student may be represented or accompanied by anyone at the hearing, including, but not limited to legal counsel.
4. After completing its review of the matter, the College Academic Standards Committee shall have three (3) business days to make its decision and notify the College Dean. The College Dean shall review and affirm or question the committee's decision and notify the subject student by hand delivery signed for by the subject student or by U.S. Mail (Return Receipt Requested) and the Department Chair of the appeal decision within five (5) University business days of said decision. The decision of the College Dean shall be final.

CAHP PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR REPORT (PBR) Department Form p.1

Student's Name: _____ Department: _____ Date _____

Filed: _____ Filed By: _____ (circle one: *faculty / clinical instructor*
/ student)

This Professional Behavior Report is (circle one):	Positive	Negative
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Describe Observed Student Behavior: *(be specific, with dates, courses, specific incident, setting, observers)*

Report received by: _____ Date: _____

Initial Departmental Remedial/Corrective Action (be specific, include time intervals, if appropriate):

Self-Reflection and Proposal By Student: *(attach as a separate sheet)*

Specific Remedial/Corrective Action or Action Plan By Initial Faculty Group:

Signatures upon completion of the meeting:

Student: _____ Date: _____

plan.

Faculty Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Filing PBR: _____ Date: _____

Dept Chair: _____ Date: _____

Student to check one box:

• I (☐ agree) (☐ disagree) with the

Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions, University of South Alabama

CAHP PBR (PBRC) Form p.2 (text boxes will expand as you type)

Student's Name: _____ Department: _____

Date(s) Related PBR was filed: _____ Related PBR(s) Filed By: _____

<i>Referred to PBRC because (circle one):</i>	Student Failed to Comply with Initial Plan	Student Did Not Agree with Initial Action	Subsequent PBR Filed on Student
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Remedial/Corrective Action Determined by PBRC (be specific, include time intervals):

Self-Reflection and Proposal By Student: (attach as a separate sheet)

Specific Remedial/Corrective Action By PBRC:

Signature upon completion of the meeting:

PBRC Chair: _____ Date: _____

Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions, University of South Alabama

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

The program consists of preclinical and clinical components. The preclinical component is designed to provide a solid foundation for the clinical component. During the clinical component the student refines the medical knowledge and clinical skills needed for professional practice.

Successful completion of the program requires that the student be able to:

1. Complete 121 hours of graduate course work consisting of 73 credit hours of didactic course work and 48 credit hours of clinical course work.
2. Obtain an accurate and detailed patient history.
3. Perform complete and focused physical examinations.
4. Establish working and differential diagnosis, order and interpret diagnostic evaluations for all organ systems to include: laboratory tests (blood, urine, spinal fluids, and cultures); imaging studies (plain film radiography, radiographic contrast studies, ultrasound studies, computerized tomography studies, MRI studies & electrocardiogram.
5. Develop and manage a treatment plan. Record patient data: (a) Written notes and charting and (b) Electronic medical record.
6. Order and/or administer therapeutic medications (a) in hospitals and clinics and (b) via written or electronic prescription.
7. Perform therapeutic medical interventions and procedures.
8. Counsel and educate patients regarding medical, therapeutic, and behavioral problems.
9. Interact with patients and the medical community in a professional manner.
10. Make appropriate referrals.
11. Provide culturally competent care to diverse patient populations.
12. Maintain the highest professional standards in the classroom and in the clinical setting

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Technical Standards for Admission to the Physician Assistant Program and Completion of the Master of Health Science Degree.

General Abilities

The student is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, taste, and smell. All data received by the senses must be integrated, analyzed and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. In addition, the individual is expected to possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, equilibrium, and movement.

Observational Ability

The student is expected to participate in and observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences.

Communication Ability

The student is expected to be able to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and postures and to perceive nonverbal communications. This requires the ability to read, write, and effectively utilize the English language. The student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and other professionals.

Motor Ability

The student is expected to be able to perform gross and fine motor movements required to perform a complete physical examination. The student is expected to have the psychomotor skills necessary to perform or assist with procedures, treatments, administration of medication, managing of equipment, and emergency interventions. The student is expected to be able to maintain consciousness and equilibrium, and have the physical strength and stamina to perform satisfactorily in clinical experiences. The student should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers. The student must be able to perform laboratory tests and work with scientific and other instruments and machinery utilized in practice as a physician assistant.

Critical Thinking Ability

The student is expected to have the ability to develop and refine problem-solving skills. This includes the ability to measure, calculate, analyze and synthesize objective as well as subjective data and make decisions that reflect consistent and thoughtful deliberation and clinical judgment. In addition, the student should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.

Interpersonal Abilities

The student is expected to have the emotional stability required to exercise sound judgment, complete assessment and intervention activities. The student is expected to establish rapport and maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with individuals, families and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds. The student is expected to have the flexibility to function effectively under stress. Concern for others, integrity, accountability, interest and motivation are necessary personal, professional and behavioral qualities.

Behavioral, Professional and Social Attributes

A student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. The student must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and education process.

MEDICAL EDUCATION CONTENT

The subject matter in PA education can be of a very sensitive and sometimes disturbing nature. Students are reminded that the purpose of the educational sessions in physician assistant training is to prepare students to provide physician supervised health care services that are culturally sensitive to a diverse patient population in a variety of healthcare settings. Healthcare delivery should occur without regard to the student's own personal beliefs, biases and stereotypes.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION EDUCATION

The physical examination is the process by which the physician assistant investigates the body of a patient for objective signs of disease. It generally follows the taking of the medical history, a subjective description of the symptoms as experienced by the patient. Together with the medical history, the physical examination aids in determining patient diagnosis and formulation of an appropriate treatment plan. The nature of learning physical examination skills requires students to spend a significant amount of time and effort practicing, both during scheduled laboratory time and at home. While in the program, students are required to practice on each other as models during laboratory time. In order to effectively accomplish this task, students must be dressed appropriately for physical exam lab – for men and women, appropriate attire is gym shorts and a t-shirt which can be removed. For women, a sports bra should also be worn. The female breast and both male and female genito-urinary examinations will be practiced using the university's simulations lab. All other portions of the physical examination will be practiced on other classmates. It is imperative that you practice professionalism and respect each other's dignity during these laboratory sessions.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

The entire curriculum is comprised of 121 semester hours taken over (7) consecutive semesters. The (4) semesters of Pre-clinical and (3) semesters of Clinical work are outlined below.

1 st semester Summer 17 credit hours		2 nd semester Fall 19 credit hours		3 rd semester Spring 19 credit hours		4 th semester Summer 18 credit hours	
PA 510 Clinical Med I	4	PA 520 Clinical Med II	6	PA 530 Clinical Med III	6	PA 540 Clinical Med IV	7
PA 510L Clinical Medicine I Lab	1	PA 520L Clinical Medicine II Lab	1	PA 530L Clinical Medicine III Lab	1	PA 540L Clinical Medicine IV Lab	1
PA 511 Anatomy	5	PA 521 Pathophysiology I	4	PA 531 Pathophysiology II	4	PA 541 Pathophysiology III	3
PA 512 Physiology	6	PA 522 Pharmacology I	4	PA 532 Pharmacology II	4	PA 542 Pharmacology III	3
PA 514 Introduction to Infectious Disease	1	PA 523 Diagnostic Data and Interpretation I	2	PA 533 Diagnostic Data and Interpretation II	2	PA 536 Issues in Healthcare and Population Health IV	2
		PA 516 Issues in Healthcare and Population Health II	2	PA 526 Issues in Healthcare and Population Health III	2	PA 544 Diagnostic Data and Interpretation III	2
CLINICAL YEAR							
5 th semester Fall – 16 credit hours		6 th semester Spring – 16 credit hours		7 th semester Summer – 16 credit hours			
Clinical Rotations: PA 550, 555, 560, 570, 580, 590, 591, 592	16	Clinical Rotations: PA 550, 555, 560, 570, 580, 590, 591, 592	16	Clinical Rotations: PA 550, 555, 560, 570, 580, 590, 591, 592, 593	12		
Clinical Rotations as listed above are completed the last three semesters while enrolled in the physician assistant program. The assignment of clinical rotations varies each semester.				PA 595 Summative Evaluation: Written exam OSCEs Board review Capstone Project	4		

Course Title	Length	Credit Hours
Internal Medicine Preceptorship	4 weeks	4
Psychiatry Preceptorship	4 weeks	4
Pediatrics Preceptorship	4 weeks	4
2 Primary Care / Family Practice Preceptorship	4 weeks	4 each
Surgery Preceptorship	4 weeks	4
OB/GYN Preceptorship	4 weeks	4
Emergency Medicine Preceptorship	4 weeks	4
3 Elective Rotations	4 weeks	4 each

Many rotations are based in the University of South Alabama healthcare system, as well as in rural and/or medically underserved areas. Private and group practices may also be utilized if they have an affiliation agreement with the USA Physician Assistant Program. Students enrolled in the physician assistant program are not allowed to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. The program will coordinate clinical sites and preceptors for program required rotations.

POLICY FOR CLASS SCHEDULE CHANGES

Changes to the classroom schedule can occur at any time, and can sometimes happen within hours of the scheduled class time. Any changes will be communicated verbally and/or via e-mail to students in a timely fashion.

REGISTRATION/WITHDRAWAL

Physician assistant students will be responsible to register for classes according to university policy and deadlines. The program will assist students by providing course numbers and sections for each student to register prior to the open of registration. **Failure to register for courses at the appropriate scheduled time may result in loss of financial aid for the semester. The program cannot intercede with the Office of Financial Aid or Government Rules and Regulations regarding these matters.**

Additional information regarding registration can be found at:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/registrar/>

Students should refer to the university's academic calendar:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/academiccalendar/> for withdrawal dates. However, withdrawal from any individual course in the physician assistant curriculum will result in withdrawal from the program.

