This handbook contains the policies and procedures of The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program relating to you, the physician assistant student. These policies and procedures should be considered a supplement to those outlined in the current Health Sciences Programs Bulletin.

These policies and procedures are reviewed a minimum of one time per year and are revised as needed to facilitate the Mission of the Program, the School, and the University. Any interested person may suggest revisions for consideration.

The Program reserves the right to make changes to any and all aspects of this Program Handbook. Students will be notified of any substantial changes to the policies and procedures as noted via the listserv. Students are expected to remain current in all policies and procedures.

Please contact program officials with any questions you may have concerning the information in this handbook or any other university publication.
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## IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
I. INTRODUCTION AND INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

A. Student Policies and Procedures Handbook

Please read this Student Policies and Procedures Handbook carefully and sign the acknowledgement form found at the end, stating that you agree to follow these policies and procedures while you are enrolled as a student in the GW Physician Assistant Program. The form is to be signed, dated and returned to the program office during orientation.

The George Washington University reserves the right to withdraw a course at any time, change fees or tuition, rules, calendar, curriculum and any other requirement affecting students.

B. Accreditation Statement

The George Washington University is accredited by its regional accrediting agency, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The GW PA Program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission for Physician Assistant Education, Inc. (ARC-PA). The GW PA Program has been continuously accredited since its inception in 1972.

C. Organizational Chart (next page)
II. TECHNICAL AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A. List of Essential Functions and Technical Standards
(updated April 2014)

The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program considers it essential for all physician assistant students to have the knowledge and skill to function in a variety of clinical settings and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care as required by the curriculum. Therefore, every physician assistant student must master a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, and procedures of the major required clinical specialty clerkships, including inpatient medicine, surgery, emergency medicine, pediatrics, women’s health, behavioral medicine, and primary (ambulatory) care medicine. This requires that every student have sufficient capacities and abilities in: Communication, Observation, Motor/Tactile Function, Cognitive/Intellectual Function, and Behavioral and Social Attributes.

Completion of this program requires that each student independently demonstrates these capabilities continuously throughout enrollment. Surrogates cannot be used to accomplish the essential requirements. Students may not have undue dependence on technology or trained intermediaries. Students are required to acknowledge that they meet these technical standards (outlined more fully below) prior to entry into the Program and prior to beginning the clinical phase.

**Communication** includes the ability to speak, hear, read, and write sufficiently to achieve adequate exchange of information with other healthcare professionals, patients and their support network.

- The student must have the ability to receive and process auditory information, and speak and write clearly for all communications with patients, their families, and other healthcare professionals.
- The student must communicate effectively through written and electronic media.
- The student must be able to communicate sensitively with patients and their families.
- The student must be able to read sufficiently to comprehend complex medical literature, and convey this information in easy to understand terms.
- The student must be able to perceive forms of non-verbal interpersonal communications including facial expressions, body language, and affect.

**Observation** includes the ability to perceive, using senses and mental abilities, information presented in both educational and clinical settings. Educational information will be presented through lectures, small groups and one-on-one interactions, as well as written and audiovisual materials.

- The student must possess sufficient sensory (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory) and mental abilities to accurately perceive information provided in the educational settings.
This includes written and audiovisual materials, laboratories, diagnostic images, microscopic and physical examination.

- The student must be able to accurately observe (using visual, auditory, tactile, and/or olfactory senses) a patient’s medical condition, including patient affect, up close and at a distance, with and without medical instrumentation. This includes but is not limited to radiography, electrocardiograms, sonograms, monitors and other graphic images.

Motor/Tactile Function

- A student must have sufficient motor function to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers.
- A student must be able to reasonably execute movements required to provide general and emergency medical care to patients. These skills require coordination of fine and gross motor skills, equilibrium and functional sensation.
- A student must have the capability to manipulate equipment and instruments for the performance of basic laboratory tests and procedures.
- A student must have the ability to move oneself from one setting to another and negotiate the patient care environment in a timely fashion.
- A student must have sufficient physical stamina to perform the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study. This includes long periods of sitting, standing and moving which are required for classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

Cognitive/Intellectual Function

- A student must be able to demonstrate cognitive and problem solving skills in an efficient and timely manner in order to meet the Program Competencies. Problem solving is one of the critical skills demanded of physician assistants. It requires all of these intellectual abilities:
  - Comprehension of visual-spatial relationships.
  - Reading and understanding the medical literature and the patient’s chart.
  - Learning, measuring, calculating, retrieving, prioritizing, analyzing, organizing, assimilating, integrating, and synthesizing technically detailed and complex information and applying this information appropriately.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

- The student must possess emotional stability for full utilization of her/his intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to both didactic studies and patient care.
- The student must be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and their family members, staff and colleagues.
- The student must be able to work collaboratively and effectively as a small group member as well as a health team member.
- The student must have sufficient interpersonal skills to relate positively with people across society, including all ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, sexual orientation, and belief systems.
• The student must possess compassion and concern for others; interest in and motivation for service; and integrity.
• The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under mentally and emotionally stressful situations.
• The student must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.
• The student must behave in an ethical and moral manner that is consistent with professional values.
• The student must be able to accept constructive criticism and appropriately respond through modification of her/his behavior.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities who can meet the requirements noted above. These accommodations must be accomplished without altering the essential requirements of the PA curriculum. Inability to meet the technical standards throughout Program enrollment will necessitate further review which may delay or terminate progression and/or enrollment in the Program.

