



Policies and Procedures Handbook

Scope and Applicability of Handbook Policies

The policies contained in this handbook apply to all PA students and applicable program personnel regardless of the location in which program activities occur. When students participate in supervised clinical practice experiences, they are also subject to the policies and requirements of the clinical site. If a clinical affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding establishes requirements that differ from Program policy, the applicable agreement or clinical site requirement will govern as appropriate ^{1 2}.

Revised and updated September 2026

Effective October 2, 2026

¹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A1.01b

² ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.01

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Program Overview

Physician Assistant Studies Program
Northeastern State University
Gregg Wadley College of Science and Health
Department of Health Professions

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Mission Statement

The mission of the NSU PA program is to produce competent and compassionate physician assistants for northeastern Oklahoma. The program is dedicated to improving access to quality healthcare for medically underserved communities, with particular attention to rural areas and communities that reflect the rich cultural heritage and history of the region.

Program Goals

The Physician Assistant Studies (PAS) Program at Northeastern State University remains committed to fulfilling its mission while fully supporting the University's strategic priorities. The University has identified four strategic goals: to be the educational partner of choice; to enhance workforce connections; to ensure student success; and to invest in employees and facilities. Together, these goals emphasize academic excellence, community engagement and workforce readiness, student success, and faculty and infrastructure development.³

Program Competencies

At the time of successful completion of all elements of the curriculum, and when the degree of Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is conferred by the university, graduates will be able to accomplish the following:

- 1) Medical knowledge. Physician assistants are expected to understand, evaluate, and apply the following elements of medical knowledge in the clinical setting:
 - MK1: etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
 - MK2: signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
 - MK3: appropriate screening and diagnostic studies
 - MK4: interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- 2) Interpersonal skills. Physician assistants are expected to:
 - IP1: use effective communication skills to elicit and provide accurate information
 - IP2: demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
 - IP3: counsel and educate patients and their families
 - IP4: work effectively with physicians and other healthcare professionals to provide patient-centered care
- 3) Clinical and technical skills. Physician assistants are expected to:
 - CTS1: accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes
 - CTS2: locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies to support patient care decisions and patient education
 - CTS3: perform an appropriate medical history and physical exam
 - CTS4: perform medical and surgical procedures essential to the specialty
- 4) Professional behaviors. Physician assistants are expected to:
 - PB1: recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others

³ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard B1.01a

- PB2: effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
PB3: advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities that contribute to health care disparities regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, race, intellect, sexual orientation, or ability to pay
PB4: demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
PB5: engage in commitment to ethical principles
- 5) Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities. Physician assistants are expected to:
- CRPSA1: interpret history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses and implement patient management plans
 - CRPSA2: manage general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
 - CRPSA3: apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
 - CRPSA4: apply the concepts of population health to patient care ⁴

Accreditation Statement

At its March 2025 meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the Northeastern State University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Northeastern State University on Accreditation- Probation status until its next review in April 2027.

Probation accreditation is a temporary accreditation status initially of not less than two years. However, that period may be extended by the ARC-PA for up to an additional two years if the ARC-PA finds that the program is making substantial progress toward meeting all applicable standards but requires additional time to come into full compliance.

Probation accreditation status is granted, at the sole discretion of the ARC-PA, when a program holding an accreditation status of Accreditation - Provisional or Accreditation - Continued does not, in the judgment of the ARC-PA, meet the Standards or when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, a program that fails to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn. Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-northeastern-state-university/>.

⁴ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standards A3.11g, B1.01b

Physician Assistant Studies Program Course Curriculum

Didactic Year Begins October

Fall Semester I – 11 credit hours

Second 8-week session

- PAS 5015 Clinical Anatomy
- PAS 5023 Medical Physiology
- PAS 5003 PA Practice, Policy, and Ethics

Spring Semester I – 22 credit hours

- PAS 5218 Clinical Medicine I
- PAS 5213 Lab Medicine and Radiologic Principles I
- PAS 5253 Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics I
- PAS 5611 Pathophysiology I
- PAS 5113 Clinical Assessment and Counseling I
- PAS 5551 Interprofessional Education
- PAS 5333 Diversity and Population Health