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC CALENDAR

For questions regarding the academic calendar, please visit:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/academiccalendar/index.html>

CLINICAL YEAR: ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic calendar for the clinical year will be provided by the Directors of Clinical Education prior to the clinical year. NOTE: Clinical students do NOT receive holidays off during the clinical year. The only exception is the holiday break in December. Students should not plan to attend weddings, family reunions, graduations or other social events during these 12 months. The clinical rotation schedule is subject to change at any time during the clinical year.

Department of Physician Assistant Studies

Estimated Tuition and Fees*

*based on 2018-2019 tuition and fee schedule-subject to change

	DIDACTIC/PRE-CLINICAL YEAR				CLINICAL YEAR			
	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	TOTALS
Tuition/Credit Hours	17	19	19	18	16	16	16	121
In-State Tuition (\$465/sem. hr.)	\$7,905	\$8,835	\$8,835	\$8,370	\$7,440	\$7,440	\$7,440	\$56,265
Out of State Tuition (\$930/sem. hr.)	\$15,810	\$17,670	\$17,670	\$16,740	\$14,880	\$14,880	\$14,880	\$112,530
Departmental and University Fees								
Resource Fee	\$145	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$1,087
Academic Infrastructure & Tech Fee	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$700
BMD Library Fee	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$70
Anatomy / Special Fee	\$275	----	----	----	----	----	----	\$275
General Lab Fee - PA 510	\$100	----	----	----	----	----	----	\$100
Background Check/Urine Drug Screen*	\$82	----	----	\$82	----	----	----	\$164
Professional Liability Coverage	----	\$12	\$12	\$1	\$12	\$12	\$1	\$50
Course Fees-PA 516/526/536	---	\$35	\$35	\$35	---	---	---	\$105
BLS/ACLS Fee - PA 540	----	----	----	\$100	----	----	----	\$100
Course Fees-PA 540/PA 595-PACKRAT	---	---	---	\$40	---	---	\$40	\$80
PAEA End of Rotation Exams	---	---	---	---	\$240	---	---	\$240
Exxat: Clinical Software	----	----	----	----	\$63	\$62	\$62	\$187
Exxat: Patient Tracking*	----	----	----	----	\$80	----	----	\$80
Graduation Application Fee	----	----	----	----	----	----	\$50	\$50
Total Estimated Fees	\$712	\$314	\$314	\$525	\$662	\$341	\$420	\$3,288
TOTAL In-State Tuition & Fees	\$8,617	\$9,149	\$9,149	\$8,895	\$8,102	\$7,781	\$7,860	\$59,553
TOTAL Out of State Tuition & Fees	\$16,522	\$17,984	\$17,984	\$17,265	\$15,542	\$15,221	\$15,300	\$115,818
Estimated Additional Student Expenses*								
Books	\$800	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$2,600
Equipment	\$2,000	----	----	----	----	----	----	\$2,000
Health Insurance (single)**	\$579	\$2,315	----	----	\$2,315	----	----	\$5,209
Scrubs	\$30	----	----	----	\$60	----	----	\$90
Lab Coats	----	\$40	----	----	\$40	----	----	\$80
Photo for Class Composite	----	----	----	----	----	\$25	----	\$25
Convocation Cap & Gown	----	----	----	----	----	----	\$85	\$85
Housing***	\$2,557	\$2,557	\$2,557	\$2,557	\$2,557	\$2,557	\$2,557	\$17,899
Food***	\$2,032	\$2,032	\$2,032	\$2,032	\$2,032	\$2,032	\$2,032	\$14,224
Travel***	\$711	\$711	\$711	\$711	\$711	\$711	\$711	\$4,977
Total Estimated Additional Student Expenses	\$8,709	\$8,055	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$7,915	\$5,525	\$5,585	\$47,189
TOTAL Estimated In-State Tuition, Fees, Expenses	\$17,326	\$17,204	\$14,849	\$14,595	\$16,017	\$13,306	\$13,445	\$106,742
TOTAL Estimated Out-of-State Tuition, Fees, Expenses	\$25,231	\$26,039	\$23,684	\$22,965	\$23,457	\$20,746	\$20,885	\$163,007

Tuition, Fees and Expenses presented are estimated based on 2018-2019 tuition, fee and expense schedule and are subject to change.

*Student pays directly, not billed by USA

Based on current rates for USA Student Health Insurance and **subject to change.

***Estimations provided by the Office of

Financial Aid

Clinical Year expenses may include:

- Miscellaneous application fees (vary per clinical site)
- Travel and Housing expenses are subject to change depending on the clinical rotation site distance from campus.
- Travel to and from clinical site, some travel expenses may be supplemented by Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC)
- Housing (some housing may be made available via AHEC)

PROGRAM POLICY

ACADEMIC ADVISING

At the beginning of the professional curriculum, each student will be assigned an academic advisor, and each student will set up to meet with his or her academic advisor no later than midterm of each semester during the didactic year and each semester during the clinical year. These sessions occur in the privacy of the faculty advisor's office, or for clinical students by phone and/or by email. Topics for discussion include professionalism, academic performance, and personal issues. Documentation of the advising session is placed in the student's file for record-keeping. Additional meetings with a student's academic advisor or other faculty member can be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

STUDENT WORK POLICY: EMPLOYMENT

The USA PA program strongly discourages any type of outside employment during our consecutive 27 month course of studies. Employment during the program may result in academic difficulties and may prevent the student from acquiring the level of knowledge needed to perform adequately as a physician assistant student during the didactic and clinical phases of the program. The program course of studies will not be altered due to student work obligations.

Students may not serve or perform as a staff or faculty member of the program. Furthermore, students may not be employed by preceptors or health care facilities while on their clinical rotations. Should such a request be made of the student, the student should notify the program director immediately.

STUDENT WORK POLICY: VOLUNTEER AND WORK EXPERIENCES

Students who are involved in volunteer or paid work during the course of the USA PA training program are strictly prohibited from using their affiliation with the program in any aspect of the volunteer or paid work. Any activity undertaken by the student that is independent of the program is NOT covered by the university's liability insurance associated with physician assistant training.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Use of the Department telephone is prohibited with the exception of urgent situations. Routine messages on the department phone are not permitted. It is the responsibility of the student to be prepared for class with needed supplies. It is not the responsibility of departmental staff to provide students with routine supplies.

PAWS SYSTEM and USA STUDENT E-MAIL

In order to access PAWS, the Personal Access Web System, you will first need your Student ID or JAG Number. Once you have this, go to <http://www.southalabama.edu>, and then click on the blue PAWS logo at the bottom. You will now be permitted to set up your student e-mail account. Please establish your account as soon as possible to receive university and departmental communications. The PAWS system is where you will also make changes to any personal information such as your current address.

E-mail is the preferred mode of communication between the program faculty, staff and students. The program will only use the student's assigned USA e-mail account. Personal e-mail accounts will not be honored by the program. **Students are encouraged to check their student e-mail accounts on a daily basis.** Failure to check your student e-mail account is not an acceptable excuse for missing a program event or notification.

FOOD/DRINK

Food is strictly prohibited in the classrooms. Water and other beverages are permissible in the classroom but must be in a closable container.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Use of cell phones in the class room is disruptive behavior and strictly prohibited. Disruptive behavior is subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the University of South Alabama Student Handbook, "Lowdown" <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>. Students must turn their cell phones OFF while in the classroom, physical examination lab, simulation lab, or standardized patient lab. Students are not allowed to leave the classroom to accept cell phone calls except in cases of emergency and prior authorization from the course instructor.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS

The HAHN building where the USA PA program classrooms are housed, is a wireless facility. The program allows the use of laptop computers in the classroom to enhance student learning. Although having a laptop in class opens up new learning possibilities for students, sometimes students utilize this privilege in ways that are inappropriate. You are encouraged to bring your computer to lecture and lab, but, while in the class, you will use your computer only for purposes related to course work.

Component	Specifications
Processor	Intel processors i5 or i7
Operating System	Microsoft 10 PC-Windows 10 or better MAC –OSX 10.11 or better
Hard Drive	256 GB or greater
RAM	8 GB or greater
Software	Adobe Reader Microsoft Office 365 (free with JagMail email account)
Network	Wireless 802.11 g/n
Connectivity Ports	HDMI/Display Port/VGA

Please refrain from instant messaging, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, playing games, social networking sites, etc. during class time. Acceptable uses include note-taking, following along with the instructor on PowerPoint, viewing demonstrations and other class activities, as well as working on assigned in-class activities, projects, and discussions that require laptop use. It is easy for your laptop to become a distraction to you and to those around you. Thus, you are expected to be considerate of the instructor and other students. Inappropriate uses of the laptop are considered unprofessional behavior. Such behavior will be noted and may result in the class being prohibited from laptop use.

Social Media Policies: USA students are expected to adhere to the standards of conduct listed below in the clinical setting. Laws and policies respecting conflict of interest, as well as applicable policies and guidelines for interacting with patients, preceptors, etc., apply online and in the social media context, just as they do in personal interactions. Students are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites. Please read the following guidelines and policies and adhere to them throughout the clinical year.

1. Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about the University, its staff, or students, or your patients.

