



**DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE**  
**PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE/ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**POLICIES AND COMPETENCIES**  
**HANDBOOK**

**2024-2026**  
**Class of 2026**

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## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The Physician Associate/Assistant Program reserves the right in its sole judgment to issue and change rules and regulations and to make changes of any nature in its program, calendar, admission policies, procedures and standards, degree requirements, and academic schedule whenever it is deemed necessary or desirable. This may include without limitations: changes in course content, the rescheduling of classes, canceling of scheduled classes and other academic activities and requiring or offering alternatives in any such case giving such notice as is reasonable and practical under the circumstances.

In addition, the University reserves the right to make whatever changes in admissions requirements, fee charges, tuition, instructors' regulations, and academic programs it deems necessary prior to the start of any class, term, semester. The University also reserves the right to divide, cancel or reschedule classes and supervised clinical practical experiences if factors so require.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Arcadia University Physician Associate/Assistant Program is dedicated to training highly competent, globally aware physician associates/assistants who are prepared to be lifelong learners. The Program is committed to fostering excellence in patient care and promoting professionalism, leadership, cultural competency, scholarship, and service.

## **THE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION**

The training program upon which you are about to embark will be challenging and exciting. The best educational experience occurs when students and program personnel work together to achieve the goals of both the student and the program.

Teaching is the primary responsibility of the principal and instructional faculty. It is the faculty's responsibility to promote an environment which is conducive to the mastery of knowledge and skills necessary to enter the PA profession. Although clinicians themselves, faculty (including the Program Director and Medical Director) are NOT permitted to offer medical advice or provide medical treatment, except in an emergency, to students (A3.09).

Learning is the responsibility of each student. Each student will be aware of the specific technical, academic, and behavioral standards required to successfully complete this program. Students must be able to effectively integrate the information and skills taught in the Program. It is necessary for each student to dedicate the time

and effort needed for individual success. Any student who experiences difficulty which causes interference with their success should seek assistance from faculty, faculty adviser, course directors, or Program Director.

Physician Associate/Assistant training may differ significantly from other educational experiences a student may have previously undertaken. In addition to achieving competence in the application of a significant body of didactic knowledge and psychomotor skills, the student must embody high standards of professionalism. The curriculum is designed to assist students in developing an independent and self-directed approach to learning. This is consistent with the expectations of a graduate physician Associate/Assistant, who will continually expand their knowledge base and expertise.

It is essential for each student to be able to organize, prioritize, and synthesize a large amount of material. Every student must pursue a consistent study routine which allows them to master a vast body of knowledge. Students will be assessed in their mastery of this knowledge by a variety of methods, to include written, oral, and practical examinations, written research assignments, group projects, and other activities.

All students accepted into the Physician Associate/Assistant Program are expected to abide by the regulations set forth by Arcadia University as specified in the Arcadia University [Graduate Academic Policies](#) and the written Policies of the Physician Associate/Assistant Program as outlined in this *PA Program Handbook* as well as written in the *Clinical Phase Handbook*.

## **ETHICAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS**

Students must be able to understand the basis and content of both general and medical ethics. Students must possess attributes such as compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility, and tolerance. Students must be able to recognize limitations in their knowledge, skills, and abilities and to seek appropriate assistance with their identified limitations. Students whose performance is impaired by abuse of alcohol or other substances are not suitable candidates for admission, promotion, or graduation. In addition, should a student be charged or convicted of any misdemeanor or felony offense while in the Program, s/he agrees to immediately notify the Program as to the nature of the legal difficulty. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES AND STANDING**

### **Maintaining Good Academic Standing**

The University reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for unsatisfactory academic performance, academic dishonesty, conduct detrimental to the University, to the welfare of patients, or to the welfare of other students, faculty, or staff. The Department also reserves the right to dismiss a student if it is determined that a student's conduct is not consistent with the professional behavior of a future Physician Associate/Assistant.

Failure to maintain good academic standing may result in dismissal from the program. All courses in the Physician Associate/Assistant curriculum are required and sequential. Students must receive a minimum grade

of “C” in all courses before progressing in the program.

### **Probation, Dismissal, Readmission and Deceleration (A3.15)**

Academic progress is monitored closely. If a student is identified to be in academic jeopardy, the student may be counseled by the faculty, faculty advisor, the Course Director, the Director of Advising and Mentoring, the Director of Didactic Education, the Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education, and/or the Program Director.

**Probation.** If a student fails to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.70 in any semester, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must then achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 during the probationary semester. Students may be placed on academic probation for demonstration of unprofessional behavior, defined as conduct contrary to the *Minimum Technical Standards for Admission, Continuation, and Graduation* for the PA profession as detailed on pages 23-27 in this Handbook.

Students on academic probation may not be eligible for participation in international or distant experiences/rotations or to be recipients of certain distinguished honors or awards.

**Dismissal from the Program during the Didactic Phase.** *(Please refer to the Clinical Phase Handbook for academic requirements and causes for dismissal in the clinical phase of the Program.)*

1. If a student fails to obtain a minimum grade of “C” in any course, he/she will be dismissed from the program.
2. Failure to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 for two (2) consecutive semesters will result in the student’s dismissal from the program.
3. During the time of academic probation, subsequent demonstration of unprofessional conduct, defined as conduct contrary to the *Minimum Technical Standards for Admission, Continuation, and Graduation* for the PA profession as detailed on pages 23-27 in this Handbook, will result in dismissal from the program.
4. All students MUST achieve the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 to enter the clinical phase of instruction. If this minimum GPA requirement has not been met by the end of the didactic phase, students will not be allowed to enter the clinical phase and will be dismissed from the program.
5. Successful completion of the core competency examination with a score of at least 70% after no more than two attempts (a third attempt is at the discretion of the PA Program Academic Review Committee). Students who do not score at least 70% on the core competency examination after two attempts or three attempts if approved by the PA Program’s Academic Review Committee will be dismissed from the program.

**Readmission.** The PA Program does not admit students with advanced placement. However, students who have withdrawn or have been dismissed from the program may be readmitted and granted credit for some of the courses they have successfully completed. Dismissal from the program does not guarantee readmission. The readmission process begins with a student request for readmission which must be submitted to the Program

Director no later than **six months** after the date of their dismissal or withdrawal and serves as a means of remediation for students who are readmitted. Students who are dismissed from the program after October 31<sup>st</sup> of the didactic year, must submit a request for readmission by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year in order to be considered for admission into the next year cohort of students. If a student dismissed after October 31<sup>st</sup> of the didactic year fails to respond by April 1<sup>st</sup> but still responds within the six month time frame, may be considered for admission into the following year's program.

The student's readmission request must include an explanation of the reasons leading to the student's dismissal or withdrawal from the program and an articulated plan for overcoming similar or other obstacles to future success. The request for readmission is evaluated by the Physician Associate/Assistant Program Academic Review Committee (PAARC) and a decision is made regarding granting readmission. If the decision is made to readmit, the PAARC develops a readmission plan after careful review of the student's academic record. Plans for remediation address numerous factors including grades, continuity of the academic experience, cohort support, and other pedagogical concerns. The plan is presented to the student requesting readmission. If all parties agree to the terms, an agreement is drawn up and signed by the student. Readmission is not guaranteed; the student must demonstrate an understanding of the obstacles they encountered and a realistic plan for their success as determined by the PAARC, which includes the Program Director.

Any student who is readmitted to the Program will be placed on academic probation as a condition for readmission. The readmitted student will remain on academic probation at the discretion of the PA Program Director.

In the event, the PA Program's Academic Review Committee (PAARC) does not decide to readmit a dismissed student, a dismissed student may appeal to the University for reconsideration.

**Deceleration.** Deceleration refers to a student who remains matriculated in the program but does not remain with their entering cohort. The Program does not offer deceleration to students. Instead, students not meeting academic standards, as outlined in this handbook, are dismissed from the Program, and offered the opportunity to apply for readmission outside of the general applicant pool via the process outlined in the Readmission section above.

### **Successful Completion of Didactic Phase**

To enter the clinical phase of the program, a student must have:

- No course grades below "C"
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 (B-)
- Successfully completed the core competency examination with a score of at least 70% after no more than two attempts (a third attempt is at the discretion of the PA Program Academic Review Committee)
- Demonstrated appropriate professional attitude and demeanor (see guidelines for ethical conduct for Physician Associate/Assistants)
- Permission of the Physician Associate/Assistant Program
- Tuitions/fees paid in full
- Completed and submitted to Student Health Services a satisfactory yearly physical examination and required screenings and immunization updates
- Demonstrated adherence with all required medical screenings and clearances

- Demonstrated maintenance of standards of professional behavior and technical standards
- Current CPR and ACLS certification, not to expire during the clinical phase
- Students must maintain CPR/ACLS certification for the entire clinical phase of the Program.

Many of the program's clinical sites require criminal background and/or child abuse history clearance forms. All students are required to submit to a complete criminal background check and a sexual offender history clearance and drug screen. Students who fail to pass the background/sexual offender check or drug screen may not be allowed to enter or continue in the program. Students may be required to submit to additional drug and / or background testing at the discretion of the clinical site and the PA Program.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

*Academic dishonesty is grounds for immediate dismissal*

The term "academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to:

- Receipt or exchange of information (**BY ANY MEANS**) during any examination (online, written, oral or practical).
- Soliciting or obtaining knowledge of test items prior to the administration of examinations, or producing any written record of test items after examinations.
- Preparing written or electronic materials such as examination notes, copies of test items, examination topic item lists etc., following the administration of examinations, regardless of how they are obtained.
- Submission of written assignments as original writing without proper footnoting, citations, and/or referencing.

See the [Code of Academic Responsibility](#) in the Arcadia University Student Handbook for more information.