B. Academic Standards and Progress

1. General

Student grades, academic integrity and professional comportment and ability to meet the technical standards are factors in student promotion. The student must meet all of these program requirements to remain in the program.

2. Faculty Advisor

Each student will be assigned a member of the faculty as his or her academic advisor. The role of the Faculty Advisor is to monitor student progress in the program and to serve as the student’s advocate. Each student is encouraged to meet with his or her Faculty Advisor at a minimum of once every semester. However, when an academic problem arises, students are required to promptly meet with their Faculty Advisor.

If a personal problem arises, students are advised to meet with their Faculty Advisor at their discretion, particularly if the problem is impacting their academic performance. Students may be referred to on-campus services including the Student Health Service, the University’s Counseling Center or Disability Support Services, depending on the problem. Short term counseling is available for students through the Counseling Center. If further services are required, a student will be referred by staff of the University Counseling Center or Student Health Service to providers in the community who are experienced in working with college students.
3. Evaluation

I. In general, the student’s achievement in departmental and program courses is determined by:

a. course participation;
b. written examinations;
c. demonstration of professionalism and comportment
d. clinical performance evaluations; and
e. other written and/or oral assignments.

II. Advanced Placement Policy:

The School of Medicine and Health Sciences Policy for Transfer Credit for Graduate Students states that “up to 6 credit hours of course work may be accepted as transfer credit for graduate students provided the course work was completed within the past three years at a regionally accredited college or university, the course work was taken for graduate credit and did not apply toward completion of requirements for another degree, and the student earned a grade of B or better in the course.” This policy can be found in the “Transfer Credit for Graduate Students” section of the Health Sciences Programs Bulletin.

The GW PA Program reserves the right to refuse transfer credit in part or in whole or to allow credit provisionally. The Program may request additional information, materials and/or passage of a competency examination in making a determination regarding a request for transfer of credit. If granted, transfer of credit only applies to pre-clinical PA coursework. The PA Program does not provide transfer credit for individuals based upon experiential learning.

4. Grading Policy

Grading scales are published in the course syllabi.

At the discretion of the instructor, a grade of Incomplete (I) may be used in reporting a student’s standing in a semester’s work if the instructor has received a satisfactory explanation for the student’s inability to complete the required work of the course. In addition, the grade may be used only if the student’s prior performance in the course has been satisfactory. Refer to the “Evaluation of Academic Performance” section of the Health Sciences Programs Bulletin for further information on grade assignment.

5. Examinations

Students are expected to take all examinations on the scheduled date and time. The rescheduling of an examination is determined by the course director if circumstances warrant (e.g., documented illness, previously identified religious holiday, or death in the family). If a student fails to take a scheduled examination, without obtaining permission from the course
director prior to the examination, the student will receive a “zero” on that scheduled
examination. Students who arrive late to an examination will not be granted additional time to
complete the examination. Exceptions to this examination policy are at the discretion of the
course director.

6. Satisfactory Performance and Progress

a. Academic Performance

Satisfactory performance and progress* are defined as:
1) obtaining a passing grade in all PA Program required courses;
2) maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher measured over all courses in the
   Physician Assistant Program curriculum. Courses taken toward an MPH or other GW
degree are not included in this measure; and
3) demonstrating clinical competence commensurate with the level of training required in
   the program. Clinical competence includes, but is not limited to, clinical judgment,
   technical and psychomotor skills, interpersonal skills and attitudes, and professional
   comportment.

*Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is also monitored by the Student Financial Assistance
office; federal financial aid may be impacted when a student’s academic progress falls below
the federal standard. These standards can be found at: http://financialaid.gwu.edu/policy-
satisfactory-academic-progress

b. Advancement to Clinical Phase

A student may begin the Clinical Phase when all of the following conditions are met:
1) all didactic course work in the PA Program curriculum has been completed with a grade
   of “C” or better;
2) a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in PA Program coursework has been achieved;
3) Student Health Clearance, including documentation of immunizations and annual TB
   screening and influenza vaccination, is completed;
4) completion of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training is
   documented;
5) drug screening and criminal background check clearance is obtained;
6) successful completion of all competency skills (e.g., BLS, ACLS, etc.);
7) verification of ability to meet the technical standards; and
8) continued enrollment in a health insurance program.

c. Academic Deficiencies

All PA Program students are required to adhere to the Academic Standing Policies as outlined
in the most current Health Sciences Programs Bulletin. Signing of the PA Program Handbook
Student’s Acknowledgement page verifies that the student has received copies or has access
to these materials and agrees to adhere to its policies.
d. Identification of Academic Deficiencies

Student performance is reviewed regularly by the Academic Progress Committee (APC). Any member of the PA Program faculty may identify a student having difficulty meeting requirements in one or more of his/her courses.

If such Academic Deficiency (see below) is identified, a student meeting will be arranged with the course director and/or designee to discuss the matter. Considering departmental resources, the faculty member will identify appropriate strategies designed to improve performance and arrange assistance (e.g., tutoring, learning disability assessment) as necessary. Student progress regarding the academic deficiencies will be reported during regular faculty meetings and documented by the advisor in the student’s advisement file.