2. Post only content that is not threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.
3. Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the University or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. USA's name or marks may not be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.
4. By posting content to any social media site, the poster represents that the poster owns or otherwise has all of the rights necessary to lawfully use that content, or that the use of the content is permitted by fair use. Posters also agree that they will not knowingly provide misleading or false information, and they will indemnify and hold the University harmless for any claims resulting from the content.
5. Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, you should contact the Program Director for clarification.
6. Do not post information, photos or videos that will reflect negatively on you, your clinical rotation site, your preceptor, your academic department, or USA.
7. It is strongly advised to avoid participation in actions or movements that may cause harm or have a negative impact on the reputation of USA and the services it offers.
8. Participation in Social Networking during clinical rotation hours is strictly forbidden. (ie. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat)
9. Posting material that is unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, slanderous, hateful, or embarrassing to any other person or entity is strictly forbidden. Interpretation of the above is subjective in nature and could be determined in a court of law and not necessarily a "jury of YOUR peers."
10. Personally identifiable information that can be used to locate someone offline, including but not limited to: photographs, location, patient identifiers, job setting or ID badges, phone numbers, home or local addresses, birth date, and e-mail addresses, should not be posted.
11. It is recommended that you not post items such as:
 - a. "I will be out of town during..." (Posts such as these notify others when your home will be vacant and you leave your residence vulnerable to thieves).
 - b. "I'm so tired I can't keep my eyes open," etc. (If a patient were to be injured during your care and the above post was discovered you could be academically dismissed from the PA program and possibly sued by family members).
12. USA strictly forbids "friending" of patients or caregivers on social media websites. Students in patient care roles should not initiate or accept friend requests except in unusual circumstances such as the situation where an in-person friendship pre-dates the treatment relationship.

13. The USA PA Program discourages preceptors from initiating “friend” requests with students they oversee. Similarly, the PA Program prohibits students from accepting “friend” requests from preceptors. Either of these activities have the potential to negatively impact your rotation grade and obscure the barrier between personal and professional boundaries.
14. The USA PA Program also strictly prohibits text messaging between students and patients. Texting is an abbreviated form of communication with a great possibility of miscommunication – but more importantly, patient confidentiality will be compromised.
15. Keep in mind that you should not disclose confidential information about any clinical rotation site, its professionals, or patients. It is also unprofessional to discuss personal opinions about a clinical site and/or its patients and staff.
16. Under current law, it is forbidden to disclose any personal health information, including images of patients, or discuss patient cases in any social network or digital media. Such conduct would be in direct violation of HIPPA guidelines. All students have received HIPPA training at the University and at their clinical rotation site.
17. You should not post any derogatory, offensive, disrespectful or disparaging remarks about faculty, fellow students, patients, preceptors or clinical sites. This causes an erosion of trust and demonstrates unprofessional behavior.
18. We recommend being respectful and professional in the relationship with clinical site employees, customers, suppliers, other health centers and patients and families in general. Remember, whatever you post will be the basis of your professionalism! Employers and hospitals use social media to research new candidates during the hiring and credentialing process.
19. Professionalism is such an important aspect of our career. It takes only one PA to ruin the reputation for PAs in the community. If a violation is noted, we expect anonymous documentation to be mailed, faxed, or left for the Program Director. Failure to adhere to or report the above mentioned policies will result in referral to the Student Progress Committee for evaluation.

Remember, your posts are available for **EVERYONE**
– **PERMANENTLY!**

IF IN DOUBT – LEAVE IT OUT!

Refer to The Lowdown, Student Computer Policy, for additional information.

I-CLICKERS

A pedagogical tool in the form of I clickers will be used during the first three semesters of the didactic curriculum. They will be distributed to each student who will then be responsible to register them on-line. Instructions will be provided as to the registration and use of the I-clicker during orientation. The student will be monetarily responsible for any clicker that is lost or damaged due to misuse. A \$55.00 fee will be assessed to the student who loses or damages a clicker. At the end of the third semester the clickers will be turned in so the incoming class can use them.

GENERAL DRESS CODE

Students are required to wear clean and appropriate attire while attending the USA PA program. Appropriate attire for male and female students is described below. Violation of the dress code is equivalent to an academic standard violation and will be referred to the departmental Chair/Faculty member who will be the final judge of appropriate attire. The following guidelines represent minimum standards:

- Clothing with slogans, advertisement, or logos shall not be worn.
- Dresses/skirts shall not exceed two inches above the knee in length.*
- Shoes shall have covered toes, be comfortable, appropriate for the work environment and consistent with professional attire.**
- Sunshades (or other tinted, non-prescription glasses) shall not be worn inside Hospital facilities.
- Caps or hats are not acceptable unless part of the uniform.
- During the didactic component of the program, slacks and appropriate shirts (collared shirts or polo shirts) are suitable attire for men; and slacks, skirts, or dresses and appropriate shirts are appropriate for women. Examples of inappropriate attire: flip-flops, baseball style caps, t-shirts with offensive images/slogans, female leggings with mini-skirts or dresses*(see above). Scrub clothing is acceptable **only** during the first summer semester when part of the day is spent in gross anatomy laboratory. The scrubs for gross anatomy can be purchased from any location and will not be used during your clinical year. Scrubs will need to be laundered frequently as they may become stained and absorb chemical odors from the lab, and these clothes should not be worn in the classroom after being worn in the lab. When visiting any healthcare facility during the didactic component of the program, (e.g., hospital, ambulatory clinic, private physician practice), professional attire, closed-toe shoes** (see above). and short while lab jackets with the program patch should be worn unless otherwise instructed.
- During the **clinical** component the following must be observed: Slacks and appropriate shirts are suitable attire for men. Men must also wear ties for clinical rotations unless instructed otherwise. Slacks, skirts, or dresses of proper length* (see above) are appropriate for women. Female leggings with mini-skirts or dresses are not allowed. Two sets of new scrubs must be purchased from the USA Bookstore prior to starting the clinical year. Do not purchase scrubs prior to instructions from the directors of clinical education. Instructions will be provided in spring semester 2018. **Closed-toe shoes are required during all clinical experiences.** ** (see above).

- Jewelry will be conservative. No facial jewelry permitted (except on earlobes)

No more than:

Anklets – 1

Rings may be on 2 fingers per hand (not to extend above the knuckle).

Earrings – No more than 2 pairs may be worn. Earrings will be no larger than two inches in diameter or length. Men may not wear earring(s).

Necklace - 1

TRANSPORTATION

During the didactic phase of the program, students are required to participate in clinical and service learning experiences in community medical settings, community and non-profit organizations, area schools, etc. Transportation to these settings and other program associated events, (e.g., health fairs), is the student's responsibility. Students in the clinical phase of the program are responsible for transportation to all clinical rotation sites and to campus on clinical class days. Further regulations regarding transportation during the clinical phase of the program will be outlined in the Clinical Rotation Manual, which will be distributed during the clinical year orientation.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)/SEXUAL HARASSMENT/MISCONDUCT

All USA PA students are required to undergo federally-mandated HIPAA training provided by the University. In addition, all students are required to participate in a mandatory sexual harassment education session and review the University's sexual harassment policies as detailed in "Lowdown", the USA Student Handbook <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

IDENTIFICATION AND MISREPRESENTATION

Physician Assistant students are issued a student ID card to be used on campus, and an ID badge to be worn identifying you as a PA student during all clinical activities or when representing the program as a didactic student. Student ID cards will be made at the Student Center (350 Campus Drive), Room 150. Student ID badges, provided by the Human Resources office at the University's medical center, will be distributed to students by the PA program.

Students will also introduce themselves as a Physician Assistant student and sign all documentation with their legible full signature followed by 'PA Student' or 'PA-S'. At no time should a student represent him/herself as being anyone other than a physician assistant student. Failure to identify oneself appropriately or misrepresenting oneself is an honors violation and will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the University's Student Handbook, the Lowdown, <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

To remain in compliance with FERPA, 1974 and the 4th edition of the Standards as set forth by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, student information, materials, grades, records and files are considered privileged and confidential. Student reports, tests and examinations are stored in a locked file room when not in use. Access to these documents is limited to faculty, staff, and appropriate administration. No information contained within a student record will be given, either verbally or in writing, without written authorization of the student. Written authorization for release of records will be kept in the student's file.

PROGRAM FACULTY AND STUDENT HEALTH CARE

The program director/chair, medical director, principal faculty and any part-time instructors are prohibited from participating in the healthcare of USA PA program students. This includes giving medical advice to students as well as, providing health care, **EXCEPT** in the case of an emergency. Program faculty may help refer students for health and mental care upon request. Members of the faculty may be members of the medical staff at the USA Student Health Center. If a student chooses to receive healthcare services at the USA Student Health Center, or any other facility where faculty may be employed, (i.e. Mobile Urgent Care), the student should identify him/herself as a physician assistant student. Faculty are not permitted to participate in any healthcare related services to these students.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Students in the USA PA program are required to maintain adequate health insurance coverage for the duration of enrollment in the Physician Assistant program. This coverage must be in place by the conclusion of your first semester, and proof of insurance should be filed with the departmental office.

The University offers a comprehensive health plan available through USA Student Health Services and can be obtained by contacting **Rhonda Baxter at 251.460.6022 or rbaxter@southalabama.edu**. All insurance information must be documented on the Health Verification Insurance Form, mailed to students upon acceptance. Students with insurance not obtained through USA Student Health must attach a copy of their insurance card to the completed Health Verification Form and send to:

University of South Alabama, Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies
5721 USA Drive North, Room 3124, Mobile, AL 36688-0002

Student Health will then determine if the insurance coverage is adequate. It is the student's responsibility to notify the department of any changes in coverage. Students found to be lacking coverage for any reason, including lapse of coverage will be dismissed from the program.