## PROFESSIONALISM POLICY

In addition to meeting minimum grade requirements, students must adhere to normally accepted standards of professional behavior which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Mature demeanor
- Acceptable dress (as defined under Dress Code)
- Ability to accept constructive criticism and develop appropriate behavioral changes in response to such criticism
- Personal integrity and honesty
- Sensitivity to patients and their families, with respect for their right to competent, compassionate, and confidential care
- Respectful and courteous behavior toward fellow students, faculty and health care workers and any support staff with whom they come in contact
- Adherence to program regulations, including attendance, punctuality, and performance in both the academic and clinical setting

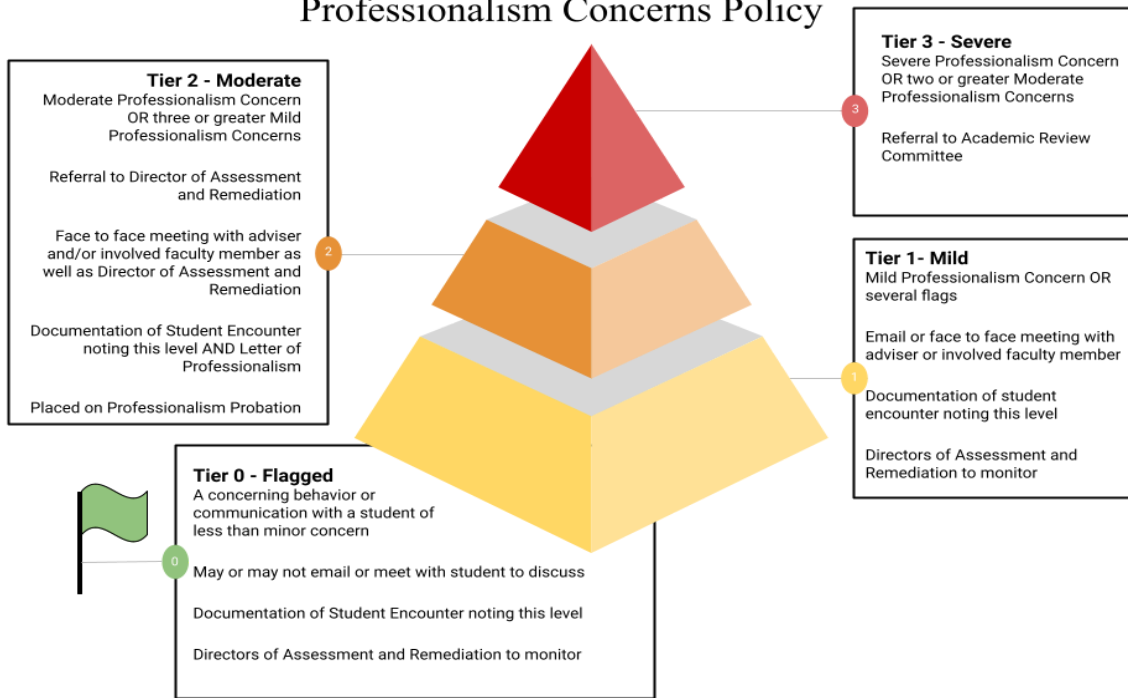
Failure to comply with these standards of professional demeanor is cause for disciplinary action, which may



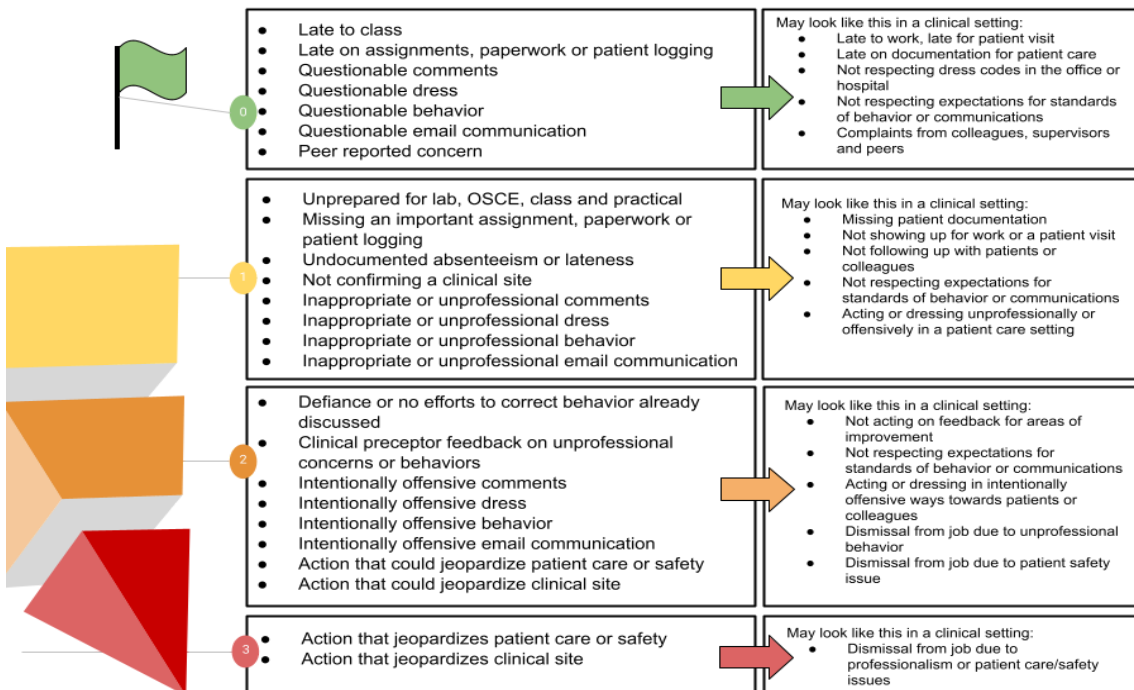
include warning, probation, suspension, and/or dismissal from the Program.

## Professionalism Tiered Evaluation

### Arcadia University's Physician Assistant Professionalism Concerns Policy



### Examples of Unprofessional Behavior by Tier



## **Professional Conduct**

The importance of maintaining the highest standards of professionalism for the Physician Associate/Assistant student cannot be over-emphasized. The faculty will continually evaluate students to ensure they adhere to the standards expected of a physician Associate/Assistant student preparing to enter clinical practice.

Professionalism should include not only superior academic and clinical performance, but also the ability to work productively and relate to peers, program staff, faculty, preceptors, and all other members of the health care team. Courtesy, respect, punctuality and attendance, a neat and professional personal appearance and a positive attitude are core principles of professionalism for the health care provider. The ability to accept and benefit from constructive feedback, to take responsibility for one's actions, to take and act upon direction, and to respond flexibly and cooperatively during unexpected/adverse conditions are also hallmarks of professionalism. See the MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSIONS, CONTINUATION, AND GRADUATION for more information.

## **Classroom Etiquette**

All students must adhere to professional standards of behavior when present in the classrooms.

1. Always address faculty by his/her appropriate title
2. Be respectful in communications with fellow students, faculty, and staff
3. Arrive in a timely manner
4. Advise the appropriate Course Director and Director of Didactic Education in the event of absence and limit the number of absences to a minimum
5. Limit entering and leaving class to the appropriate times
6. Faculty reserve the right to prevent late entry to class until the break
7. Cell phones or other electronic devices capable of emitting sounds will be in silent mode during classes and need to be secured away during exams.

## **Web Etiquette**

Email is an important tool which will be utilized daily.

It is important to remember that standards of professional behavior apply here as well.

1. Always address an email with an appropriate salutation (“Dear Professor Jones”, “Dear Susan”)
2. Always sign an email
3. All email should be written in a professional and appropriate manner – in short, write nothing in an email which you would not be comfortable putting on the board in front of a class
4. Be judicious when forwarding or copying additional persons on emails
5. Check your Arcadia email at the beginning and end of each day
6. Respond to email correspondence in a timely manner
7. Email transmitted in part or wholly over University operated electronic systems is subject to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#)

## **Virtual Learning Etiquette**

Instruction may take place virtually, when necessary, through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc.

Students are held to the same Attendance and Absence Policy as they would be if the learning event occurred in person. Arcadia University's Physician Associate/Assistant program has adopted the following virtual learning etiquette and behavior expectations as the minimum requirements for students during these virtual sessions:

Students must:

1. Display professionalism at all times, including being prepared to engage in scholarly discussions
2. Avoid sharing Zoom/classroom information, links, or passwords to anyone outside of their cohort or Physician Associate/Assistant program unless directed to do so by Physician Associate/Assistant faculty/staff.
3. Recordings of virtual learning sessions are to be used only for personal academic use. They are not to be shared, distributed, or published.
4. Have a computer with video and audio capabilities and know how to operate the features on their device before class begins.
5. Upon entering the virtual classroom, mute their microphones (if not already muted by the Host). In addition, students should rename their display name as “First Name” “Last Name”. This will assist the program in maintaining the safety and security of our virtual online sessions.
6. When possible, use a headphone device when engaged in the virtual sessions in order to reduce ambient noise and distractions.
7. Choose an appropriate physical environment or virtual background prior to entering the virtual classroom and avoid those that are distracting to other participants.
8. Use the chat window for questions and comments relevant to the class. This is not for socializing or posting comments which distract from the discussion and which will be considered disruptive.
9. Understand these virtual rules of engagement also serve as an initial warning to all students and any violation of this “Virtual Learning Etiquette Policy” can result in the student receiving a professionalism warning/infraction as outlined in the Professionalism Policy.

### **Social Media Etiquette**

Students are required to abide by the provisions of the University's [Information Technology Policy](#), including Section X regarding Social Media. In addition, students are expected to comply with the provisions below:

1. Participation in social media and online activities such as blogging, tweeting, wiki, Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok, or any other form of online publishing is more the norm than the exception in our lives. As future healthcare professionals, students within the Program are held to a higher standard of behavior regarding the use of these types of activities. The tenets of professionalism, good taste, and common sense should permeate every aspect of a student’s social media interaction. As part of online activities, if physician Associate/Assistant students identify themselves with Arcadia University, they are now connected to every person in the class and the Program.