An Academic Deficiency exists if any of the following are identified:
(1) failure to demonstrate academic progression;
(2) failure to achieve at least a “C” or higher in every course;
(3) failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in all PA Program coursework;
(4) failure to meet attendance requirements as defined in Section III.B.2 of this handbook;
(5) failure of mid-rotation and/or final clinical preceptor evaluations;
(6) failure of an end-of-rotation examination;
(7) failure to demonstrate clinical competence commensurate with the level of training in the PA program;
(8) improprieties in conduct, academic integrity and professional comportment;
(9) failure of the summative observed clinical skills examinations (OSCEs); and
(10) failure of the comprehensive knowledge-based examination.

At the time an Academic Deficiency is identified, the appropriate course director and/or designee will meet with the student to reiterate consequences of Academic Deficiencies, assess student understanding of current academic performance, and identify any extenuating circumstances contributing to the student’s performance. All Academic Deficiencies are referred to the Academic Progress Committee for review and consideration at regularly scheduled meetings or referred to the Program Director for further consideration. Specific consequences of Academic Deficiency (ies) will be delineated in writing to the involved student and include requirements that, if successfully met, will correct the Academic Deficiency.

C. STUDENT EVALUATION AND REMEDIATION

1. Evaluation

Evaluation is an ongoing process that includes both formative and summative assessment of students as they progress towards achieving the program competencies.
Ongoing formative evaluation of student learning takes place frequently during the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Various modalities of evaluation are utilized to assess a student’s acquisition of knowledge, problem-solving skills, clinical competencies, and professional development.

During the didactic phase, students are evaluated via objective written exams using mainly multiple-choice questions, and also via case presentations, student write ups, and standardized patient encounters. Evaluations may also be based on class attendance, class participation, class presentations and professionalism.

It is the prerogative of the course director to determine the specific balance of evaluation methods for a particular course. Evaluation and grading methods are clearly articulated in the course syllabi. The course director develops exams that include content related to the course learning objectives. While on rotations during the clinical phase of the program, students are evaluated on their oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills, medical knowledge, correlative abilities, technical skills and PA role performance. Students are evaluated by their preceptor, the PA faculty, and through written exam.

Summative evaluation of each student is conducted prior to program completion to make sure that the program’s expectations for clinical knowledge and technical skills have been met. The summative evaluation consists of multiple observed clinical skills examinations (OSCEs). A student must successfully complete and pass the OSCEs in order to graduate. The student must also complete and pass a comprehensive knowledge-based examination prior to graduation.

2. Remediation

Remediation is a process to resolve a student's inability to achieve a course competency (ies); the process allows the student the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the identified competency(ies) in the course.

**Goals of Remediation:** To assist the student in mastering the area of study in which they have demonstrated a deficiency.

**Guidelines for Remediation** The academic and clinical phases of the program have distinct policies and procedures related to remediation:

**Academic year:**

Over the course of the first three (3) semesters of the program, a student will have the opportunity to remediate a maximum of two (2) failed exams. Within 48 hours of notification of failing an exam, the student is responsible for meeting with the course director or designee to outline a plan of remediation which may include a review of the specific course material with a faculty advisor, peer tutor, or other content expert. The
highest score a student can attain for a repeat exam is 70% or the lowest “C” achievable based on the grading scale. The repeat exam must be taken by the start of the next semester. The course director will review and inform the student of his/her options related to retaking the failed examination(s). These options are only available to students at risk of course failure or being placed on academic probation. There are no opportunities to repeat failed exams after the maximum number of failed exams have been taken.

**Clinical year:**

Students have the opportunity to retake a maximum of two (2) failed EOR exams during the clinical year. Due to the unique nature of the clinical year, the failed exam must be retaken within 7 days of notification of the failed exam (as described in Section 4(b)). Students only have the opportunity to remediate one (1) failed clerkship.

### 3. Consequences of Academic Deficiencies

When an Academic Deficiency occurs, depending upon the frequency, nature, and extent of the deficiency (ies), the following actions may be recommended by the Academic Progress Committee: A student will be:

1. placed on Academic Observation;
2. required to remediate the deficiency;
3. required to repeat the course/clerkship;
4. decelerated;
5. subject to a change in clinical year clerkship assignment and/or sequencing;
6. placed on a learning contract, and/or
7. referred to the Senior Associate Dean of the Health Sciences Programs for dismissal.

At the discretion of the Senior Associate Dean of the Health Sciences Programs, the recommendation may also be reviewed by the Health Sciences Evaluation Committee before submitting the recommendation to the Dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The final decision about dismissals rests with the Dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The remediation policy stated above does not supersede a learning contract that is developed between the student and program.

#### a. Academic Observation and Recommendation for Dismissal

Academic Observation should be regarded as a serious matter and is official notice to the student that his/her performance during the observation period must improve to meet Program standards in order to continue matriculation. Any student who fails to improve his/her performance in the areas identified by the faculty may be recommended for dismissal from the Program.
A student who receives a failing grade in any course (i.e., less than a “C”) will not be allowed to progress within the curriculum until that course or comparable course approved by the Program is satisfactorily completed. Provided that the student has not failed any other courses and is not currently on probation, s/he may be given one opportunity to retake the failed course when it is offered next. Most courses are only offered one time per year, therefore the student may be required to take a leave of absence for one year, and repeat the failed course at that time. If the student successfully completes the failed course s/he may be given permission to progress.