MALPRACTICE INFORMATION

Students are covered under an "umbrella" malpractice policy as long as they are functioning within the scope of the curriculum while attending the University of South Alabama PA program. Any activities not scheduled or assigned by the faculty are considered to be outside the scope of the curriculum. The University of South Alabama is self-insured. A fee related to USA's self-insurance program is assessed to students each semester.

HEALTH CLEARANCE AND IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Students matriculating in the USA PA program are required to receive the following immunizations and titers:

IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIRED*	
Documentation of Vaccine Type and Date Administered required	
Measles (Rubeola) – two single or combo MMR/MMRV injections**	Prior to registration
Mumps – two single or combo MMR/MMRV injections	Prior to registration
Rubella (German Measles) – two single or combo MMR/MMRV injections	Prior to registration
Tdap (Tetanus-Diphtheria–Pertussis) age 18+ / Td booster***	Prior to registration**
Varicella (Chicken Pox) – two single or combo MMRV	Prior to registration
Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) – three single injections ****	Prior to matriculation***
Meningococcal: only if student is living on campus, including “The Grove” apartments.	Prior to matriculation
Blood TB test (interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) such as quantiFERON TB Gold In Tube or T-SPOT	A TB blood test is required prior to matriculation, and a follow up TB skin test is required prior to the start of the Clinical year.
Influenza Vaccine (shot or intranasal)	Annually each Fall by October 1
TITERS REQUIRED –QUANTITATIVE Serum Titer*****	
Titers must be completed at least 6-8 weeks after the completion of vaccine series or boosters	
Measles (Rubeola) IgG	Prior to matriculation
Mumps IgG	Prior to matriculation
Rubella (German Measles) IgG	Prior to matriculation
Varicella (Chicken Pox) IgG	Prior to matriculation
Hepatitis B surface antibody (anit-HBs)	Prior to matriculation

*Though documentation (lab paperwork) is preferred, if student is unable to access immunization records, titers demonstrating a positive immune response will be accepted in lieu of vaccine documentation. **Titers must be drawn within 5 years prior to matriculation.**

**If the MMR titer shows non-immunity, the student will need to repeat the 2 vaccine series at least 28 days apart and another MMR titer drawn 6-8 weeks later.

***The PA Department follows the USA Student Health and County Health Department policy with respect to the Tetanus booster. **One booster must be given as the Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis) at or after age 18. Documentation MUST indicate that a Tdap was given or the vaccine will have to be repeated.** This booster is valid for 10 years, after such time the individual can continue to receive Td (tetanus-diphtheria) boosters every 10 years.

**** If an anti-HBs titer shows non-immunity and the student has immunization records of completing the full 3 vaccine series, than a single HBV booster may be administered and another anti-HBs titer will be drawn 6-8 weeks later. If the student cannot provide immunization records demonstrating completion of the 3 vaccine series, the student will need to repeat the series in full following the provided schedule:

- 3 doses at 0, 1, and 6 months
- Doses #1 and #2 must be completed and documentation submitted by May 10, 2018

Students who have a negative anti-HBs titer after completing a 3 vaccine series have failed to mount an immune response. These students will be referred to USA Infectious Disease to be evaluated according to the Hepatitis B Vaccine Hospital Policy. Additional alternatives will be offered to the student to help achieve HBV immunity. In the event HBV immunity cannot be acquired, the student will be offered a release of liability to sign prior to proceeding with the PA Program. The individual will be limited to clinical rotation sites that do not require a positive HBV titer.

*****Please be sure that your medical provider and/or lab are aware that you are required to have a **QUANTITATIVE** titer.

Failure to comply with the above required immunization/titer schedule will result in either the inability to matriculate into the PA Program or dismissal from the PA Program.

Students may be required to get additional immunizations not listed but required by clinical rotation site.

Students infected with HIV or HBV:

Students who have knowledge of being infected with either HIV or HBV shall not perform or assist in the performance of an invasive procedure unless and until he or she has notified the State Health Officer, as provided in Section 22-11A-61 of the Alabama Code, and agrees to cooperate with any investigation authorized in Section 22-11A-63 of the Alabama Code and any necessary practice modifications.

Therefore, any student infected with HIV or HBV must contact the State Health Officer of the Alabama Department of Public Health (334-206-5364), or his or her designee. An investigation and subsequent report will be completed to determine practice modifications and limitations. When received by the student, the final report must be presented to the Office of Disability Services in the planning and determination of what accommodations may be reasonably made with the parameters of the educational program. Clinical Preceptors will be made aware of the student's practice limitations and restrictions in a confidential manner. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in dismissal from the Program.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance in didactic, clinical and practical activities at the scheduled time on each school or clinical day is **mandatory**. The responsibility of meeting all activities and obligations as part of the educational program rests solely on the student.

Students are expected to be in attendance and punctual for all program courses and activities. Failure to do so may result in a loss of points from the student's final course grade. Students should make every effort to initially report any absence or tardiness to the course instructor via e-mail, phone message, or in person if appropriate. If the student is unable to contact or leave a message with the course instructor, students should call the program at 251-445-9334 and leave a message with the departmental secretary who will relay the message to the faculty. A valid excuse from a MD, DO, PA or NP must be given within one day of returning to classes. Students should refer to each course syllabus for attendance policies. Students are responsible for notifying the department program director/chair of any potential personal crisis that may impact academic performance as soon as possible (e.g. ailing family member, death of immediate family member, hospitalization, etc.).

The student is responsible for obtaining all course materials, announcements, or other information related to any missed class. If a make-up activity is warranted, it is the student's responsibility to arrange with the instructor, coordinator, and/or preceptor for the satisfactory completion of the portions of work missed (class activity, examination, lab) because of absence. This should be accomplished through individual contacts, with students having the responsibility of making the initial contact with appropriate faculty or staff member.

If a student encounters difficulty in completing academic work, or maintaining professional commitment due to extended illness or other extenuating circumstances, the student is required to arrange an immediate appointment with their faculty advisor **and** the Program Director/ Chair of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING ABSENCE FROM CLASSROOM

1. Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive in advance. Tardiness is distracting to the instructor and other students and will reflect poorly on the professionalism of our students.
2. Habitual violation of absence/tardiness guidelines may result in referral to the Department Chair/Faculty member.
3. The responsibility for notifying the instructor in advance and the make-up of missed work rests entirely with the student. The instructor makes the final determination regarding excused versus unexcused absences.
4. Refer to each instructor's class syllabus for specific guidelines regarding penalties and make-up of missed work.
5. The student should be aware that some assignments and laboratories cannot be made-up. See instructor syllabi for policy.
6. Students must notify the program director/chair as soon as possible in the event of an illness or emergency.
7. Any illness resulting in absence or a missed scheduled exam will require documentation from your health care provider.
8. Any absences over 3 days from a clinical rotation may result in a grade of "I" or incomplete. In this event, graduation will be delayed until this rotation is repeated and all other required rotations and graduation requirements are completed.

Failure to comply with the program attendance policy is subject to disciplinary action for unprofessional behavior as outlined by the University's Student Handbook, the Lowdown (<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>).

STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

The University provides services to students with physical, psychological or learning disabilities. In addition to providing services and accommodations to students with bona fide disabilities as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Student Disability Services works closely with faculty and staff in an advisory capacity and assists in the development of reasonable accommodations that allow students with disabilities to fully participate in all of the programs offered on campus. Students in need of, or anticipating the need of accommodations during the PA program should contact Student Disability Services upon entering the program. Student Disability Services is located at: 251.460.7212, 320 Alumni Circle, Educational Services Building, Suite 19, <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/sds/>

- Accommodations are NOT retroactive. You will begin receiving accommodations once you are completely registered with SDS.
- Having a diagnosed disability does not necessarily mean you will qualify for academic accommodations.
- USA does not grant provisional accommodations.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

USA PA students are expected to behave in a professional manner and exhibit mature and appropriate demeanor in the classroom and clinical setting. Respect for your peers and patients are the cornerstones of professionalism. Professionalism is formally evaluated each semester during the student's required faculty advising session. However, professionalism may be evaluated continuously throughout the USA PA training program. Failure to conduct yourself as a professional or failure to meet academic and clinical commitments in a professional manner will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the University's Student Handbook, the Lowdown (<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/lowdown/>).

Examples of unprofessional behavior include but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty
- Arrogance and sense of entitlement
- Prejudice
- Lack of respect for patients, fellow classmates, colleagues, faculty, staff and HIPPA guidelines
- Disruptive behavior(s) in the classroom during lectures
- Engaging in conversation with classmates while instructor is lecturing
- Inappropriate use of laptop computers
- Lack of respect for diversity and inclusion
- Lack of ability to accept responsibility and constructive criticism
- Lack of accountability for medical errors and oversights
- Leaving the clinical rotation site for any reason without permission of supervising physician and the director of clinical education
- Performing any activity beyond the scope of your role as a physician assistant student
- Reproducing or copying in any format any paper or online test
- Distributing any information to fellow classmates regarding the content of any paper or online test, or any other curricular assignment.
- Lack of commitment to lifelong learning
- Lack of due diligence (laziness, carelessness); failure to perform all or part of assigned tasks, duties and responsibilities
- Failure to report observed unethical conduct (e.g., alcohol abuse, substance abuse) by other members of the health care profession, including other students
- Sexual harassment or misconduct:
<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studentaffairs/titlenine/>
- Poor attendance and/or tardiness
- Inappropriate attire
- Behavior which compromises or interferes with the delivery of safe patient care in the clinical setting
- Using any cooperating agency to procure or distribute illegal substances
- Initiating exploitative student-patient relationships which:
 - a) are incongruous with student role
 - b) result in financial gain
 - c) are illegal transactions
 - d) involve professionally unacceptable behavior
- Failure to respect the dignity and rights of deceased individuals
- Violating patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality of information
- Criminal behavior, felony/misdemeanor
- Forgery of any kind
- Rendering patient care while impaired (i.e., under the influence of alcohol, prescribed, or illegal substances)

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

A criminal background check is required for all students prior to matriculation **and** once more prior to start of the clinical rotations phase of the program. The fees for required background checks are the responsibility of the student. Refusal to undergo the background check will result in dismissal from the program.