The following guidelines and policies are intended to help make proper choices as students engage in social media:

### **DEFINITIONS:**

- Mobile Communication device is defined as any Cell Phone, Pager, Personal Digital Associate/Assistant (PDA), MP3 player, headphone, Bluetooth device, or any other wireless device that could be used to access the Arcadia network.
- Recording device is defined as any device used to record or intercept any wire, electronic, oral, or visual communication, to include, but not limited to, mobile communication devices,

including those with picture messaging, tape recordings, other photo devices and the transmission of images through email systems.

#### BACKGROUND:

- The use of personal mobile communication devices and other electronic devices has expanded rapidly.
- The University does not wish to unreasonably constrain the use of these devices; however, it has a broader responsibility to: (1) ensure that they are used in an appropriate manner; (2) ensure the integrity of proprietary information; (3) preserve the privacy of employees and students, and (4) ensure that unauthorized surveillance does not breach the reasonable expectation of privacy in the learning environment.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Students are expected to be thoughtful in how they represent themselves on social networks. The line between private and public, personal, and professional typically blur in online social networks. Students are expected to respect fellow classmates, faculty, the University, colleagues, and the audience online.
- Students should recognize their class cohort, the Arcadia University student body and the community represent diverse customs, values, and points of view. Students should express their opinion in a respectful manner. This includes avoiding the use of obscenities, personal insults, ethnic, religious, or racial slurs, sexually harassing or inappropriate commentary, as well as topics that can be considered inflammatory or obscene. If a student is unsure, ask for faculty guidance. Respect the privacy of others, especially classmates, other students, faculty, and staff. Use sound judgement when putting anything into writing as it will be seen by others.
- Students must maintain confidentiality about patients, their families, clinical facilities and staff, Arcadia University, its students, or its alumni. Students are encouraged to use sound ethical judgement and follow University Policies and federal requirements such as [HIPAA](#) (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) and [FERPA](#) (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).
- Students are encouraged to avoid posting personally identifiable information, including that which can be used to locate someone offline, including phone numbers, addresses, birth dates, email addresses, etc.
- Potential employers typically conduct web searches (including searches on Facebook and other social media) on job candidates before extending offers. Such searches may apply to students within the Program.
- Students should not post commentary and other postings deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, obscene, or dangerous on the web. Potential employers may see this content and disqualify potential employees from an offer of employment.
- Mobile Communication Devices – Students are required to exercise discretion and restrict the use of personal mobile communication devices, in any educational/clinical setting to the extent required by the facility in which the clinical experience takes place and in accordance with this policy.
- Recording Devices - Generally, recording devices and camera-equipped devices (including mobile communication devices) and their uses are restricted in accordance with state and federal regulatory guidelines concerning unauthorized surveillance. Students shall not use the picture-taking functionality of mobile communication devices in the educational/clinical setting, unless specifically authorized to do so.
- Unauthorized use of cameras at any facility, including designated clinical/research areas, restrooms, or hospital/office areas without the express written consent of the department manager is not allowed.
- Recording Conversations - It is expected that students will respect the privacy of patients in the clinical setting, and that secret recording of individuals without their knowledge is not

compatible with the mission of the University. While realizing that recordings may serve many legitimate academic purposes, the University does not condone recording of individuals who are unaware that such recordings are being made. To promote an environment of trust and collegial academic sharing, the University expects that any recording will be done only with the prior consent of the parties involved. Covert/secret recording of any conversation or meeting occurring in the clinical setting, including any patient rounds or other clinical experience, or conversations or meetings offsite that deal with matters of official concern is prohibited.

- Students are also prohibited from arranging for others to do any recording of conversations, phone calls or other educational activities, unless specifically permitted by the University.
  - In compliance with the privacy regulations contained in the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA), visual and recording devices shall not be used in patient care areas.
  - The University shall not be liable for the loss or damage of personal cell phones, multimedia devices or other recording devices brought into the educational setting.
  - Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from an academic program, depending on the severity of the infraction.
  - Students are strictly prohibited from photographing patients while at a clinical site.
1. Be aware that no privacy setting is perfect or foolproof. The classroom is not an appropriate place to catch up with friends on social media, surf the web or play video games. These activities are distracting to other students in the classroom. Students involved in activities that are disruptive will be asked to leave the classroom.
    - Be mindful that video recording software utilized during class time may capture your computer screen. These recordings are viewed by your classmates and program principal faculty.
  2. Infractions of the University's [Social Media Policy](#) (Section X) or this section may result in a warning, probation, or dismissal from the program.
    - University students must be concerned with any behavior that might reflect badly on themselves, their families, and University. Such behavior includes any activities conducted online. Students are not restricted from using any online social networking site and/or digital platform. However, users must understand that any content they make public via social media is expected to follow acceptable social behaviors and to comply with federal and state government laws and University policies, procedures, rules, and regulations. Because social networking sites are part of the public domain, students should make use of any available privacy settings, and as a general rule should avoid posting sensitive personal information such as a home address, phone number or birth date. Students should also be aware that inappropriate conduct online could negatively impact their personal, academic and professional lives if viewed by university personnel, employers, internship supervisors, scholarship committees or admissions committees. If inappropriate conduct is deemed a violation of any law or regulation, disciplinary and/or law enforcement action will be taken. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, derogatory language about any member of the University community; demeaning statements about or threats to any third party; and incriminating photos or statements depicting hazing, sexual or gender-based discrimination, vandalism, stalking, underage drinking, or illegal drug use.

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools Policy**

Absent a clear statement from a course instructor, use of or consultation with generative AI shall be treated analogously to assistance from another person. In particular, using generative AI tools to substantially complete an assignment or exam (e.g. by entering exam or assignment questions) is not permitted. Students should acknowledge the use of generative AI (other than incidental use) and default to disclosing such assistance when in doubt.

Individual course instructors are free to set their own policies regulating the use of generative AI tools in their courses, including allowing or disallowing some or all uses of such tools. Course instructors should set such policies in their course syllabi and clearly communicate such policies to students. Students who are unsure of policies regarding generative AI tools are encouraged to ask their instructors for clarification.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance at all classes, clinical experiences, and practice sessions, is mandatory. Attendance and punctuality are reflections of your professionalism and may result in disciplinary measures including but not limited to warnings, probation, or dismissal. Attendance is further discussed within the context of specific courses.

If you need to miss a class or any portion of a class, you must notify the appropriate Course Director(s), the Director and Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education, and [PAattendance@arcadia.edu](mailto:PAattendance@arcadia.edu) **before** the start of class. Absence from any class, clinical experience, or practice session may be reflected in your grade, evaluation, and may possibly lead to disciplinary measures. You are expected to be in the classroom at least **five minutes** before the scheduled start of class. If you are frequently late, this may be reflected in your grades, evaluations, assignment of clinical experiences and rotation sites and may result in disciplinary measures. Being punctual to class is akin to being punctual for work shifts. Tardiness reflects poorly on a student's professional behavior and is disrespectful and distracting for faculty or adjunct faculty who are instructing.

## **ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

Arcadia University acknowledges religious holidays. Students may request leave from the college and the request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis per the didactic year content. For more information, see the Leave of Absence section.

## **DRESS CODE**

You are expected to be dressed appropriately both in the classroom and in clinical/patient areas. Your dress reflects the profession and the Program. Many of the guest faculty will be your future preceptors and employers. First impressions are hard to change. Please remember this when you come to class. Appropriate classroom attire is casual but appropriate.

The following are examples considered unprofessional for the classroom setting:

- Hats, baseball caps
  - Reasonable accommodations based on religious and/or cultural observances or practices such as, but not limited to, style of dress, head coverings, grooming requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Clothing with logos, graphics, designs, images, or words that may be interpreted as offensive or polarizing

- Including but not limited to profanity, political or religious preferences/affiliations, religious or political stances/positions/jokes
- Torn, unkempt/dirty clothing
- Tube tops, tank tops, strapless tops or dresses, halter tops, thin/spaghetti straps

For clinical experiences during the didactic year and clinical rotations, expected dress is *professional*. The following examples are considered unprofessional for the clinical setting:

- Clothing or accessories that are safety concerns such as open toe shoes, sandals or excessive jewelry should be avoided
- NO sneakers, jeans or leggings, t-shirts, sweats, open-toed shoes
- Facial piercings need to be removed
- Tattoos need to be covered
- Long hair must be pulled back

Please note that the guidelines, policies, rules, regulations set forth by the clinical site supersede those of the university.

### **Patient Confidentiality**

Students are expected to respect and maintain patient confidentiality in both the clinical and academic settings and adhere to HIPAA regulations. Students must participate in HIPAA training and pass a mandatory certification examination to participate in clinical training experiences.

Maintaining patient confidentiality includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Not sharing the medical or personal details of a patient with anyone except those health care professionals involved in the well-being of the patient, or within the context of an educational endeavor
- Not discussing patients or their illnesses in public places where conversations may be overheard
- Not publicly identifying patients in spoken words, or in writing, without adequate justification
- Not inviting or permitting unauthorized persons into patient care areas of the institution
- Not sharing your confidential computer system passwords with others.
- Not accessing the medical records of patients for which you are not directly providing care

### **Supervision**

Appropriate supervision is fundamental to the role of both the student and professional physician Associate/Assistant. This represents the hallmark of the PA profession, and without this, the PA student cannot legally or ethically provide patient care. While participating in clinical training experiences, PA students will obtain supervision from a physician or other licensed health care professional designated by the Program. Information regarding the designated preceptor at clinical training sites can be found in Exxat, the Program's clinical phase data management system.

If a circumstance arises in which a student is asked or expected to perform clinical procedures or to deliver patient care services without adequate or appropriate supervision, the student must politely, but firmly, decline and **immediately** contact the PA Program faculty.