Students who fail the same course more than one time or who fail two different courses across the curriculum—either academic or clinical courses—will be recommended for dismissal from the Program regardless of overall GPA. A student recommended for dismissal will receive further communication from the Senior Associate Dean in accordance with procedures outlined in the “Academic Standing” section of the Health Science Programs Bulletin. Any student required to repeat a course or rotation must anticipate a delay in the timing of his/her graduation and incur additional tuition and fees necessary to repeat coursework. Students who are decelerated due to a failed course may be required to demonstrate competencies for coursework previously completed, in order to progress through their program of study.

**Didactic Phase**

A didactic phase student may be placed on Academic Observation if the student fails two (2) or more exams in a semester and/or previously described academic deficiencies are incurred. The period of Academic Observation will be articulated in writing for the student, and will expire when and if the student adequately remediates the academic deficiency. If a student fails to remove specific deficiencies in accordance with the requirements for correction of academic deficiencies, such as those outlined in a learning contract, the student will be recommended to the Senior Associate Dean of the Health Sciences Programs for dismissal from the Program.

**Clinical Phase**

There are three (3) basic components to the evaluation of students during the clinical phase: clinical rotation examinations; clinical rotation evaluations; and other clinical rotation requirements. Examples include: attendance, assigned projects, comportment, and/or oral/written presentations. Final determination of the clinical rotation grade is made by the assigned course director, taking all clinical rotation components into consideration.

The minimum passing grade for an end of rotation examination is a 70%. A grade of “0” (zero) is initially assigned to any converted score less than a 70%. The student must repeat the exam within seven (7) calendar days (including weekends and holidays) of exam grade notification. If the student successfully passes the retake opportunity, a
grade of 70% will be documented as the weighted component for the end of rotation examination. If a student fails both attempts of the clinical rotation exam, a grade of “0” is assigned as the final grade for the end of rotation examination. A grade of “F” will also be assigned for the final rotation grade. The student is placed on Academic Observation and required to repeat the rotation in full to acquire the knowledge needed to successfully remediate the failed clinical rotation examination. The student repeats the rotation during the next available rotation block. The student must successfully pass all of the components of the respective repeat rotation including the end of rotation exam. Upon successful completion of the remediation, the student is removed from Academic Observation and continues in the clinical year. Failure of any component when the student is on Academic Observation is referred to the Academic Progress Committee for disposition and may result in a recommendation for dismissal. A student is only allowed to repeat one (1) clinical rotation during the entire clinical year.

A student will also be placed on Academic Observation, which will remain in effect for the remainder of the clinical year, when they have exhausted their two re-examination attempts. A failure of a third EOR examination when the student is on Academic Observation is referred to the Academic Progress Committee for disposition and may result in a recommendation for dismissal.

If a student fails the clinical preceptor evaluation component or receives a final rotation grade of less than 70%, the student will be placed on Academic Observation, a grade of F will be assigned as the final rotation grade, and the student will be required to complete an Independent Study prior to repeating the rotation in full. The student will be required to register for PA 6299 Independent Study. The Director of Clinical Curriculum will design the independent study based on input from the preceptor and the PA Program faculty to remediate identified deficiencies. Remediation may include but is not limited to oral and/or written case presentations, simulated patient case scenarios, additional supervised clinical experiences as well as additional written assignments. The minimum length of the independent study is six-weeks. Upon successful completion of the independent study, the student re-enters the clinical year and repeats the respective rotation during the next available clerkship block. With successful completion of the entire remediation process, the student is removed from Academic Observation and continues in the clinical year. Failure of any component while the student is on Academic Observation is referred to the Academic Progress Committee for disposition and may result in a recommendation for dismissal. A student is only allowed to repeat one (1) clinical rotation during the entire clinical year. The period of Academic Observation will be articulated in writing for the student, and will expire when and if the student adequately remediates the academic deficiency.

If a student fails the summative OSCE, he/she will have one (1) opportunity to retake the examination as scheduled by the faculty. Failure of the second summative OSCE
will be referred to the Academic Progress Committee for disposition and may result in a recommendation for dismissal.

If a student fails the comprehensive knowledge-based examination, he/she must repeat the exam within seven (7) calendar days (including weekends and holidays) of exam grade notification. If the student successfully passes the retake opportunity, a grade of 70% will be documented and the student passes this competency. If the student fails the second examination, he/she will be referred to the Academic Progress Committee for disposition and may result in a recommendation for dismissal.

For further information, please refer to flow chart on the page that follows.
Clinical Student not on ACADEMIC OBSERVATION

- Fails clinical rotation examination
  - Reexamination within 7 calendar days
    - Passes
      - Passes rotation if other components passed, one subsequent reexamination allowed
        - Fails second clinical examination, 2nd reexamination opportunity allowed
          - Passes reexamination
            - Placed on Academic Observation
    - Fails
      - Grade of F assigned; Placed on Academic Observation; Required to repeat failed rotation.

- Fails clinical rotation evaluation

- Fails Clinical Clerkship Course
  - Grade of F assigned; Placed on Academic Observation; required to complete independent study (IS). Upon successful completion of IS, repeat failed rotation.

- Fails any subsequent evaluation, EOR examination*, or requirement component
  - Recommendation for dismissal forwarded to Senior Associate Dean

* applies only to student who has failed a prior EOR exam
D. Academic Integrity and Professional Comportment

1. Academic Integrity

Since the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for the degree, it is imperative that a student maintain a high standard of individual honor in his/her scholastic work. All students are required to conform to, and are entitled to the benefits of the Code of Academic Integrity. Matters involving academic integrity proceedings will be handled in accordance with the procedures found in University’s Code of Academic Integrity.