DRUG TESTING

Urine drug testing is required for clinical year and can be requested by the program at any time. Any fees associated with testing will be the responsibility of the student. Refusal to submit to such testing will result in dismissal from the program.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Students' academic performance is assessed using a number of different formative evaluation methods including, but not limited to, regularly scheduled exams, presentations, journal clubs, team-based learning, problem-based learning, service learning, community outreach projects, standardized patient encounters, reflective writings, homework assignment, general and focused practicums, simulations, written and oral presentations.

The faculty will communicate to students the methods and systems by which they will be evaluated. Students must consult with faculty regarding their progress in the program. This consultation is in addition to the evaluation they may receive in clinic, lab, or on exams. Students are required to meet with their assigned faculty advisor at least once a semester but are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor as needed.

FACULTY / COURSE EVALUATIONS

At the end of each semester students are offered the opportunity to evaluate each course and the course instructor(s) to help with our ongoing program evaluation for continued excellence, via our online assessment tool, Class Climate. Student responses to the evaluations are anonymous. There is no impact on student academic performance.

STUDENT/PROGRAM DIRECTOR MEETINGS

USA PA program class officers/program director meetings are held for the purpose of providing support to the student body and receiving student feedback. Others members of the class may also attend the meeting if the student has an issue or concern to bring to the program director's attention. Students are encouraged to schedule a meeting in private with the program director for issues of a more personal or sensitive nature.

The following are some topics generally discussed:

- Philanthropic Endeavors
- Service Learning and/or Community Projects
- Event Planning
- Class Issues, Concerns, Conflicts
- Programmatic and/or Curriculum Concerns
- Important Dates and Deadlines

EXPOSURE CONTROL POLICY AND INCIDENT REPORTING

<http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/alliedhealth/biomedical/biosafety/index.html>

University of South Alabama Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Program

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), PEP is short-term antiretroviral treatment to reduce the likelihood of HIV infection after potential exposure.

Post-exposure Procedure:

Student/Employee

1. Immediately wash needle stick injuries, cuts, or splashed area with copious amounts of soap and water (first aid). Eyes should be rinsed with water/saline.
2. Report any potential exposure to your training supervisor immediately after administering yourself first aid.
3. Mandatory requirements include student or employee blood work and initial exposure evaluation by a PEP-trained provider, as is outlined below. Accepting PEP drug therapy is voluntary. However, you are strongly encouraged to take PEP for an exposure to blood or body fluid from a known HIV infected person as soon as it is offered.
4. Baseline student/employee laboratory work should include a complete blood count (CBC), renal and hepatic function tests, pregnancy test (if appropriate), Hepatitis B surface antibody (IgG), Hepatitis B core antibody (total), Hepatitis C antibody (total), and standard HIV by ELISA.
Report incident and action taken to your academic department as soon as possible.
5. Medical questions, or concerns (e.g. treatment delay) not fully addressed by training site personnel can be discussed directly with on-call Infectious Disease (ID) physician specialist at USA by calling 251-471-7895 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.). After hours, call the USAMC operator at 251-471-7000. Identify yourself, your location, and phone number that you can be immediately reached at by ID personnel.

The USA PA Program requires that each student complete an USA Accident/Incident Report Form following an exposure.

Site Training Supervisor

1. Initiate appropriate on-site PEP procedure. Procedural specifications are usually found in workplace Exposure Control Plan or Employee Health Plan. Currently recommended drugs for PEP are Combivir one po BID, and Isentress 400mg one po BID. If there are questions at the local site about the appropriateness of PEP for an exposure, or if the above regimen is not available, please contact the USA ID physician specialist, as detailed above.
2. Students performing practicums within two hours travel time to USAMC should report directly Employee Health Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and to the ER after hours and on weekends/holidays. If the student is more than two hours travel time from USAMC, students should be referred to affiliated institution's Employee Health Nurse, Trauma Care provider, or Infectious Disease specialist if practicum site is at a physician office or/clinic where on-site PEP is not available. Antiretroviral drugs should be administered with 4 hours post-exposure.
3. The following tests should be drawn on the SOURCE PATIENT: Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis B core IgM, Hepatitis C total antibody, and Rapid HIV. If positive, a confirmatory HIV by ELISA with Western blot confirmation should be obtained.
4. Coordination of PEP with on-call University of South Alabama (USA) Infectious Disease Specialists is possible by calling the telephone numbers listed in Post-exposure Procedure paragraph 6 above and Post-exposure Follow-up Program below.

Post-exposure Follow-up Program:

If you believe that the clinical site is not initiating a PEP evaluation in a timely fashion you should call 251-471-7895 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.). After hours, call the USAMC operator at 251-471-7000. Identify yourself to the on-call ID specialist as a USA Allied Health student with a training-incurred potential HIV exposure. The on-call USAMC ID Specialist can order an "exposure prophylaxis kit", which provides a 72-hour regimen of antiretroviral drugs.

The kit enables a timely start of PEP so that need for continuing PEP can then be assessed. The student/employee should also notify their USA academic department that he/she has entered the USAMC follow-up program.

The PA department's point of contact is: Bri

Kestler, PA-C, MMSc

Office: 251.445.9338

Cell: 970.402.6656

brikestler@southalabama.edu

INCIDENT REPORTS

Occasionally, accidents will occur on clinical sites or in the laboratory. Should a student, patient, or other staff member be injured as a result of an accident involving a student, the student must comply with all accident and injury protocols established at the institution. The student may be required to follow-up with his/her private primary care provider for further evaluation and/or treatment. An "USA Accident/Incident Report Form" should be completed immediately and filed with the director of clinical education, if the student is in the clinical phase of the program; or the director of didactic education, if the student is in the didactic phase of the program, no later than the Friday of the week following the incident. Additionally, students must notify the director of clinical education or faculty member by telephone and/or e-mail of any such incident as soon as possible. To protect the privacy of all involved parties, health information regarding the student or patient should not be included in the documentation. Further, the form should not contain any patient identifying data. A printed e-mail **and the incident report** placed in the student's file will suffice as appropriate documentation. A copy of the form is enclosed in the back of this handbook and should be reviewed carefully (see Appendix B).

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Upon matriculation students are required to participate in the University's Blood borne Pathogens Training Module. Participation in the training course is mandatory. The course is typically taught during the first week of classes by a faculty member. At the completion of the training module, students are required to take an examination. Students have a total of three attempts to score 80% or above to successfully complete the module training.

PERFORMANCE OF INVASIVE PROCEDURES

Pursuant to Section 22-11A-62 of the Alabama Code, Alabama law provides that "[n]o health care workers[, which include students 'in the healing arts,'] having knowledge that he/she is infected with either HIV or HBV shall perform or assist in the performance of an invasive procedure unless and until he or she has notified the State Health Officer, as provided in Section 22-11A-61 [of the Alabama Code], and agrees to cooperate with any investigation authorized in Section 22-11A-63 [of the Alabama Code] and any necessary practice modifications." Therefore, upon enrolling in the Physician Assistant program, any student infected with HIV or HBV must contact the State Health Officer of the Alabama Department of Public Health (334-206-5364), or his or her designee. An investigation and subsequent report will be completed to determine practice modifications and limitations.

When received by the student, the final report must be presented to the director of clinical education who will then work with the student and Special Student Services in the planning and determination of what accommodations may be reasonably made with the parameters of the educational program. Clinical Preceptors will be made aware of the student's practice limitations and restrictions in a confidential manner. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in dismissal from the Program.

FIRE/EVACUATION

In the event of a building evacuation, students, faculty and staff should exit via stairwells, utilizing emergency exits and meet in designated departmental location south of the HAHN building in front of Alpha Hall East (AHE), between AHE and University Boulevard. Students are required to review the Emergency Evacuation Plan in Appendix A of this document carefully and participate in any scheduled practice drills.

STUDENT SAFETY & SECURITY

The University of South Alabama Police Department is committed to the promoting and providing a safe living, learning, and working environment for all members and guest of the University. The USA Police Department offers numerous services, students are encouraged to visit the USA Police Department webpage at <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/police/> to become familiar with the many services offered. Students should exercise caution at all times and report any suspicious activities.