To protect your personal and professional integrity and to avoid potential legal liability, do not perform any patient care activity if:

- The authorized preceptor or his/her designee is not on the immediate premises
- You have not received adequate instruction and/or are not proficient in or knowledgeable about the care

- you are asked to deliver
- You have reason to believe that such care or procedure may be harmful to the patient
  - There is no adequate or appropriate supervision available at the time you are expected to carry out the assignment
  - The care or procedure is self-initiated (i.e., the PA student assumes or decides that a particular service or procedure should be performed)
  - The activity is beyond the scope of your role as a PA student

In some settings, especially if there are many patients, you may be pressured to perform services which are inappropriate to your level of training or knowledge. It is much easier to defend why you won't perform a particular task than it is to defend why you endangered a patient's well-being.

Do not allow good judgment be compromised by the momentary flattery or excitement of doing something you view as challenging or daring. You may face termination as a PA student if you fail to exercise common sense regarding the welfare of a patient.

You have an obligation to exercise good judgment and professionalism in your approach to patient care. Use the above comments to guide you in your decision-making. If you encounter a compromising situation, **ALWAYS** call the Program faculty, in a timely manner.

### **Classroom Session Recordings**

The Program utilizes lecture capture software to record instructional sessions. Your voice or image may be captured and used for future educational purposes.

Meetings/sessions of any course in the Program may be recorded. Any recordings will be available to students registered in the Program. This is intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate university policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Recordings, or any part of the recordings, may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments. Doing so would be a breach of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### **Computer Policy**

To meet the academic requirements of the PA program students are required to have and maintain a laptop computer that meets the [minimum published technical capabilities](#). Program communication with students occurs mainly via electronic mail and or Canvas, the University's learning management system. Students are required to bring their laptop to every class. It is at the discretion of the instructional faculty to allow computer use during scheduled class time. Any instructional faculty who finds a student's computer activity during class distracting or disruptive may ask that the student leave the classroom. Such infractions may result in a warning or probation.

### **Evaluations**

As part of the program's continuous self-assessment process, students are required to complete course and lecturer evaluations. Evaluations may be completed online within the Canvas course and must be completed for each didactic course within 48 hours after the final exam. If an individual fails to complete an evaluation within the 48-hour time frame, they will receive an email reminder from the Program. If they do not complete the evaluation within 24 hours after the email reminder, this will be considered a professionalism infraction and a note stating such will be placed in their file.



## **Outside Volunteer and Work Experiences**

While enrolled in the Program, students are **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED** from obtaining or continuing with outside employment because of the intensive nature of the courses and the clinical workload. Students who are involved in volunteer or paid work during their course of study in the PA Program cannot use their affiliation with the Program in any aspect of that job. Work time cannot be used toward meeting clinical rotation requirements. Work outside the PA Program undertaken by the student, independent of the Program, is not covered by the liability insurance required for clinical work associated with the educational experience of the Program. PA students cannot be required to work for the program (A3.04), although graduate Associate/Assistantships may be offered on a merit basis. PA Students cannot be utilized as instructional faculty, clinical or administrative staff (A.3.05).

## **Student Identification (A3.06)**

While at clinical sites, you must clearly identify yourself as a physician Associate/Assistant student. You must wear your Arcadia issued name tag and a short, white laboratory coat with an Arcadia University PA Program patch to distinguish you from physicians, medical students, and other health professionals. Individual sites may issue and require you to wear their identification badge. If this is the case, you must wear the institution's badge and your university issued name tag unless specifically directed otherwise by the clinical site. Students are also expected to introduce themselves as a "Physician Associate/Assistant Student."

## **EXAMINATIONS**

### **Written Examinations**

Google calendar is used to communicate the didactic year schedule to first year students, including quizzes, examination schedules will be provided at the start of each semester. Once the proctor announces, "time is up," **NO** additional time will be allowed to continue working on the examination and the exam must be submitted. The proctor determines the seating arrangement for examinations. During examinations, cell phones must be placed in the off or silent position and placed in your bags, away from your desk.

If you arrive late for an examination, you forfeit the time. If you arrive for an examination any time after one or more students have already left the examination room, you will be considered absent, and you will not be permitted to take the examination at that time.

### **Examination Review**

Upon completion of written examinations, the course director(s) will validate exams within seven days in order to post student grades. Students will not be permitted to review a specific examination but may meet with the course director to discuss any concern. Upon completion of the validation of an exam, the course director will provide a summary of the examination validation including any overall topics which the majority of students performed poorly or to clarify questions which allowed for multiple answer responses or provide additional clarity for students. Students may access their own personal strengths, weaknesses and opportunities report through Exemplify (Examsoft) platform and may request a meeting with the course director for further review. Any student scoring lower than 70% on an exam will be required to meet with a course director. Students may be prompted to prepare for this meeting by reviewing various course content in order to demonstrate remediation efforts prior to and during the meeting. Students scoring between 70-75% may choose to meet with the course director and should schedule a meeting with course directors accordingly. Students who score 80% or higher have demonstrated the minimum recommended knowledge base on lecture subject material and are discouraged from meeting with course directors unless the student strongly feels the need to meet to discuss topic material and not a specific question on an examination. All students should be prepared to discuss

his/her/their understanding of the material and concepts prior to any meeting with a course director in order to ensure an interactive and purposeful learning experience.

## **Practical Examinations**

In addition to written examinations, students must pass all practical examinations in Physical Diagnosis I and II as outlined in the course syllabi.

## **Missed Exam Policy**

**Didactic year:** If a student is absent for a scheduled examination due to an unanticipated catastrophic life event, the student or their designee is required to promptly notify the department. The course director(s), in conjunction with the Director of Didactic Education, and/or Program Director, will determine the accommodation made regarding a make-up examination. In the event of an illness or other obstacle that precludes a student from taking an exam, this will be classified as an unexcused absence and the student is required to promptly notify the course director. The course director(s), in conjunction with the Director of Didactic Education, and/or the Program Director, will determine if a makeup examination will be administered. The maximum exam score a student can obtain for the makeup examination is 65. Only one makeup examination for an unexcused absence will be granted during the didactic year.

**Clinical year:** If a student is absent for a scheduled examination due to an unanticipated catastrophic life event, the student or their designee is required to promptly notify the department. The clinical coordinator(s), in conjunction with the Director of Clinical Education, Associate/Assistant Director of Clinical Education, and/or Program Director, will determine the accommodation made regarding a make-up examination. In the event of an illness or other obstacle that precludes a student from taking an exam, this will be classified as an unexcused absence and the student is required to promptly notify the clinical coordinators. The clinical coordinators, in conjunction with the Director of Didactic Education, Associate/Assistant Director of Clinical Education, and/or the Program Director, will determine if and when a makeup examination will be administered. Only one makeup examination for an unexcused absence will be granted during the clinical year.

## **Device Policy for Examinations**

At this time students are required to take all Program examinations using a student owned laptop, this device must meet the [University/program specifications](#). The Program will be using the PAEA End of Rotation Exams, and these will be taken on student-owned laptop computers also. These devices are subject to be searched by faculty should questions regarding academic dishonesty arise.

## **Examination Remediation Policy**

### **Didactic Assessment Remediation**

The remediation process is designed to help struggling students achieve the expected competencies and core academic and technical skills as outlined in each syllabus. Each syllabus with the Physician Associate/Assistant Program curriculum outlines the assessments (both formative and summative) for that course, and clearly specifies the passing parameters for each assessment.

Students who do not earn a passing grade on an examination, summative assessment, or Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) will be **required** to remediate and meet with either the Course Director(s) or the Director of Didactic Education or the Director of Clinical Education or the Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education or the Associate/Assistant Director of Clinical Education. The faculty member will

determine the appropriate remediation plan to include identification of the deficient knowledge and skills, process for correcting the deficiency, and the resulting measurable outcome. Remediation processes may include, but are not limited to, review of the curriculum materials, additional readings or video assignments, self-reflection, and simulation. The process for measuring the outcome of the remediation may include, but is not limited to, retesting of the content with a different version of the exam, skill proficiency demonstration, and simulation assessment. The remediation plan and outcome will be documented and placed in the student's programmatic file.

Students must pass the remediation with the same minimum passing standard specific in the syllabus for the original assessment. Remediations must be completed within the timeframe specified by the faculty member, otherwise, a professionalism infraction will be recorded in the student's academic record. If the remediation attempt is not successful, the student will be referred to the Physician Associate/Assistant Program's Academic Review Committee for further disposition which may include remediation through a different modality.

## FINAL COURSE GRADES

Final course grades are not rounded to the whole number. They are based on a percentage scale of 0-100%:

Grading Criteria	
A	93.45-100%
A-	89.45-93.45%
B+	86.45-89.44%
B	83.45-86.44%
B-	79.45-83.44%
C+	75.45-79.44%
C	70.00-75.44%
F	< 70%

## OFFICE POLICIES

Because of the heavy traffic in our office area, we would like to remind you of the following policies which have been established for the Program offices:

- Students are not permitted to use office telephones, copy machines, fax machines, computers, stationery, or supplies. Program Support Specialists cannot duplicate materials nor do other work for students.
- Students are not permitted to use the office area as a lounge. There are lounges available on the second floor of Brubaker Hall and on the first floor of Easton Hall in Glenside and in the PA Program department at the Christiana campus.
- "Guests" in the classroom are disruptive to effective learning and are discouraged. No "guests" are permitted in the classroom without prior approval from a principal faculty member. If granted permission, all guests must be introduced to the entire class.
- The Program cannot accept or deliver messages or allow students to place or receive phone calls at the PA office, except in an emergency. In addition, the student cannot use the Program address for receipt of personal mail or deliveries (including food items unless prior approval has been granted by a principal faculty member).

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

Arcadia University provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you require accommodations or other academic supports due to a chronic medical condition, a physical, psychological, psychiatric or learning disability, you should contact [Disability Support Services](#) in the Office of Academic Development (Knight Hall Room 131) at the following numbers: 215-572-2122, 215-572-4686, or 215-572-4086. Or [Counseling Services](#) at Heinz Hall Room 38 or call 215-572-2967.