2. Professional Comportment

As members of the health care community, Physician Assistant students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the principles and obligations inherent in professional practice. Professional maturity, integrity, and competence are expected of students in every aspect of the educational and clinical setting with preceptors, coworkers, and patients. Students are obliged to practice diligence, loyalty, and discretion in all endeavors.

**Comportment:** to behave in a manner conformable to what is right, proper, or expected.

Health Science professionals, including students in training, are expected to adhere to a high standard of behavior. These individuals are expected to demonstrate the following characteristics of **professional comportment**, in clinical, academic and related settings:

**Diligence** – A professional is expected to:
- perform his or her tasks promptly and completely, with appropriate level of attention to detail and accuracy;
- acknowledge mistakes, accept and utilize constructive feedback, and take steps to correct errors; and
- be punctual.

**Presentation and Demeanor** – Professional appearance requires that:
- personal hygiene and dress are appropriate;
- attire and grooming must indicate respect for colleagues and patients; and
- verbal and nonverbal communication is appropriate to the role and situation.
**Personal Interactions** – In professional behavior he or she:
- treats others with positive regard, dignity, respect and compassion; and
- maintains confidentiality and respect for personal privacy appropriate to the role; situation.

**Integrity** – A professional:
- is forthright and displays honesty; and
- is completely honest in all documentation and acknowledges errors.

**Ethical Behavior** – A professional:
- upholds ethical standards of the profession, and of society.

**Judgment** – A professional:
- evaluates a situation and determines an appropriate course of action; and
- recognizes his or her own limitations and seeks help when needed.

Some behaviors or patterns may raise concerns as to the student’s suitability to continue in the program of study. Inappropriate behaviors for a health profession student may include, but are not limited to, breaching patient confidentiality, using illegal drugs or abusing controlled substances, becoming sexually involved with a patient, undertaking a procedure or scope of practice beyond that of a student, disobeying or showing disrespect for preceptors, showing a judgmental attitude toward instructors, patients, or revealing a lack of concern or compassion in practice.

All cases involving alleged misconduct by PA students will be processed under the Regulations on the Evaluation of Professional Comportment as outlined in the “Regulations on Evaluation of Professional Comportment” section of the Health Sciences Programs Bulletin.

**E. Graduation Requirements**

A candidate for the degree of MSHS in The George Washington University PA Program must meet all of the following requirements:

1. The student must achieve PA Program requirements. The Program’s faculty evaluates student achievement through periodic review and summative evaluation of student performance.

2. The student must complete the required PA Program coursework.

3. The student must discharge all financial obligations to the University. In the event of nonpayment, one or more actions may be taken by the Dean: a) readmission may be
denied; b) a student’s grades and official transcript may be withheld; and/or c) the degree to which the student would otherwise be entitled may be withheld.

4. The student must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in all PA Program coursework, have no academic deficiencies, and have no incompletes.

5. The student must pass summative OSCEs within the last 4 months of completing the PA Program.

6. The student must pass the comprehensive knowledge-based examination.

7. All students are cleared for graduation by the Academic Progress Committee.

F. Miscellaneous Requirements

1. Background Checks/Drug Screens

The George Washington University does not condone violations of law, including violation of those laws that prohibit possession, use, sale or distribution of drugs. All PA students are required to undergo criminal background checks (CBC) and drug screens through the agency specified by the School of Medicine and Health Sciences at the time of matriculation. In addition, clinical affiliates may require additional CBC/drug screens prior to participation in educational experiences at the site. All CBC and drug screening expenses are born by the student. Failure to comply will result in a hold being placed on student registration and the inability to complete the program. The CBC/drug screen policy is available on the Health Sciences Program’s website.

2. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Standards Requirements

All students must complete HIPAA compliance training as required by the university. Furthermore, clinical affiliates may impose additional requirements for HIPAA training of students. Violations of HIPAA regulations are considered inappropriate behaviors of professional comportment and are evaluated in accordance with Regulations on the Evaluation of Professional Comportment as delineated in the most current Health Sciences Programs Bulletin.

3. Immunization and Health Assessment Requirements

Immunization forms are provided to students prior to matriculation and must be uploaded into the Certiphi system through the online portal. Student compliance with the PA Program’s immunization policy (see below) will be reported to the Program by Certiphi; students will be expected to update their immunization record and demonstrate compliance as required, during their tenure in the Program. Students who
do not have an approved immunization record on file with Certiphi will not be assigned any patient contact responsibilities. Student compliance with the Program’s immunization policy will be documented by the PA Program and becomes a part of their permanent record.

In addition to immunization clearance, all students are required to have the GW Health Sciences Student Physical Examination form completed and signed by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider. The form will also be uploaded into the Certiphi system and compliance with this requirement will be reported to the Program and documented in their permanent record.

Further, students are required to maintain copies of their health history form and immunizations as they may be required to produce these records by request of their assigned clinical placement.

Students under the age of 26 are required to complete the GW Mandatory Immunization Form and submit this to the Office of Student Health Services upon matriculation, in addition to the above stated procedures. This form is mandatory for all GW students under age 26, regardless of program of study, part-time or full-time, degree or non-degree status, in compliance with the immunization requirement as set forth by the Law of the District of Columbia.