Campus Police:
290 Stadium Boulevard
460-6312

EMERGENCY AND WEATHER ALERTS

The University of South Alabama closely monitors hazardous or potentially dangerous weather conditions. Weather related closure or bulletins are made available from the following sources:

USA Weatherline: 251.460.5999

USA Website: www.southalabama.edu

Emergency and Weather Alerts Website: <http://www.southalabama.edu/alert/index.html>

Campus-wide email sent by the Office of Public Relations

STUDENT PARKING

Parking Services is located in the Beta/Gamma Commons-Police Building, 290 Stadium Blvd. The entrance for Parking Services is located on the South side of the building. Office hours are 7:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. Monday - Friday. All vehicles operated on the USA campus must be properly registered and display a current USA parking permit; twenty-four (24) hours a day, and seven (7) days a week. Anyone who operates a motor vehicle on the USA campus is required to register his/her vehicle with Parking Services and obtain a valid parking permit. This includes all employees, faculty, staff, designated guests, administrative officials, and all students. Regulations apply to students enrolled in day, evening, weekend, online web classes, and all enrolled students at other locations including Baldwin County, Springhill Avenue Campus (SHAC), and Dauphin Island Sea Lab. The parking permit must be displayed from the rear view mirror facing outward. Displaying it in any other location is considered a violation. Parking permits are valid for one academic year. Additional information can be obtained from Parking Service's website: <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/parkingservices/>

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicsuccess/cae/writinglab.html>

The USA Writing Center, Academic Services Center 1390, 111 Jaguar Drive, 460-6480, is an instructional facility with the primary goal of improving student writing skills. The Writing Center's tutoring staff includes both graduate and undergraduate students who are excited to help clients increase their confidence and success in the craft of writing.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/studenthealth/>

The Student Health Center, 5870 Alumni Drive, 460-7151, provides efficient and cost effective health care services relevant to the needs of the University Community. The Center strives to accomplish this mission through health education, health promotion and primary health care.

USA COUNSELING AND TESTING CENTER (CTS)

<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/counseling/>

The USA CTS is located at 326 Alpha Hall East, 555 University Blvd N, M-F, 8am-5pm, closed during holidays, 460-7051. Counseling and Testing Services (CTS), a department in the Division of Student Affairs, provides counseling and standardized testing services to the University of South Alabama's undergraduate and graduate student community. Their mission is to provide high quality counseling, testing, and consultative services to the University community. We strive to facilitate the academic, emotional, social, and career development of students. Please visit their website for information about services offered.

USA LIBRARIES

<http://www.southalabama.edu/libraries/>

The University of South Alabama has an excellent network of library services to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff and visitors. Students in the PA program will most often utilize the services of the Biomedical Library: <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/biomedicallibrary/>

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC

<http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/psychology/psychologyclinic/>

2000 University Commons Building (UCOM), 307 University Blvd No.

Appointments and information 460-7149

The USA Psychological Clinic provides professional services for the USA community. Graduate students in psychology provide most of the direct client services. In all cases, student clinicians are supervised by faculty members who are Clinical or Counseling Psychologists and are licensed in the State of Alabama. Some psychological services are provided directly by licensed Clinical and Counseling Psychologists.

USA OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/veteransaffairs/>

111 Jaguar Drive, Academic Services Center, Suite 1345

460-6230

New veteran students should report to the Office of Veteran Affairs at the time of application to the university. Certification for benefits must be requested in writing and signed by an advisor for each term.

Due to changes in benefit allowances and VA policies, students using VA benefits should regularly visit the VA home page at <http://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>. Students should also maintain regular contact with the Office of Veteran Affairs at (251) 460-6230 or vets@southalabama.edu.

Students receiving veteran's benefits are responsible for the payment of all tuition and fees at the time of registration. The G.I. Bill may not meet the total cost of attendance. For a net price calculator, please go to <https://southalabama.edu/npc>. Students may also apply for [Financial Aid](#) to cover any unmet need. **Post 9/11 students may be an exception.** It is the student's responsibility to assure that all requests for VA and Federal Tuition Assistance are submitted in advance and in a timely manner. A payment plan is offered through the University of South Alabama Federal Credit Union. For more information about this plan call (251) 706-0255.

Information regarding VA benefits, including eligibility, payment information, remaining entitlement, or the address of the nearest regional office is available through the VA at 1-888-GIBILL1 (1-888-442-4551) or online at <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>. For information concerning "Transfer Credit from Military Service School", see the 'Enrollment Services' Section of the [USA Bulletin](#).

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL STUDENT AFFAIRS

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/omsa/>

Student Center, Room 120

460-6895

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) was created in June 1990 to assist in the personal development and retention of minority students at USA. The office serves to:

- Provide programming for cultural awareness and communication among the university community
- Encourage students to participate in all aspects of campus life
- Provide leadership opportunities for aspiring student leaders
- Assist to ease the transition into college.

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs takes a participatory role in fostering leadership, mentoring and promoting academic and social success. OMSA supports numerous programs and activities on campus and in the Mobile community.

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE CHANGES

It is the responsibility of each student to maintain a current local address, telephone number and assigned USA Jagmail email address with the PA program.

BLS/ACLS

The PA program requires all students to be certified in Basic Life Support (BLS). All students must provide the program with a copy of the BLS card upon enrollment. Re-certification must be maintained during the complete 27 month educational program. ACLS certification and maintenance is required for the 12-month clinical phase of the program. The program offers BLS/ACLS during the student's second summer semester as part of the Clinical Medicine IV course.

FINANCIAL AID

<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/finaid/>

390 Alumni circle

Meisler Hall Suite 1200

1-800-305-6828 (financial aid inquiries only)

The Office of Financial Aid is committed to providing student financial assistance to eligible students to help pay the costs associated with attending college. Visit their website to view the various types of student financial assistance available, the application procedures, eligibility requirements and the application deadline dates.

Students are encouraged to obtain financial aid, if needed, rather than seek employment during their professional education.

ACADEMIC POLICY

STUDENT EVALUATION

Multiple evaluation methods will be used to evaluate course work throughout the didactic and clinical phases of the programs. Formative and summative methods may include but are not limited to:

- multiple choice examinations
- short essays
- fill in the blank
- T/F
- Oral presentations and journal clubs
- Service learning projects and community projects
- Homework assignments
- Reflective writings, online forums/chats
- Clinical Skills practicums
- Patient logs
- Case-based learning, critical-thinking and problem-solving
- Team-based learning
- Interprofessional / collaborative education
- Standardized patient experiences
- Simulations
- Video for student learning (e.g. physical exam, interviewing)
- PACKRAT examination
- Kaplan Review

Examinations are the sole property of the USA PA program. Students should see their specific course syllabi for assessment and grading methods.

EXAMINATION POLICY

During written examinations, students should arrive on time. If a student is tardy for an examination the student will not be allotted extra time to complete the examination. If a student fails to take an examination, an excuse from a healthcare provider must be submitted. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the course instructor for a make-up examination. Failure to supply a medical excuse for a missed examination due to illness will result in the student receiving a grade of zero for that examination.

If a student must miss an examination due to a family crisis or personal emergency, the student should notify the course instructor immediately and make arrangements for a make-up examination. Students will not be allowed to reschedule didactic or end of rotation activities/examinations for reasons such as weddings, running in a marathon, extracurricular activities, extramural activities, etc.

During examinations students are only allowed their pencils and a beverage in a closed container. Cellular telephones, food, recording devices, written materials of any kind, electronic devices are strictly prohibited. If students require a bathroom break, permission must be given by the instructor. Students are highly encouraged to attend to personal needs prior to the examination to prevent any class distraction or disruption.

Students should refer to the Clinical Rotation Manual for policies regarding missed examinations and other end of rotation (EOR) activities, as well as a more detailed policy relating to EOR.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments in the didactic and clinical phases of the program must utilize the most recent version of the American Medical Association (AMA) Manual of Style. Written assignments should be free of typographical errors, spelling and grammatical errors and plagiarism. Faculty will utilize Turnitin to assess for plagiarism in the graduate research assignment. Students should practice cultural sensitivity in their written work. Failure to adhere to these criteria may affect the student's grade received. Students should keep an extra copy of all written assignments for their records. Citation examples of AMA Manual of Style can be found in any medical journal, the AMA Manual of Style text, or the USA Biomedical Library web resources.

SUMMATIVE EXAMINATION

Students will have a summative examination no earlier than four months prior to graduation. The summative evaluation will consist of the following:

- Comprehensive written examination
- OSCE with standardized patient for case-based clinical skills testing
- Board review
- Capstone project

If a student fails the standardized patient examination mandatory remediation is required. The student will be given a make-up examination, date/time to be determined by the director of clinical education. Should the student fail the make-up, the program director and faculty will review the case and decide on the course of action which may include possible dismissal from the program.

GRADING

Each instructor may vary in terms of their grading system. The total course grade may reflect a "weighted" percentage based on various learning activities. This method is commonly used during the clinical year where the final rotation grade is based on a number of variables (i.e. End of Rotation examination, learning activity, clinical coordinator grade, preceptor grade, sufficiency of patient logging). One of the most commonly used systems in the basic and clinical sciences is as follows:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
≤60	F

Please note that any grade of D or below in any course or clinical rotation constitutes dismissal from the USA PA program.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

The symbol "I" (Incomplete) may be given by an instructor when a student's work in a course has not been completed at the end of a semester and when the failure to complete the work has been due to circumstances beyond the student's control. The grade of "I" does not substitute for a grade of "F."

PROGRESSION FROM THE DIDACTIC TO CLINICAL YEAR

The Student Progress Committee will convene to determine each student's progress from the clinical year. The student must, at a minimum:

- Successfully complete all didactic year coursework;
- Maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 during the didactic year;
- Successfully pass a faculty evaluation of professional behavior with a grade of 80% or better

The Student Progress Committee will determine the course of action should any student fail to meet the above requirements from the didactic to the clinical year.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation is dependent upon successful completion of all course work during the didactic and clinical phases of the program, summative examinations and research requirements in the physician assistant curriculum. Eligibility to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination is contingent upon successful completion of all program requirements.