If you have any temporary or chronic medical problems that may impair your ability to provide medical care or pose a risk to yourself, to patients, or to your fellow students, please inform a faculty member immediately.

## **STUDENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

Student safety is of utmost importance to the PA Program and University. The PA Program has developed Clearance Guidelines that establish policy all students must follow in order to enter the clinical setting during any phase of PA training. These guidelines were developed based on CDC guidelines and common clinical site requirements outlined in contractual agreements and are posted in the PA Class course in Canvas.

### **Public Safety at the Glenside campus**

To maintain a safe environment for the University community, the university employs a trained public safety staff at the Glenside campus. [Public Safety](#) Officers patrol the campus 24 hours a day and operate an around-the-clock communications system. The contact number for non-emergent public safety inquiries is 215-572-2800 (ext. 2800 on campus).

- For emergencies on the Glenside campus, call 215-572-2999 (ext. 2999 from a campus phone)

### **Public Safety at the Christiana campus**

The Christiana campus main building doors are operated via keypad with unique codes overnight from 6 p.m. – 8 a.m. daily. The building complex is staffed with a security guard. The campus suite main doors are locked 24 hours a day and **require a keycard for access**. Students must use their university issued ID badge to gain access to the Christiana campus. There are 5-closed circuit cameras located throughout the suite and monitored by campus security from the Glenside campus.

- For emergencies on the Christiana campus, call 911
- Call 215-572-2999 for phone escort (public safety will remain on the phone with you until you reach your destination).

## **Medical and Mental Health**

Students may find they need to tend to medical or mental health concerns while enrolled in the PA program. The Program encourages PROMPT attention to these matters, as you cannot properly learn to care for others if your health and wellbeing are compromised.

Students at both the Glenside and Christiana campuses, can access medical care through [Student Health Services](#) (215-572-2966) and mental health care through [Student Counseling Services](#) (215-572-2967), both services are located at Heinz Hall.

In addition to the above support services, students may request to utilize one mental health day per semester per the mental health day policy. Students who do not follow the requirements to request the mental health day may not be granted its approval and could be considered to have an unexcused absence from class. (page 35)

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Policy**

### **College of Health Sciences Statement Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination for Students**

Most clinical sites that accept students in our Department of Medical Science now require that students receive COVID-19 vaccination prior to attending their site for clinical training; while sites accepting students in our Department of Physical Therapy have required this to a lesser extent, we anticipate that the requirement will only become more prevalent over time. While Arcadia does not currently require COVID-19 vaccination for matriculation, although that is itself anticipated to change once a COVID-19 vaccine receives final approval by the FDA, **students should be aware that, at present, if they do not receive the vaccine, their options for clinical site placements, and, consequently, pathways for program completion, may be severely limited.**

Exemptions based on medical need or sincerely held religious belief may be available at clinical sites, and CHS personnel will support students in seeking an accommodation on these bases from any site to which the student has been assigned to complete their training. However, the University has no authority over outside entities and the policies that they choose to enforce, or decisions made pursuant to those policies. Therefore, Arcadia cannot guarantee that required clinical training experiences will be available for the unvaccinated student to complete their degree.

While the University will attempt to work with students who are unable to get the vaccine for medical or religious reasons in terms of program completion, students must be aware that an inability to participate in clinical experiences will most likely result in their inability to successfully complete clinical phase requirements and therefore not graduate from the College of Health Sciences program in which they are enrolled.

Students who refuse the vaccine for other reasons are not entitled to any programmatic accommodations, including any changes to the clinical year schedule. But any student in the Department of Medical Science has the option to request a maximum 12 week leave of absence during their clinical phase of training as outlined in the Clinical Phase Handbook. Each request will be reviewed by the PA Academic Review Committee (PAARC) with decisions being rendered on an individual basis.

Students should refer to the [University COVID-19 website](#) for the most current information.

### **Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens**

Students will be exposed to inherent risks while participating in clinical training including possible exposure to blood, tissue or other body or laboratory fluids that may contain human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and/or hepatitis C virus (HCV). This policy is based upon the available data and Public Health Service recommendations for postexposure management of health care workers who have occupational exposure that may place them at risk of acquiring HIV and other blood-borne pathogen infection (A3.08).

The following outlines the procedure to follow if exposure to bloodborne pathogens occurs while a student is participating in clinical rotations (A3.08b):

1. Act as quickly as possible.
2. Wash exposure site thoroughly with soap and water (or water only for mucous membranes).
3. Notify the preceptor of your rotation AND, if applicable, the nursing supervisor who should request source-person clinical information and blood work (e.g., HBsAG, HCV antibody, HIV) unless HIV, HBV and HCV status is already known.
4. The site may require you to complete an incident report.
  - a. Do NOT fill out a workman's comp or employee health claim
5. It is very important to report all exposures and get follow-up care promptly

- a. This follow up care begins by you going to the nearest emergency department.
  - b. After being seen emergently by a healthcare professional, follow up with your primary care provider is recommended to determine if you need post-exposure prophylaxis. If you do not have a PCP the insurance plan utilizes the MultiPlan Provider Network and you can contact them for a referral at the following phone number: (800) 557-6794.
6. Notify the PA Program (by contacting a clinical coordinator or the Director of Clinical Education) as soon as possible, no later than the next business day.
  7. Send bills directly to your insurance company.
  8. Complete the needlestick/splash claim form (Appendix B) and email to Nancy Woehrle at [woehrlen@arcadia.edu](mailto:woehrlen@arcadia.edu). An Arcadia representative will then complete the “Policyholder Representative” signature box and then it will be faxed to (972) 492-4946.
    - a. Please note you will need to put the policy number on the claim form also: Policy No. N04964366.
    - b. If you have any questions, you can use the following phone number: (972) 492-6474 to follow up.
    - c. This insurance coverage is considered secondary or excess coverage, meaning if your current health insurance does not cover any or all the expenses this plan will reimburse you up to the maximum benefit level (A3.06c).

If you are exposed to bloodborne pathogens while on a clinical training experience during your didactic year, a faculty member will be on premise. Follow steps one and two above and notify the faculty member immediately. They will help you seek emergency care. You will need to seek follow up from a primary care physician and submit your medical bills to your insurance company.

### **Title IX**

Arcadia University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination. The University's [Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) details our commitment to preventing and addressing such behavior. We understand the impact that sexual harassment and sexual misconduct can have, and are committed to doing our part to foster an environment that is safe and equitable.

Please know that all faculty on campus are mandatory reporters. This means that if you disclose an experience of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct to us outside of a classroom discussion, a writing assignment, or a University-approved research project, we must share what you have reported to us with Arcadia’s Title IX Coordinator. This does not mean that you will have to pursue an investigation, or go through a grievance process. Even if you do not choose these options, the Title IX Office can provide supportive measures and other resources to you. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, please know that you are not alone. If you would like to speak to someone confidentially, confidential resources are provided on the Office of Equity and Civil Rights [website](#).

What is Title IX? [Link here](#).

### **FACULTY ADVISERS**

All students are assigned a faculty adviser and are encouraged to seek assistance when necessary for personal or academic reasons.

## **Letters of Recommendation**

All requests for letters of recommendation should be emailed to the student's advisor. Please fill out the [LOR Request Form](#) and be sure to include all requested information. In addition to the Request Form, you should also include a draft of your letter of recommendation. This draft should include why you feel to meet the qualifications for scholarship, award, clinical position, or residency program. Students must allow a reasonable amount of time for faculty to fulfill this request (typically 10 business days).

## **Credentialing Paperwork:**

Requests for credentialing for employment need to be submitted to: [pacredentialing@arcadia.edu](mailto:pacredentialing@arcadia.edu)

## **CLASS CANCELLATIONS**

If there is a lecture change/cancellation or a scheduled examination needs to be changed, the class will receive notification by email and/or an announcement via Canvas if the change occurs within two weeks of the scheduled event. The Google calendar will be updated to reflect the change as well.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

A leave of absence (up to 12 weeks) will only be granted after successful completion of the didactic phase of the Program and will not be granted to students on academic probation. Requests for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the PA Program Director and should indicate the reason for the leave and expected duration. The Director may approve one (1) such a request if you are in good standing and are maintaining the equivalent of a grade of C in each course in progress at the time of your request. Granting of a leave of absence is a rare and unusual event reserved only for exceptional circumstances.

In the event of an emergency or tragedy in either the didactic or clinical phase of the program, a student may be granted an excused absence for up to five (5) consecutive and cumulative class days at the discretion of the Program Director. This is not considered a leave of absence.

## **CLASSROOM MAINTENANCE**

Every effort must be made to keep the classroom and student lounge clean. You may not bring food into the classroom. Beverages are permitted provided they are in covered containers. Consumption of food is to be reserved for break time only. It is disruptive to eat while someone is lecturing in class. Do not leave books, notes, or electronic devices overnight. When leaving the classroom, any valuables should be taken with you.

## **CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE**

It is YOUR responsibility to inform the PA Program staff and appropriate University Offices (e.g. Registrar, Business, Public Safety) of any change in name, address, or telephone. This notification should occur as soon as the name change is in effect.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

See [Graduate Academic Policies](#) or the [Arcadia University Graduate Forms](#).

## **STUDENT TEACHING**

Students enrolled in the Physician Associate/Assistant Program are not permitted to teach components of the program curriculum (A3.05a), although they are expected to make presentations before the class as part of their learning experience and participate in classroom discussion and active learning sessions. Students are encouraged to support their classmates and work collaboratively through study groups and informal peer

tutoring.