**Immunization Compliance**

The GW PA Program follows the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) published by the CDC in 2011. All students, regardless of age, are required to submit documentation showing:

1. **Diphtheria/tetanus and Pertussis**: Documentation of one dose of diphtheria/tetanus and pertussis within the last ten years.
2. **Rubella**: Vaccination with the live rubella virus or a positive rubella antibody titer (copy of laboratory report).
3. **Rubeola**: Vaccination with live attenuated rubeola. **NOTE**: All students born after December 31, 1956, must show proof of either two doses of vaccine administered on or after their first birthday (at least 30 days apart), or serologic proof of immunity (a copy of the laboratory report), or laboratory confirmation of disease and/or evidence of immunity.
4. **Mumps**: Vaccination with live attenuated mumps, only available after 1967, or laboratory confirmation of disease and/or evidence of immunity.
5. **Hepatitis B**: All PA students must receive a complete series of three Hepatitis B vaccinations or show serologic proof of immunity to Hepatitis B.
6. **Varicella (Chicken Pox)**: Proof of varicella vaccination, a positive titer confirming immunity or evidence of prior infection, or validated history of disease.
7. Tuberculin Skin Test (PPD): Students must provide documentation of one purified protein derivative (PPD) tuberculin test within the past year. If positive, student must provide documentation of a chest x-ray. Records must be updated annually, or before the start of the clinical year.

8. Meningococcal (or signed waiver)

9. Yearly influenza vaccination during the fall/winter months.

### III. STUDENT RIGHTS

#### A. Policies and Procedures

1. **Statement of Equal Opportunity**

   The George Washington University does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of the University, including admission to education programs and employment. The University is subject to the District of Columbia Human Rights Act.

   Inquiries concerning the application of this policy and federal laws and regulations concerning discrimination in education or employment programs and activities may be addressed to Associate Vice President for Human Resources, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052, (202) 994-9610 or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education.

2. **Sexual Harassment Policy**

   The University affirms its commitment to maintain a positive climate for study and work in which individuals are judged solely by relevant factors such as ability and performance and are free to pursue their academic and work activities in an atmosphere that is free from coercion and intimidation. Sexual harassment of students by faculty or administrators or of employees by those in a position to affect their status or by other affiliated persons is detrimental to such an atmosphere and will not be condoned. Students who wish to discuss sexual harassment complaints informally and confidentially may contact any member of the Committee on Student Sexual Harassment. The names and phone numbers of committee members may be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Students, Rice Hall, #401; (202-994-6710). The University's policy is available online.
3. **Mistreatment of Health Science Students**

The [Student Mistreatment Policy](#) as provided in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin pertain, where applicable, to all health sciences students to include those enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program.

4. **Protection of Privacy of Information**

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) applies to institutional policies governing access to and release of student education records.

The University will release the following information upon request: name, local address, phone number and email address; name and address of emergency contact; dates of attendance; school or division of enrollment; field of study; enrollment status; credit hours earned; degrees earned; honors received; participation in University-recognized organizations and activities (including intercollegiate athletics); height, weight, and age of members of athletic teams as well as likenesses used in University publications. A student who does not wish such directory information released must file written notice to this effect in the Office of the Registrar.

The University’s full policy statement on the releases of student information is published in the [Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

5. **Request for Accommodation**

Students seeking accommodations and/or services must contact the University’s Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at (202) 994-8250 or [dss@gwu.edu](mailto:dss@gwu.edu) prior to or upon admission; there is no automatic referral from Admissions or other GW offices. Furthermore, the University has no legal obligation to recognize any student as having a disability until that student has established eligibility with the Office of Disability Support Services. All information regarding the registration process can be found on their website.

A student must request testing accommodations for scheduled examinations in every course for which he/she are registered according to the procedures set forth by DSS. If a student fails to submit a timely request for test proctoring, he/she forfeits the option to take the exam under the conditions described in the [Eligibility for Accommodations](#) letter sent to the course “Professor” (Course Director/Course Liaison). When this occurs, the student must then take the exam at the regularly scheduled date, time, and location as listed in the course syllabus without extended time, private space testing, alternate exam format, or any other accommodation that is not also offered to all other students enrolled in the course.

A student who has a grievance regarding grades or other academic decisions is obligated first to make a serious effort to resolve the issue with the instructor. Students who believe that a grade or evaluation is unjust or inaccurate may submit a petition through the department or program that offers the course. If a mutually satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the student may use the appeal procedures found in the *Health Sciences Programs Bulletin*.

B. Other General Guidelines

1. GW Identification Badges

While on The George Washington University campus, including its affiliated clinical facilities, students must wear their identification (ID) badge, obtainable from the GWorld Office. Students must not attempt to use another student’s ID badge or to permit another student to use their ID badge. In addition, during the clinical phase the student must wear their name tag identifying them as a George Washington University Physician Assistant Student.

2. Attendance and Reporting Absences

Attendance at all educational experiences is expected. All absences must be reported to the PA Program office and the appropriate course instructor and/or preceptor. If classes, labs, exams, or clinical rotation days are missed for any reason, the decision as to whether the work or test can be made up is at the discretion of the course director, section director, instructor or clinical preceptor. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the course director or preceptor immediately following absenteeism or lateness regarding course work or exam make-up. Excusable reasons for absence are limited to documented: (1) illness, (2) death or illness in immediate family, (3) jury duty, (4) military service, (5) subpoena, and (6) faculty approved attendance at professional conferences. Not reporting an absence is considered unexcused. Abuse of the attendance policy is grounds for Academic Observation.