MAINTENANCE OF GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

The USA PA program in conjunction with the Graduate School Policy requires a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for satisfactory academic standing and degree conferral. Students experiencing academic difficulties will be identified by the faculty and remedial measures will be initiated to aid the student in improving his or her academic performance. According to the Graduate School Policy, if the cumulative GPA falls below a 3.1 at the end of any semester, the student will be placed on academic probation and will have two consecutive semesters to bring the GPA to 3.0 or higher. Failure to meet these criteria may result in academic dismissal from the program. Any grade of "D" or lower in any didactic or clinical course constitutes automatic academic dismissal from the program.

REMEDIATION POLICY

Mandatory remediation will be required of any student(s) who receives less than a B (75%) on 2 consecutive course examinations (during either didactic or clinical year), any grade less than 75%, or any student who does not pass the clinical skills practicum on the first attempt. The student's progress will be subsequently monitored and future remediation will be arranged as needed.

The goal of the remediation policy of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies is to successfully identify and remediate students who are at academic risk. The steps taken in this process include:

- Identify the problem
 - Academic
 - Professional behavior
- Identify source of deficits: program, student or both
- Assess clinical knowledge base and identify potential weaknesses and deficiencies
- Assess clinical skills and identify potential weaknesses and deficiencies
- Assess professional behavior components and identify any potential weaknesses and deficiencies

Remediation effectiveness determined by:

- Student grade of B or better on course examinations
- Student satisfactorily passing the clinical skills practicum
- Student compliance with components of Professionalism
- Course grade B or better
- Monitoring of student progress

Proactive Process:

If a student receives less than a grade of B on 2 course examinations (didactic year), receives any grade less than 75%, or, does not satisfactorily pass a clinical skills practicum, the following procedure is followed:

- The course instructor informs the Department Chair regarding the name of the student, course number, assessment tool, and student grade
- The course instructor and faculty advisor, hereafter referred to as the *PA Performance Review Committee (PA PRC)*, meets with the student to share concerns regarding the student's knowledge base, exam grade, any weaknesses, deficiencies, or unsatisfactory progress noted in the course, clinical skills, and any deficiencies noted in professional behavior
- The student has the opportunity to respond to concerns and offer any observations and/or attributions regarding their academic performance and/or professional behavior
- The PA PRC and student will jointly determine if the student problem is:
 - o Behavioral/Professional
 - o Cognitive
 - o Both
- The PA PRC and student will jointly develop a mandatory remediation plan which may include, but is not limited to,
 - I. Review Sessions
 - o Review of course examination
 - o Review of clinical skills practicum
 - o Review of student study skills and habits
 - o Review of student learning style
 - o Tutoring with course instructor as appropriate (clinical content and/or practicum skills)
 - o Review of test anxiety, personal issues, etc.
 - II. Referrals
 - o Referral to USA Counseling and Testing Center (test taking strategies, test anxiety, study skills, diagnostic assessment to determine learning strengths and weaknesses)
 - o Referral to primary care provider as needed
 - o Referral to a behavioral counselor
 - o Referral to USA Psychological Clinic
 - o 1-2 person study group, or, independent study

Recommendations:

The PA PRC will make specific recommendations regarding the remediation and document the plan. The appropriate remediation plan may include a variety of modalities such as:

- o Advise student to practice physical exam skills outside of structured class time
- o Advise student to utilize independent study by means of multimedia or mix of media: supplemental readings (identified by PA PRC) from additional resources to help concentrate course content
- o Provide student with instruction in test-taking strategies, identification of common test-taking errors, pacing for a timed exam, identification of key elements of questions, process of narrowing options, how to prioritize responses, discussion and rationales for question/response, and clinical-decision making skills
- o Provide students with tutoring regarding clinical skills practicum

- Provide student with extra coursework for independent study, self-directed learning, and increased depth of knowledge
- Recommend private tutor, PA review textbooks, web resources with interactive case scenario's
- Recommend referral to outside agencies (e.g., USA Counseling, USA Psychological Clinic, primary care provider) for personal issues
- Remediation plan and timeline is documented on Student Remediation Form, signed and dated by the PA PRC and the student.
- A copy of the remediation plan and timeline is given to the student and must be followed as a measurable means for improving performance. The original is placed in the master remediation notebook, which is kept in a locked room.
- The student will inform the PA PRC of their progress in fulfilling each recommended course of action
- The PA PRC monitors student progress and documents academic performance on next examination per timeline. If student scores grade of B or better, the PA PRC will f/u with student and notify the student that progress in academic and/or clinical skills training areas will be monitored continuously through ongoing review.
 - A student who scores a grade of C or less following the initial remediation process, or does not conform to appropriate professional behavior, will meet with the PA PRC to evaluate the reason(s) for the repeat performance. At that time the PA PRC will either re-enforce the initial remediation plan, or in conjunction with the student, devise a new plan. The PA PRC will monitor student progress in an ongoing manner via multiple modalities as appropriate: performance in coursework, supervision during clinical skills practicum, assessment of professional behavior.

STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE:

- The Student Progress Committee (SPC) is comprised of the Department Chair/Program Director, Medical Director and Faculty. The committee is chaired by a member of the faculty as determined by the department chair/program director. The charge of the SPC is to evaluate a student's progress in regards to recommendation(s) made by the PRC towards that student's remediation and to make appropriate recommendations pertaining to that progress. The committee will convene on an ad hoc basis at any time to address specific student's progress under the plan provided by the PRC committee. The following, though not comprehensive, represents reasons why the committee may be convened:
 - Any student who fails to meet the academic performance and/or professionalism requirements for the program despite repeated efforts towards remediation
 - Any student who scores less than a grade of B on 2 course examinations (didactic) or any grade less than 75% despite repeated efforts towards remediation
 - Any student who fails to satisfactorily pass the clinical skills practicum despite repeat efforts towards remediation and after a second attempt
- The committee will meet to review the student's didactic and/or clinical grades, and any other information that is available to assist in the evaluation of the student. At the meeting the SPC may make one of the following recommendations regarding the student:
 - Advance in good standing
 - Advance on probation
 - Academic dismissal
 - Professional dismissal

If a student is recommended for any status other than advance in good standing, the student will be asked to meet formally with the SPC and must be provided details and justification for the recommendation. In cases where advance on probation is recommended, the SPC will define exact remediation strategies.

Currently, the remediation policy is reviewed at the end of each semester. Any changes/modifications are based on student & faculty evaluations. A revised policy will be distributed at the beginning of the semester as appropriate.

Refer to Clinical Rotation Manual for clinical remediation policy.

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY: ACADEMIC DISMISSAL AND PROBATION

The Dean of the Graduate School has authority to dismiss graduate students from the Graduate School.

- Any term in which a graduate student drops below a 3.0 Program GPA, the student is placed on probationary status and has a period of two terms to attain a 3.0 Program GPA or be dismissed.
- A student in the status of Provisional Admissions who does not have a "B" (3.0) average upon completing 15 semester hours of graduate credit, that is part of the student's graduate program, will be dismissed from the graduate program and the Graduate School. The USA PA program does not participate in provisional admissions.
- A student who has been academically dismissed is eligible to reapply to the Graduate School subject to the approval of the director of graduate studies of the specific new program and the Dean of the Graduate School. ***This is not intended to include the program from which the student has been dismissed.***
- In addition to the Academic Standards of the Graduate School, any course grade of D or lower will result in automatic academic dismissal from the USA PA program.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- Students' knowledge, skills, and proficiency will be continuously evaluated using multiple measures of formative and summative evaluation (e.g. written and practical skill examinations, oral presentations, standardized testing). The Department Chair will recommend the student to the Dean of the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) for graduation from the College upon their successful completion of the program. Successful completion of the program is defined as meeting all requirements of the graduate school and the department which include test results, competency evaluations, acceptable clinical preceptor evaluations and completion of clinical skills for each rotation. The Dean of the Graduate School has the authority to dismiss graduate students from the Graduate School. [A grade point average of 3.0 or greater must be maintained. No more than two courses with a grade of "C" can be applied toward the Master of Health Science degree (M.H.S).] Please refer to the University Bulletin for further details about Graduate School Academic policy. In addition to the Academic Standards of the Graduate School, any grade of D or lower will result in automatic academic dismissal from the Department of Physician Assistant Studies.

DECELERATION/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The USA PA program has an established time limit for program completion since its first matriculant class in 1996. From initial entry into the PA program, no student will be allowed more than 15 months to complete the didactic phase courses and 12 months to complete the clinical phase courses. The entire length of the program is 27 continuous months. Because of the cohort structure of the didactic curriculum, and since courses in each semester are prerequisites for the next semester, the student must successfully complete all courses during each semester to progress to the next semester.

Decisions in relation to deceleration by the USA PA program have been made on a case-by-case basis by the program director and faculty based on the following:

- In exceptional circumstances such as the sudden onset of a serious medical condition, (e.g., lung transplantation due to severe cystic fibrosis, sudden military deployment while in the program, pregnancy/delivery while in the program), the program has granted a leave of absence from the program. Requests must be made in writing and must cite the specific circumstances that warrant a leave. All coursework offered during the leave of absence must be completed during the next semester offered upon the students return. Any student granted a leave of absence is issued a contract which outlines the terms of continued matriculation in the USA PA program that must be successfully completed in order to graduate. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, a student who is dismissed from the PA program is not eligible for a leave of absence from the program.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

The program director should be notified in writing should a student decide to withdraw from the program. Students should follow the University's Policy and Procedures for withdrawal from courses and/or the University. Withdrawal from any individual course in the physician assistant curriculum will result in withdrawal from the program.