## **STUDENT WORK POLICY**

Due to the intensity of the PA program, students are discouraged from outside employment while enrolled in the PA program. Students are prohibited from applying compensated clinical experience toward academic credit. Students cannot be required to work for the PA Program (A3.04), although they may be selected to voluntarily work for the graduate Associate/Assistantship program, which serves to support instructional faculty in the classroom and manages the note taking service for PA lectures during the didactic year. Graduate Associate/Assistantships are a merit-based opportunity offered to students at the time of acceptance into the program.

While in the clinical setting, students may not provide services within a preceptor's practice apart from those rendered as part of the clinical training arranged by the program (A3.05b). Students are not permitted to substitute for clerical or administrative staff while in the clinical setting. Students may not receive compensation for any work performed within the preceptor's site or practice.

## **MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR PA PROGRAM ADMISSION, CONTINUATION, AND GRADUATION**

Technical standards are defined as the attributes considered necessary for students to complete their education and training and subsequently enter clinical practice. These standards are prerequisites for entrance to, continuation within, and graduation from the Arcadia University Physician Associate/Assistant Program. They are also prerequisites to licensure by various state professional boards. Reasonable accommodation will be offered for persons with disabilities in conjunction with Disability Support Services and the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (<https://www.ada.gov/>).

Competency in technical standards will be assessed regularly throughout the Program. The Program has the ethical responsibility for the safety of patients with whom students and graduates will come in contact, and to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent PAs. Thus, it is critical that persons admitted to the Program possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice medicine.

Students must verify that they meet these Technical Standards prior to or at the time of matriculation to the Program and maintain them during their PA training. Students are obligated to alert the Program in a timely fashion of any change in their ability to fulfill the Technical Standards. Students are subject to dismissal if they do not possess the minimum physical or cognitive abilities, or sufficient mental or emotional stability to complete the entire course of study; if they do not participate fully in all aspects of PA training; if they are not deployable as competent PAs (with or without reasonable accommodation); or if they otherwise do not meet the Technical Standards.

Students must possess aptitude, ability, and skills in the following six (6) areas:

1. Observation
2. Communication
3. Motor and Sensory Function
4. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities
5. Behavioral and Social Attributes
6. Ethical and Legal Standards



The functions described below are critically important and must be autonomously performed by the student. It should be understood that these are standards for minimum competence in the program:

### **Observation**

Students must be able to observe demonstrations, participate in physical examination sessions and clinical skills workshops, and observe the difference of normal versus pathological states. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan.

Students must be able to accurately observe a patient near and at a distance, noting nonverbal, as well as verbal signs. Specific vision-related criteria include, but are not limited to, detecting, and identifying changes in color of fluids, skin, culture media, visualizing and discriminating findings on x-rays and other imaging tests, and reading written and illustrated materials. Students must be able to observe and differentiate changes in body movement, observe anatomic structures, discriminate among numbers and patterns associated with diagnostic tests such as electrocardiograms and competently use diagnostic instruments such as an otoscope, ophthalmoscope, and microscope.

### **Communication**

Students must be able to relate effectively to patients while conveying compassion and empathy. They must be able to clearly communicate with patients to elicit information, accurately describe changes in mood, activity, and posture of patients, and understand verbal as well as nonverbal communication.

Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing. Physician Associate/Assistant education presents exceptional challenges in the volume and breadth of reading required to master subject areas and impart the information to others. Students must be able to communicate quickly, effectively, and efficiently in oral and written English in the classroom and later with all members of the health care team. Specific requirements include but are not limited to the following: rapidly and clearly communicating with the medical staff on rounds or elsewhere, eliciting an accurate history from patients, and communicating complex findings in appropriate terms to patients and to various members of the health care team. Students must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional cues, such as sadness and agitation.

Students must be able to accurately and legibly record observations and plans in legal documents, such as the patient record. Students must be able to prepare and communicate concise, complete summaries of both limited patient encounters and complex, prolonged encounters, including hospitalizations. Students must be able to complete forms in a timely fashion, and according to directions.

### **Motor and Sensory Function**

Students must possess sufficient sensory and motor function to perform physical examinations using palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. This requires sufficient exteroceptive sense (visual, auditory, touch and temperature), coordination to manipulate patients and adequate motor and diagnostic instruments.

Students must be able to evaluate various components of the voice, such as pitch, intensity, and timbre. They must also be able to accurately differentiate percussive notes and auscultatory findings, including but not limited to, heart, lung, and abdominal sounds. Students must be able to accurately discern normal and abnormal

findings, using instruments including, but not limited to, tuning forks, stethoscopes, and sphygmomanometers.

Students should be able to execute physical movements needed to provide general care and emergency treatments to patients. The student, therefore, must be able to respond promptly to emergencies within the hospital or practice setting, and must not hinder the ability of his/her co-workers to provide prompt care. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of a physician Associate/Assistant include arriving quickly when called and assisting in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), administering intravenous medications, applying pressure to arrest bleeding, maintaining an airway, suturing wounds, and assisting with obstetrical maneuvers. As further illustration, CPR may require moving an adult patient, applying considerable chest pressure over a prolonged period, delivering artificial respiration, and calling for help.

Students should be able to learn to perform basic laboratory tests such as wet mount, urinalysis, etc., and diagnostic/therapeutic procedures such as venipuncture or placement of catheters and tubes. The administration of intravenous medications requires a certain level of dexterity, sensation, and visual acuity. Students must be able to measure angles and diameters of various body structures using a tape measure or other devices to measure blood pressure, respiration, and pulse, and interpret graphs describing biologic relationships. Clinical rotations require the ability to transport oneself to a variety of settings in a timely manner.

### **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

Students must be able to learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction; small group, team, and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports; and use of electronic technology. Students must have the mental capacity to assimilate and learn a large amount of complex, technical and detailed information to formulate diagnostic and therapeutic plans.

Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of physician Associate/Assistants, often requires rapid intellectual function, especially in emergency situations. These intellectual functions include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning analysis, judgment, and synthesis. Students must be able to identify significant findings in the patient's history, physical examination, and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, and choose appropriate medications and therapy.

It is essential the student can incorporate new information, from many sources, toward the formulation of a diagnosis and plan. Good judgment in patient assessment and diagnostic/therapeutic planning is also essential. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the extent of their knowledge to others.

### **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

Students must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly, without warning, and/or in unpredictable ways. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly completing all responsibilities during their academic training, as well as the responsibility attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. They must understand the legal and ethical standards of the medical profession. Students must be able to work effectively, respectfully, and professionally as part of the educational and healthcare team, and to interact with instructors and peers, patients, patient families, and health care personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. Students must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept constructive feedback from others; and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes.

### **Statement of Values of the Physician Associate/Assistant Profession**

- Physician Associate/Assistants hold as their primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity

of all human beings.

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

## The PA and Patient

**The PA Role and Responsibilities.** Physician Associate/Assistant practice flows out of a unique relationship that involves the PA, the physician, and the patient. The individual patient–PA relationship is based on mutual respect and an agreement to work together regarding medical care. In addition, PAs practice medicine with physician supervision; therefore, the care that a PA provides is an extension of the care of the supervising physician. The patient–PA relationship is also a patient–PA–physician relationship.

The principal value of the physician Associate/Assistant profession is to respect the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings. This concept is the foundation of the patient–PA relationship. Physician Associate/Assistants have an ethical obligation to see that each of their patients receives appropriate care. PAs should be sensitive to the beliefs and expectations of the patient. PAs should recognize that each patient is unique and has an ethical right to self-determination.

Physician Associate/Assistants are professionally and ethically committed to providing nondiscriminatory care to all patients. While PAs are not expected to ignore their own personal values, scientific or ethical standards, or the law, they should not allow their personal beliefs to restrict patient access to care. A PA has an ethical duty to offer each patient the full range of information on relevant options for their health care. If personal moral, religious, or ethical beliefs prevent a PA from offering the full range of treatments available or care the patient desires, the PA has an ethical duty to refer a patient to another qualified provider. That referral should not restrict a patient’s access to care. PAs are obligated to care for patients in emergency situations and to

responsibly transfer patients if they cannot care for them.

Physician Associate/Assistants should always act in the best interests of their patients and as advocates when necessary. PAs should actively resist policies that restrict free exchange of medical information. For example, a PA should not withhold information about treatment options simply because the option is not covered by insurance. PAs should inform patients of financial incentives to limit care, use resources in a fair and efficient way, and avoid arrangements or financial incentives that conflict with the patient's best interests.

**The PA and Diversity.** The physician Associate/Assistant should respect the culture, values, beliefs, and expectations of the patient.

**Nondiscrimination.** Physician Associate/Assistants should not discriminate against classes or categories of patients in the delivery of needed health care. Such classes and categories include gender, color, creed, race, religion, age, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, nature of illness, disability, socioeconomic status, physical stature, body size, gender identity, marital status, or sexual orientation.

**Initiation and Discontinuation of Care.** In the absence of a pre-existing patient–PA relationship, the physician Associate/Assistant is under no ethical obligation to care for a person unless no other provider is available. A PA is morally bound to provide care in emergency situations and to arrange proper follow-up. PAs should keep in mind that contracts with health insurance plans might define a legal obligation to provide care to certain patients.

A physician Associate/Assistant and supervising physician may discontinue their professional relationship with an established patient if proper procedures are followed. The PA and physician should provide the patient with adequate notice, offer to transfer records, and arrange for continuity of care if the patient has an ongoing medical condition. Discontinuation of the professional relationship should be undertaken only after a serious attempt has been made to clarify and understand the expectations and concerns of all involved parties.

If the patient decides to terminate the relationship, they are entitled to access appropriate information contained within their medical record.

**Informed Consent.** Physician Associate/Assistants have a duty to protect and foster an individual patient's free and informed choices. The doctrine of informed consent means that a PA provides adequate information that is comprehensible to a competent patient or patient surrogate. At a minimum, this should include the nature of the medical condition, the objectives of the proposed treatment, treatment options, possible outcomes, and the risks involved. PAs should be committed to the concept of shared decision making, which involves assisting patients in making decisions that account for medical, situational, and personal factors.