University Policy Regarding Religious Holidays

With respect to policies regarding student absence and observance of religious holidays, the following guidelines apply:

- that students notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;
• that faculty continue to extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasion, including permission to make up examinations;
• that according to several schools of Islamic law which are followed by many of our Muslim students, attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is a required religious duty. Although the precise time of observance varies from year to year, it always remains within the time period of 12 noon and 2 pm;
• that the administration convey this policy to students by including it in the schedule of classes and other places deemed appropriate; and
• respect for religious freedom extends to our clinical educational environment as well. Students on clinical rotations must notify the Program of any planned absence due to religious observance. The Program may require that the student off-set the absent time with other assignments or additional hours/shifts at the rotation site.

3. E-mail, Telephone, FAX, Pager, Cell Phone

a. E-mail

All students will be assigned a GW campus e-mail account. All e-mail information from the academic and clinical departments will only be sent to the student’s official GW email. **Students are responsible for checking and responding to GW email within 48 hours, as instructed by the program.** It is important to remember that campus e-mail and Internet use are intended for University related purposes only, the same with campus telephones and FAX machines. Individuals found abusing these office communication methods may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and/or legal action.

b. Telephones

Students should provide the Program’s main number (202-994-7644) to persons who need to reach them in an emergency. Use of mobile phones is not permitted during exams, so students should inform those who need to reach them during such times to contact the Program’s main number. In all other instances, students should use other means for obtaining personal messages while they are on campus.

c. FAX and Copiers

The Departmental and Program’s Office FAX and copy machines are not for student use.
d. Pagers

Pagers must be turned to vibrate during class. **Pagers may not be worn during written or practical exams.** Students who may be expecting an emergency page during an exam should ask the instructor to monitor their pagers.

e. Cell phones / Smartphones / Internet personal digital assistance devices (PDAs)

Cell phones / Internet PDAs must be turned off during class and when guidelines dictate in a clinical facility, according to the policy of the facility. **Students may not have cell phones, pagers, Smartphones/Internet PDAs, or any other electronic devices on their person or at their desk during written or practical exams or during exam reviews.** Other arrangements should be made for emergency calls during these times.

4. Attire

**Academic Phase:** All students must wear: 1) a GW University identification tag; and 2) publicly acceptable attire in the classroom setting. Clothing that expose areas of the chest, abdomen, midriff or back are unacceptable attire with the single exception of the physical examination laboratory setting. In settings that include patient contact, clinical phase requirements will be enforced.

**Clinical Phase:** All students must wear: 1) a short white lab coat with the Program patch on the pocket; 2) a GW University identification tag; 3) a name tag identifying the student as a Physician Assistant Student from The George Washington University PA Program; and professional attire as described below. If the name tag breaks or is lost, the student must call the Program to order a new one.

All students must dress in a professional manner. Jeans, shorts, cutoffs, t-shirts, “recreational clothing” or clothing that exposes areas of the chest, abdomen, midriff or back are unacceptable attire. Only closed toes shoes are allowed in the clinical setting. Avoid wearing perfumes, scented lotions, or colognes in all clinical settings. With the exception of small, non-dangling earrings, no body piercings are acceptable in the clinical setting.

5. Change of Name, Address and Emergency Telephone Contact

Students are expected to keep the Program, Health Sciences Student Services and the Registrar’s Office informed of correct name, address and emergency telephone contact. If the student changes name, addresses and/or emergency contact information while in school, the Program, Student Services and Registrar’s Office must be notified. **The student must change this information through the GWEB Info system.** Additionally, students will be required to update this information in the password protected PA Program database.
6. Employment

Student employment during enrollment in the Program is strongly discouraged. Student employment that interferes with the student's academic or clinical responsibilities and performance will be referred to the Academic Progress Committee and/or Program Director.

7. Inclement Weather

The George Washington University provides updates pertaining to the University's operating status during inclement weather conditions. If you question whether a specific class has been postponed due to weather conditions, call the GW campus advisory line (202-994-5050) or visit the website.

Due to the variability of supervised practice activities, cancellations will vary depending upon the site. If inclement weather makes it dangerous to travel to the clinical facility, the student must contact the Program and the clinical facility as soon as possible to inform them that he/she will not be there and to see that any important patient responsibilities are covered. It is recommended that the student speak directly to the supervising preceptor and discuss alternatives for patient responsibilities including attempting to come in later in the day. In making the decision regarding attendance during inclement weather, consider that:

a. The student has a professional responsibility to the patient/client and the facility to which he/she is assigned.

b. The individual can best judge the danger to his/her own safety based on his/her own transportation situation and other factors.

8. Leave of Absence Policy

Only one leave of absence per academic or clinical year is permitted. The student may request a leave of absence for a defined period of time not to exceed one year if requested during the didactic year and not to exceed one semester during the clinical year. All requests or extenuating circumstances beyond this policy must be forwarded to the Program Director at which time the request will be sent to the Senior Associate Dean of Health Sciences for consideration. Requests beyond this policy may require re-application to the Program or repeating components of the academic and/or clinical year. All students returning from a leave of absence may be required to complete and pass a criminal background check and drug screening. In addition, they will join a new cohort and must acknowledge and adhere to the established policies and program of study for this cohort. Additionally, a leave of absence will affect the fixed price tuition rate and possibly the Program of Study. The maximum length of time for completing
the Program of Study, including a leave of absence(s), is forty (40) months total, from the day of matriculation (MSHS students) and fifty-two (52) months from the day of matriculation (MSHS/MPH).