LICENSURE, CREDENTIALING AND CERTIFICATION

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CREDENTIALS

Education in an accredited program, national certification, lifelong learning, and state licensure are four areas vital to practice as a Physician Assistant and are discussed briefly below. It is the student's responsibility to obtain additional information regarding credentialing in order to remain informed of any and all changes regarding physician assistant practice and credentialing.

GRADUATION FROM AN ACCREDITED PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

There are 265 (as of April 2019) physician assistant educational programs in various stages of accreditation by the ARC-PA. ARC-PA is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the official accrediting agency for Physician Assistant educational programs. Accreditation assures that the program has met the nationally accepted standards for the education of physician assistants. Graduation from an accredited program is a requirement for eligibility to sit for the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) examination.

The USA PA program obtained initial accreditation April 1, 1996 through ARC-PA and is currently accredited through its next accreditation cycle September, 2024. The University of South Alabama is accredited by the Commission on College and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097; telephone 404.679.4501) to award baccalaureate, master's, doctor of philosophy and doctor of medicine degrees.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

Physician Assistants are certified by an independent agency, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). To become certified, a physician assistant must pass the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE), a competency examination designed to test the medical skills and knowledge of physician assistants.

Successful completion of the examination confers the title "Physician Assistant Certified" or "PA-C." Certification is valid for ten years.

Visit their website for information: <http://www.nccpa.net/>

MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

The ten-year certification maintenance cycle is divided into five two-year periods. During every two-year period, PA-C designees must earn and log a minimum of 100 credits of CME and submit a certification maintenance fee to NCCPA by 11:59 p.m. PT, December 31 of their certification expiration year.

You can begin [earning and logging CME credits](#) on May 1 of your certification cycle year and must finish earning and logging them by 11:59 p.m. PT, December 31 of the year your certification expires. The only exception to this policy is for first-time loggers.

By the end of the tenth year of the certification maintenance cycle, PA-C designees must have also passed a recertification exam. Offered at testing centers throughout the U.S., the multiple choice [Physician Assistant National Recertifying Exam \(PANRE\)](#) is designed to assess general medical and surgical knowledge.

PAs who fail to maintain their certification must meet CME requirements and take and pass PANRE to regain it.

Following the completion of the ten year requirements, the certification maintenance process begins again.

10-year Certification Maintenance Process that Began in 2014

2014 marked the beginning of the PA profession's transition to a 10-year certification maintenance process. PAs who passed PANCE, [regained certification](#), or wrap up a six-year certification maintenance cycle will begin the new 10-year process. To see when you move to the 10-year cycle, [sign in](#) to your record to review your dashboard.

The 10-year certification maintenance process includes five two-year cycles during which all certified PAs must log 100 CME credits online and submit a certification maintenance fee by 11:59 p.m. PT, December 31 of your certification expiration year.

During each of those two-year cycles, you must earn and log at least 100 CME credits, including at least 50 Category 1 CME credits. The remaining 50 credits can be Category 1, Category 2 or a combination of both.

Two types of Category 1 CME are self-assessment CME and PI-CME. While these types are no longer required as part of the 50 credits, we recognize the value of these very interactive types of CME, and will weight these types of CME more heavily. We will award **50% additional credit** for all activities designated for **self-assessment Category 1 CME credit** (i.e., a self-assessment activity worth 10 credits will be converted to 15 credits by NCCPA). Also, the **first 20 PI-CME** credits logged during every two-year cycle will be **doubled** when logged with NCCPA.

Your CME earning and logging window begins May 1 of the year your current certification was issued and continues through December 31 of the certification expiration year. (For example, PA-C designees whose certification expires in 2016 must have earned their CME between May 1, 2014 and December 31, 2016.) The only exception to this policy is for first-time loggers.

STATE REGISTRATION OR LICENSURE

Physician Assistants perform medical services under physician supervision in 50 states, the Territory of Guam and the District of Columbia. The registration or licensure requirements for physician assistants vary from state to state, but generally include certain minimum qualifications, such as graduation from an approved physician assistant program and national certification. The regulatory authority for physician assistants in most states is the board of medical examiners, which handles the registration or licensing of physician assistants, issues regulations governing both physician and physician assistant practice, and enforces provisions of the medical practice and physician assistant practice laws.

STATE LAW COVERING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PRACTICE

A copy of the rules governing physician assistant practice in the state of Alabama is available online at www.aapa.org

Specific information is also available through the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners at www.albme.org or other state medical licensure committee websites.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

While attending the USA PA Program, students will have the opportunity to join the American Academy of Physician Assistants as well as state physician assistant associations at reduced fees.

ALABAMA PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT SOCIETY (ALPASS)

Student members of the Alabama Physician Assistant Student Society (ALPASS) endeavor to promote the Physician Assistant (PA) profession within the USA PA program throughout the USA PA program service area. Members of this society represent the USA PA program on both the state and national levels. The Alabama Physician Assistant Student Society is registered as a member of the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) and is eligible to participate in the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) National Medical Challenge Bowl, the AAPA Assembly of Representatives (AOR), and the AAPA House of Delegates (HOD) meetings. Members of ALPASS participate in a number of events in the community and on campus, including: National PA Week, the Annual Blood Drive, Habitat for Humanity, Penelope House, and the class promoted philanthropy event which typically raises between \$3000-\$4000 for a charity organization chosen by each class, as well as, participation in numerous other events. Students will be responsible for electing class officers who will represent the class. Students will also choose a member of the faculty to function as faculty advisor to the student society.

UNIVERSITY AND GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students should refer to www.southalabama.edu/bulletin and review *all policies and procedures* of the University and the Graduate School. Two sections of the Bulletin which are especially important are <http://www.southalabama.edu/bulletin/current/colleges-schools/graduate-school/index.html> and <http://www.southalabama.edu/graduatemajors/graduateschool/>. The Graduate section contains details about the policies of the Graduate School, which houses the PA Program. The Academic section contains details about academic policies at the University.

In addition to the requirements listed, the PA Program highly recommends that you also have access to the latest version of Microsoft Power Point program as you will be required to do presentations on PowerPoint.

All courses offered by the Program are web enhanced. All students must log on to the <https://usaonline.southalabama.edu/> using their student ID to access required course material including syllabus, schedule of lectures and activities and handouts.

FAIR PRACTICES

Announcements and advertising providing clear and credible information to stakeholders about all dimensions of the program may be found at the following web site <http://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/alliedhealth/pa/>. Identical information is shared with the public and prospective students during our Open House and Informational sessions, community presentations at high schools, community colleges and four-year institutions, and during interprofessional education presentations within the College. Printed materials containing clear and credible information may be distributed across campus to various departments such as Multicultural Affairs, Veterans Affairs, etc. These same print materials are used by our Educational Outreach Specialist and at various medical conferences and recruiting events.

Appendix A – Emergency Evaluation Plan

Appendix B – USA Accident/Incident Report Form

Appendix A:

University of South Alabama
College of Allied Health Professions
Department of Physician Assistant Studies

EMERGENCY/COMMUNICATION/EVACUATION PLAN

Policy: To set forth the procedures all faculty, staff, students and visitors of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies must be aware of evacuation plans to ensure a safe and hazard-free environment and to follow if evacuation becomes necessary.

Departmental contacts:

Physician Assistant Studies office	445-9334
Ms. Stephanie McGilvray, Director/Chair	445-9337
Ms. Nancy Dunn	445-9345
Mrs. Bri Kestler	445-9338
Ms. Erin Lunn	445-9270
Mrs. Lisa Simon	460-6289
Mrs. Sharon Pelekanos	445-9342
Mrs. Lelani Waltman	445-9344

Procedure:

The above people will be responsible for notifying all faculty and students of the problem.
If the problem is in our area, one of the people listed above will notify appropriate campus authorities.

Specific duties of each contact shall be:

Pelekanos/Lunn	Year-I Classroom (HAHN 3091), Year-II Classroom (HAHN 3092)
Simon	PA Lab-1 (HAHN 3094), PA Lab -2 (HAHN 3095)
Dunn	Conference room (HAHN 3103), student mailroom (HAHN 3120)
Waltman/Dunn	Departmental administrative offices/work room (HAHN 3124), see that corridors are clear, close doors and turn on lights before evacuating the building. Bring student list from each class to meeting location.
Kestler/Lunn	Check roll at the meeting location

Faculty members holding class at the time will be responsible for overseeing the relocation of students in that class. They will see that electrical equipment is off, lights are on and that doors are closed.

1. All faculty, staff and students will know the locations of all exits, ABC fire extinguishers, hose cabinets and evacuation routes. Please use nearest stairwell. **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS.**

Designated meeting place – Once evacuated from the building, all PA employees and students will meet with their department at the designated meeting area located in front of the Alpha Hall East (AHE) between AHE and University Blvd..

Re-entry statement - No one will be permitted to re-enter the building(s) until notified by the Building safety officer, building coordinator, campus police or fire departments that it is safe to return.

Contact Numbers:

University Police	460-6312
Maintenance	460-7111
Maintenance Emergencies (after 3:00 p.m. weekdays and holidays)	460-7047

Appendix B:**Evaluation of Circumstances Surrounding an Exposure Incident Form**

Name: (student, employee)	Department:
Incident date:	Incident location:
Procedure being performed when incident occurred:	
Description of device being used (including type and brand):	
Work practices followed: (see ECP p.9.)	
PPE or clothing used at time of exposure incident: (gloves, eye shields, etc.)	
Engineering controls in use at time of exposure: (see ECP p.9.)	
Exposed individual's HAV/HBV vaccination status:	
Confirmation that required BBP training was current: (date completed)	

Person completing form:

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Handling: Attach a copy of retained incident report & send both items to College Biosafety Officer.