In caring for adolescents, the PA should understand all the laws and regulations in his or her jurisdiction that are related to the ability of minors to consent to or refuse health care. Adolescents should be encouraged to involve their families in health care decision making. The PA should also understand consent laws pertaining to emancipated or mature minors. (See the section on **Confidentiality**.)

When the person giving consent is a patient's surrogate, a family member, or other legally authorized representative, the PA should take reasonable care to assure that the decisions made are consistent with the patient's best interests and personal preferences, if known. If the PA believes the surrogate's choices do not reflect the patient's wishes or best interests, the PA should work to resolve the conflict. This may require the use of additional resources, such as an ethics committee.

**Confidentiality.** Physician Associate/Assistants should maintain confidentiality. By maintaining

confidentiality, PAs respect patient privacy and help to prevent discrimination based on medical conditions. If patients are confident that their privacy is protected, they are more likely to seek medical care and more likely to discuss their problems candidly.

In cases of adolescent patients, family support is important but should be balanced with the patient's need for confidentiality and the PA's obligation to respect their emerging autonomy. Adolescents may not be of age to make independent decisions about their health, but providers should respect that they soon will be. To the extent they can, PAs should allow these emerging adults to participate as fully as possible in decisions about their care. It is important that PAs be familiar with and understand the laws and regulations in their jurisdictions that relate to the confidentiality rights of adolescent patients. (See the section on *Informed Consent*.)

Any communication about a patient conducted in a manner that violates confidentiality is unethical. Because written, electronic, and verbal information may be intercepted or overheard, the PA should always be aware of anyone who might be monitoring communication about a patient.

PAs should choose methods of storage and transmission of patient information that minimize the likelihood of data becoming available to unauthorized persons or organizations. Computerized record keeping and electronic data transmission present unique challenges that can make the maintenance of patient confidentiality difficult. PAs should advocate for policies and procedures that secure the confidentiality of patient information.

### **The Patient and the Medical Record**

Physician Associate/Assistants have an obligation to keep information in the patient's medical record confidential. Information should be released only with the written permission of the patient or the patient's legally authorized representative. Specific exceptions to this general rule may exist (e.g., workers compensation, communicable disease, HIV, knife/gunshot wounds, abuse, substance abuse). It is important that a PA be familiar with and understand the laws and regulations in his or her jurisdiction that relate to the release of information. For example, stringent legal restrictions on release of genetic test results and mental health records often exist.

Both ethically and legally, a patient has certain rights to know the information contained in his or her medical record. While the chart is legally the property of the practice or the institution, the information in the chart is the property of the patient. Most states have laws that provide patients access to their medical records. The PA should know the laws and facilitate patient access to the information.

**Disclosure.** A physician Associate/Assistant should disclose to his or her supervising physician information about errors made while caring for a patient. The supervising physician and PA should disclose the error to the patient if such information is significant to the patient's interests and well-being. Errors do not always constitute improper, negligent, or unethical behavior, but failure to disclose them may.

**Care of Family Members and Co-workers.** Treating oneself, co-workers, close friends, family members, or students whom the physician Associate/Assistant supervises or teaches may be unethical or create conflicts of interest. For example, it might be ethically acceptable to treat one's own child for a case of otitis media, but it probably is not acceptable to treat one's spouse for depression. PAs should be aware that their judgment might be less than objective in cases involving friends, family members, students, and colleagues and that providing "curbside" care might sway the individual from establishing an ongoing relationship with a

provider. If it becomes necessary to treat a family member or close associate, a formal patient-provider relationship should be established, and the PA should consider transferring the patient's care to another provider as soon as it is practical. If a close associate requests care, the PA may wish to assist by helping them find an appropriate provider.

There may be exceptions to this guideline, for example, when a PA runs an employee health center or works in occupational medicine. Even in those situations, the PA should be sure they do not provide informal treatment but provide appropriate medical care in a formally established patient-provider relationship.

**Genetic Testing.** Evaluating the risk of disease and performing diagnostic genetic tests raise significant ethical concerns. Physician Associate/Assistants should be informed about the benefits and risks of genetic tests. Testing should be undertaken only after proper informed consent is obtained. If PAs order or conduct the tests, they should assure that appropriate pre-and post-test counseling is provided. PAs should be sure that patients understand the potential consequences of undergoing genetic tests – from impact on patients themselves, possible implications for other family members, and potential use of the information by insurance companies or others who might have access to the information. Because of the potential for discrimination by insurers, employers, or others, PAs should be particularly aware of the need for confidentiality concerning genetic test results.

**Reproductive Decision Making.** Patients have a right to access the full range of reproductive health care services, including fertility treatments, contraception, sterilization, and abortion. Physician Associate/Assistants have an ethical obligation to provide balanced and unbiased clinical information about reproductive health care.

When the PA's personal values conflict with providing full disclosure or providing certain services such as sterilization or abortion, the PA need not become involved in that aspect of the patient's care. By referring the patient to a qualified provider who is willing to discuss and facilitate all treatment options, the PA fulfills their ethical obligation to ensure the patient's access to all legal options.

**End of Life.** Among the ethical principles that are fundamental to providing compassionate care at the end of life, the most essential is recognizing that dying is a personal experience and part of the life cycle.

Physician Associate/Assistants should provide patients with the opportunity to plan for end-of-life care. Advance directives, living wills, durable power of attorney, and organ donation should be discussed during routine patient visits.

PAs should assure terminally ill patients that their dignity is a priority, and that relief of physical and mental suffering is paramount. PAs should exhibit non-judgmental attitudes and should assure their terminally ill patients that they will not be abandoned. To the extent possible, patient, or surrogate preferences should be honored, using the most appropriate measures consistent with their choices, including alternative and non-traditional treatments. PAs should explain palliative and hospice care and facilitate patient access to those services. End of life care should include assessment and management of psychological, social, and spiritual or religious needs.

While respecting patients' wishes for particular treatments, when possible, PAs also must weigh their ethical responsibility, in consultation with supervising physicians, to withhold futile treatments and to help patients understand such medical decisions.

PAs should involve the physician in all near-death planning. The PA should only withdraw life support with the supervising physician's agreement and in accordance with the policies of the health care institution.

## **The PA and Individual Professionalism**

**Conflict of Interest.** Physician Associate/Assistants should place service to patients before personal material gain and should avoid undue influence on their clinical judgment. Trust can be undermined by even the appearance of improper influence. Examples of excessive or undue influence on clinical judgment can take several forms. These may include financial incentives, pharmaceutical or other industry gifts, and business arrangements involving referrals. PAs should disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest to their patients.

Acceptance of gifts, trips, hospitality, or other items is discouraged. Before accepting a gift or financial arrangement, PAs might consider the guidelines of the Royal College of Physicians, “Would I be willing to have this arrangement generally known?” or of the American College of Physicians, “What would the public or my patients think of this arrangement?”

**Professional Identity.** Physician Associate/Assistants should not misrepresent directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, or identity. Physician Associate/Assistants should uphold the dignity of the PA profession and accept its ethical values.

**Competency.** Physician Associate/Assistants should commit themselves to providing competent medical care and extend to each patient the full measure of their professional ability as dedicated, empathetic health care providers. PAs should also strive to maintain and increase the quality of their health care knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence through individual study and continuing education.

**Sexual Relationships.** It is unethical for physician Associate/Assistants to become sexually involved with patients. It also may be unethical for PAs to become sexually involved with former patients or key third parties. Key third parties are individuals who have influence over the patient. These might include spouses or partners, parents, guardians, or surrogates.

Such relationships generally are unethical because of the PA’s position of authority and the inherent imbalance of knowledge, expertise, and status. Issues such as dependence, trust, transference, and inequalities of power may lead to increased vulnerability on the part of the current or former patients or key third parties.

## **Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

It is unethical for physician Associate/Assistants to engage in or condone any form of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is defined as any behavior, action, or policy that adversely affects an individual or group of individuals due to disparate treatment, disparate impact, or the creation of a hostile or intimidating work or learning environment.

It is unethical for PAs to engage in or condone any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or academic environment, or
- Accepting or rejecting such conduct affects or may be perceived to affect professional decisions

concerning an individual, or

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's training or professional position.

## **The PA and Other Professionals**

**Team Practice.** Physician Associate/Assistants should be committed to working collegially with other members of the health care team to assure integrated, well-managed, and effective care of patients. PAs should strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with other health care professionals, their organizations, and the public.

**Illegal and Unethical Conduct.** Physician Associate/Assistants should not participate in or conceal any activity that will bring discredit or dishonor to the PA profession. They should report illegal or unethical conduct by health care professionals to the appropriate authorities.

**Impairment.** Physician Associate/Assistants have an ethical responsibility to protect patients and the public by identifying and assisting impaired colleagues. “Impaired” means being unable to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety because of physical or mental illness, loss of motor skills, or excessive use or abuse of drugs and alcohol.

PAs should be able to recognize impairment in physician supervisors, PAs, and other health care providers and should seek assistance from appropriate resources to encourage these individuals to obtain treatment.

**PA–Physician Relationship.** Collaboration should include ongoing communication between the physician and the physician Associate/Assistant regarding patient care. The PA should consult the collaborating physician whenever it will safeguard or advance the welfare of the patient. This includes seeking assistance in situations of conflict with a patient or another health care professional.

**Complementary and Alternative Medicine.** When a patient asks about an alternative therapy, the PA has an ethical obligation to gain a basic understanding of the alternative therapy being considered or being used and how the treatment will affect the patient. If the treatment would harm the patient, the PA should work diligently to dissuade the patient from using it, advise other treatment, and perhaps consider transferring the patient to another provider.

## **The PA and the Health Care System**

**Workplace Actions.** Physician Associate/Assistants may face difficult personal decisions to withhold medical services when workplace actions (e.g., strikes, sick-outs, slowdowns, etc.) occur. The potential harm to patients should be carefully weighed against the potential improvements to working conditions and, ultimately, patient care that could result. In general, PAs should individually and collectively work to find alternatives to such actions in addressing workplace concerns.