A medical leave of absence requires written documentation from the health care provider stating the anticipated time and duration of the absence. Further, written documentation from the health care provider must document that the student is fit to return to the Program and meets the Technical Standards.

9. Liability Insurance

The university provides professional liability insurance for all students while enrolled as a student in a course involving patient contact. All students are covered for professional liability by the university’s comprehensive insurance program. There is no separate charge for this insurance.

10. Health Insurance

All students in the Physician Assistant Program are required to have health insurance coverage that is maintained throughout enrollment to include the clinical phase. Information on student health insurance and other services can be found on the Student Health Services website.

Injuries and illnesses related to exposure to blood and/or body fluids (further described below) may occur during the course of the professional program. If medical attention is required at any point during the Program, costs incurred are the student’s responsibility, and not that of the PA Program or the University. All injuries and illnesses must be documented on an incident report form (and submitted to the program immediately). Forms are available online. Please notify your advisor as well.

11. Student Exposure to Blood and/or Body Fluids

- Wash hands and any other affected skin area with soap and water. Flush mucus membranes with water as soon as feasible.

- Report the incident immediately to the appropriate person at the classroom, lab or clinical site.

- GW Hospital currently contracts with Medcor (located at George Washington University Hospital) to provide employee health services for hospital employees. As part of this agreement, the university pays GW Hospital to permit Medcor to provide limited services to medical school residents, medical students undergoing clinical rotations and health science students performing clinical
duties (including physician assistant, emergency health services, physical therapy, and medical laboratory science.

- **Occupational Exposures:** Residents, students, or research personnel who sustain an occupational exposure to potentially infectious materials (needle-stick injury, splash exposure, etc.) should be evaluated immediately by Medcor. If the injury occurs after hours, they should be evaluated by the GWUH Emergency Department within two hours. If they are unable to reach GW within 2 hours, they should seek immediate treatment at the closest appropriate facility and then report the exposure to Medcor at the earliest opportunity. Medcor will manage appropriate follow up care.

All students with an injury and/or exposure must complete this form and follow the instructions for submission to the University’s Office of Risk Management Att: Claims Manager. Email risk@gwu.edu; Phone 202-994-3265/Fax: 202-994-0130.

12. **Withdrawals/Adds/Drops**

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the University, the Program and the Senior Associate Dean of Health Sciences Programs must be notified in writing. If the notification is not given, and the student fails to register for the next semester, action will be taken to terminate the student’s degree candidacy. If it is necessary to withdraw from the University during the semester, the student’s advisor, Program Director, and the Senior Associate Dean of Health Sciences Programs must approve an adjustment form. At the time of withdrawal, the student’s GW photo ID must be turned into the Student Services office. Failure to fill out the program adjustment form and receive approval to withdraw will result in grades of Z (unauthorized withdrawal). Permission to withdraw from the University will not be granted to a student who does not have a clear financial record. Refer to the “Withdrawal/Add/Drop Policy” section in the Health Sciences Bulletin.

Courses may be added or dropped by using the GWeb Registration system. Any changes in course enrollment made after the GWeb registration period, including dropping and/or adding courses, must have the approval of the instructor, faculty advisor, and Health Sciences Student Services. A Program adjustment or Registration Transaction form must be completed in accordance with procedures established in the most current School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Health Sciences Programs Student Handbook. Tuition refund schedules and deadlines for adds/drops are delineated in the Handbook.

13. **Use of the George Washington University Logo**

The George Washington University logo mark and logotype, as they appear on official University publications and stationery, are registered trademarks and are protected by trademark laws. Their use on stationery and publications are governed by policy and
should be reviewed by students prior to embarking upon student activities where the name and/or logo will be prominently displayed.

14. Copyright Policy

The Program encourages its students to carry out scholarly endeavors consistent with applicable law and policy. It is important that students comply with all applicable laws regarding copyright and distribution of materials and intellectual property owned by individuals, organizations, and institutions. The University’s copyright policy should be reviewed when considering printing and or distributing copyrighted materials.

15. GW Smoke Free Policy

In an effort to provide a healthy, comfortable learning environment and to set high standards of health promotion, this institution has established a policy that governs smoking on campus and should be reviewed by students. No smoking in any university building is permitted.

16. Social Media Policy

Students who communicate with others through social networks, blogs, online encyclopedias, and/or video and photo sharing websites should refer to the University’s Social Media Policy for guidance regarding expectations for appropriate behavior and managing the risk associated with such use that may impact the reputation of The George Washington University, the GW PA Program and its faculty, staff, and students.
## C. PA Program Course of Study

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**TOTAL CREDITS**

104 136**

**COPC is the default track for the joint program. Program of study reflects on COPC PA/MPH program of study. MPH coursework for other public health track included in the scheme above.**
IV. Acknowledgement Form

STUDENT'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand that the contents of this Student Policies and Procedures Handbook are provided for my information as a student in The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program; Department of Physician Assistant Studies.

By signing this statement, I acknowledge receipt of the Physician Assistant Program Student Policies and Procedures Handbook and understand my responsibility to access the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin and Student Handbook for Health Sciences Programs.

I accept my responsibility to follow the regulations outlined in this handbook.

________________________________________
Student's Name (PRINT)

________________________________________
Student's Signature

________________________________________
Date

To be retained in your program administrative files
RETURN TO:
PA Program ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – Suite 343
2100 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20037

This handbook is effective as of May 2015.