**PAs as Educators.** All physician Associate/Assistants have a responsibility to share knowledge and information with patients, other health professionals, students, and the public. The ethical duty to teach includes effective communication with patients so that they will have the information necessary to participate in their health care and wellness.



**PAs and Research.** The most important ethical principle in research is honesty. This includes ensuring subjects' informed consent, following treatment protocols, and accurately reporting findings. Fraud and dishonesty in research should be reported so that the appropriate authorities can take action.

Physician Associate/Assistants involved in research must be aware of potential conflicts of interest. The patient's welfare takes precedence over the desired research outcome. Any conflict of interest should be disclosed.

In scientific writing, PAs should report information honestly and accurately. Sources of funding for the research must be included in the published reports.

Plagiarism is unethical. Incorporating the words of others, either verbatim or by paraphrasing, without appropriate attribution is unethical and may have legal consequences. When submitting a document for publication, any previous publication of any portion of the document must be fully disclosed.

## **The PA and Society**

**Lawfulness.** Physician Associate/Assistants have the dual duty to respect the law and to work for positive change to laws that will enhance the health and wellbeing of the community.

**Executions.** Physician Associate/Assistants, as health care professionals, should not participate in executions because to do so would violate the ethical principle of beneficence.

**Access to Care / Resource Allocation.** Physician Associate/Assistants have a responsibility to use healthcare resources in an appropriate and efficient manner so that all patients have access to needed health care. Resource allocation should be based on societal needs and policies, not the circumstances of an individual patient-PA encounter. PAs participating in policy decisions about resource allocation should consider medical need, cost-effectiveness, efficacy, and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens in society.

**Community Well Being.** Physician Associate/Assistants should work for the health, wellbeing, and the best interest of both the patient and the community. Sometimes there is a dynamic moral tension between the wellbeing of the community in general and the individual patient. Conflict between an individual patient's best interest and the common good is not always easily resolved. In general, PAs should be committed to upholding and enhancing community values, be aware of the needs of the community, and use the knowledge and experience acquired as professionals to contribute to an improved community.

**Conclusion.** The American Academy of Physician Associate/Assistants recognizes its responsibility to aid the PA profession as it strives to provide high quality, accessible health care. Physician Associate/Assistants wrote these guidelines for themselves and other physician Associate/Assistants. The goal is to honor patients and earn their trust while providing the best and most appropriate care possible. At the same time, PAs must understand their personal values and beliefs and recognize the ways in which those values and beliefs can impact the care they provide.

## **Personal Excused Absences (Mental Health Days)**

### **Rationale**

Arcadia University is a caring community committed to student success. Students enrolled in the Physician Associate/Assistant program need to adapt to significant changes, such as moving to a new area, separation from familiar social networks and support systems, establishing a new social network, managing an intensive academic course schedule, perhaps coping with a disability in a new environment and, for international students, living in a new country and adjusting to a different culture. For many, these changes are exciting and challenging and an intrinsic part of the attraction of attending higher education. However, they can also give rise to anxiety and stress.

Most personal problems experienced during the didactic year of the physician Associate/Assistant program can be resolved quickly by talking to a faculty member, speaking to a friend or seeking help from a member of the student's support system. It is important not to label these experiences as "mental health" problems which are in reality normal emotional reactions to new experiences. However, a number of students may experience emotional or psychological difficulties that without appropriate professional support are more persistent and inhibit their ability to participate fully in higher education. These difficulties may take the form of a long-term mental illness or a temporary, but debilitating, psychological condition or reaction. In addition, some students may arrive with a pre-existing psychological problem, either declared or undeclared. Mental health problems can seriously impair academic performance and may lead to confused or disturbed behavior. Minor difficulties that interfere with a student's capacity to work may also result in distress and wasted effort and undermine academic progress. The Physician Associate/Assistant Program aims to provide a supportive environment which will help students with mental health difficulties to realize their academic potential and more specifically, to meet course requirements.

### **Policy**

**Didactic Year:** Under this policy, a student will have up to 5 (five) personal days from class lectures due to the mental or behavioral health of the student or to attend a "life event" (wedding, graduation ceremony, etc). Students will be allowed to utilize no more than two days per semester (Summer, Fall, Spring) for a total of five days during the didactic year of the physician Associate/Assistant program. These personal days are simply excused absences in the same way as if the student were physically ill with the exception of the need to complete any scheduled course examinations, practical examinations, problem based learning scenarios, student presentations or course assignment deadlines. While this policy excuses a student from class attendance, the student remains responsible for all material covered in class.

*Disclaimer: The Physician Associate/Assistant Program reserves the right to review specific situations to determine if exceptions to the established personal day policy are warranted.*

### **Scope of Applicability**

This policy is applicable to all physician Associate/Assistant graduate students enrolled in the physician Associate/Assistant program at Arcadia University.

### **Process and Notification**

The student must notify the Director of Didactic Education, the Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education and the student's Academic Advisor of the request to utilize a personal day. The personal day request will not excuse a student from completing a scheduled course examination, practical examination, student presentation or course assignment deadlines. Any student requesting a personal day will be required to complete any course examination, practical examination, student presentations, physical diagnosis labs, interprofessional experiences, certification programs and/or course assignment deadlines scheduled during the day of the request but will be excused from the remainder of the day's scheduled events. The Director of Didactic Education and/or the Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education will notify the necessary and appropriate course directors of a student's personal day absence. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their course instructors about any missed course instruction including physical diagnosis course lab sessions, clinical skills course procedures and/or any certification programs. In keeping with this policy, course directors shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and may provide an opportunity for the student to

complete other required work and/or alternative assignments. Students who have followed this policy should not incur academic penalties.

### **Documentation**

Any student who wishes to utilize this policy is required to email their academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education, and the Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education prior to 24 hours of the requested date. Failure to provide documentation via email will result in the absence(s) being considered unexcused.

### **Appeal**

If an instructor fails to follow this policy, the student may appeal the instructor's decision in writing to the Program Director.

### **Counseling Services**

Arcadia University's Wellness Center is available to assist students and provide counseling services if so desired by the student.

## Bereavement Policy

### Rationale

Arcadia University is a caring community committed to student success. In the event a student experiences the death of a loved one during the course of an academic term, the student may request to utilize the Bereavement Policy for Students. The Physician Associate/Assistant Program recognizes the impact a loss may have on the emotional and academic well-being of a student and wishes to support the student during this stressful time. The Physician Associate/Assistant Program also understands grief impacts every student differently and, therefore, this policy is not an attempt to quantify the impact of the death of a loved one or in any way address the nature of the grief process. Rather, the purpose of this policy is to provide a formal process to allow grieving students the time to attend the bereavement services, as well as the opportunity to be available for their families during times of death and grief.

### Policy

**Didactic Year:** Under this policy, a student will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. A student is entitled up to five (5) consecutive *academic* days of bereavement to mourn a death in the immediate family as defined below. For a death outside the immediate family as defined below, a student is entitled up to two (2) consecutive *academic* days of bereavement. While this policy excuses a student from class attendance and examinations, the student remains responsible for all material covered in class as well as course assignments and must work with each individual professor upon return to complete any other required work and must work with each course director in order to schedule any makeup examinations which were missed. If the student wishes to take a course examination remotely during the leave of absence instead of an excused absence makeup examination afterwards, that option is at the discretion of the course director(s).

The immediate family includes:

- Parent(s) or legal guardian(s)
- Siblings
- Spouse or partner
- Children
- Other relatives living as members of the student's household

Relationships outside the immediate family may include, but are not limited to:

- Grandparents
- Aunts or uncles
- Cousins
- Nieces or nephews
- In-laws

*Disclaimer: The Physician Associate/Assistant Program reserves the right to review specific situations to determine if exceptions to the established bereavement policy are warranted.*

### Scope of Applicability

This policy is applicable to all physician Associate/Assistant graduate students enrolled in the physician Associate/Assistant program at Arcadia University.

### Travel Days

In addition to the aforementioned excused academic days, students may be granted up to two (2) additional *calendar* days to account for travel considerations. This is to be determined by the distance of the verified funeral services from Arcadia University's Glenside and Christiana campuses as follows:

- Within 150 miles of Arcadia University: 0 *calendar* days for travel
- Between 150 - 300 miles from Arcadia University: 1 *calendar* day for travel
- Over 300 miles from Arcadia University: 2 *calendar* days for travel
- Verified travel outside of North America: To be determined on case by case basis

(these days will be approved based upon a documented travel itinerary)

### **Process and Notification**

The student or a representative (family member, room/suitemate, on-campus faculty/staff) must notify the Physician Associate/Assistant Program Director and the Office of Student Success prior to the start of the bereavement leave. A representative from the Office of Student Success will notify the necessary and appropriate on-campus offices (Director of Didactic Education, Associate/Assistant Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Associate/Assistant Director of Clinical Education, Academic Advisor, Course Directors) of a student's bereavement leave and anticipated return date. The student is required to provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Student Success and the Program Director. Upon return to the institution, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their instructors about any missed assignments and examinations and arrange to complete missed work or schedule makeup examinations. In keeping with this policy, course directors shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity for the student to complete missed quizzes, exams, papers, other required work and/or alternative assignments. Students who have followed this policy should not incur academic penalties.

### **Documentation**

Any student who wishes to utilize this policy is required to provide documentation to the Office of Student Success. Acceptable documents may include: a funeral program, obituary, signed letter from funeral home, or death certificate. Failure to provide documentation will result in the absences being considered unexcused.

### **Appeal**

If an instructor fails to follow this policy, the student may appeal the instructor's decision in writing to the Program Director.

### **Counseling Services**

Arcadia University's Wellness Center is available to assist students and provide counseling services if so desired by the student.