Summer Semester I – 20 credit hours

- PAS 5226 Clinical Medicine II
- PAS 5223 Lab Medicine and Radiologic Principles II
- PAS 5273 Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics II
- PAS 5631 Pathophysiology II
- PAS 5123 Clinical Assessment and Counseling II
- PAS 5313 Medical Practice Mgmt.
- PAS 5551 Interprofessional Education

Fall Semester II – 22 credit hours

- PAS 5238 Clinical Medicine III
- PAS 5233 Lab Medicine and Radiologic Principles III
- PAS 5293 Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics III
- PAS 5651 Pathophysiology III
- PAS 5133 Clinical Assessment and Counseling III
- PAS 5501 Advanced Clinical Procedures
- PAS 5302 Evidence-Based Medicine & Research
- PAS 5551 Interprofessional Education

Didactic courses are primarily in person with occasional online or hybrid sessions.⁵

Clinical Year Begins Spring II

Spring Semester II – 12 credit hours

- Clinical Rotation
- Clinical Rotation
- Clinical Rotation

Summer Semester II – 8 credit hours

- Clinical Rotation
- Clinical Rotation

Fall Semester III– 15 credit hours

- Clinical Rotation
- Clinical Rotation
- Clinical Rotation
- PAS 5993 – Summative Seminar

PAS 5920 Special Studies for Physician Assistant
Students-Clinical (1-4 credit hours) * (offered each semester)

Six-Week Rotations (offered each clinical year semester)

- PAS 5704 - Internal Medicine Rotation
- PAS 5714 - Surgery Rotation
- PAS 5724 - Pediatrics Rotation
- PAS 5734 - Women's Health Rotation
- PAS 5744 - Behavioral Health Rotation
- PAS 5754 - Emergency Medicine Rotation
- PAS 5764 - Family Medicine Rotation
- PAS 5804 - Elective Rotation

Clinical courses are conducted primarily in person, with possible telemedicine experiences in which preceptors are present in the room, except for the behavioral health rotation, which may be primarily via telemedicine.⁶

PAS 5910 Special Studies for Physician Assistant
Students-Didactic (1-8 credit hours) * (offered each semester)

*Enrollment needed as part of a remediation plan.

Didactic Year: 75 credit hours/25 courses

Clinical Year: 35 credit hours/9 courses required

Total Credit Hours: 110 credit hours

⁵ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.11d-e

⁶ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.11d-e

Program Faculty and Staff⁷

Program Director

Jayne Myers, MHS, PA-C

Jayne currently serves as the Program Director for the Physician Assistant program. She joined the program in 2022 and has previously served as Director of Admissions and Director of Didactic Education before stepping into her current role. Jayne has participated in several accreditation activities and enjoys the challenges and rewards of program leadership.

A former Razorback, she earned a BSE in Pre-Professional Kinesiology at the University of Arkansas and continued her education at the University of Oklahoma Physician Associate program in Oklahoma City. She has a special interest in providing care for underserved and vulnerable populations. Jayne has precepted for several students in her clinical practice and has always enjoyed training the next generation of PAs.

Outside of her professional role, she enjoys playing pickleball with her husband and being a mom to four kids. She and her family love traveling and outdoor activities, and she finds the most joy in watching her children experience new things.

Principal Faculty

Kelly Gilcrest, MPAS, PA

Kelly currently serves as the Director of Admissions. She was born and raised in Northeastern Ohio. She attended Ashland University and received her Bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. Kelly attended PA School at Alderson-Broadbent College in West Virginia. She graduated cum laude in 1999 with a Bachelor's degree in Medical Science (PA studies). It was at AB that she met her husband, Tim Gilcrest (also a PA). Tim was offered a job in Tulsa upon graduation and that is how Oklahoma became their new home. There were not a lot of PA jobs in the Tulsa area in early 2000 but Kelly ended up obtaining a job with the State of Oklahoma working in correctional medicine at Eddie Warrior Correctional Facility, a minimum-security women's prison. She joined the Army National Guard as a PA in February 2001 and was the Officer in Charge of the Troop Medical Clinic at Camp Gruber for over 8 years and ended up with the rank of Captain. She went back to school and received her master's degree in PA Studies (MPAS) from the University of Nebraska in 2005. She went on to work at various Primary Care Clinics such as VA Tulsa Clinic, OU Health at Work Clinic, RSU Student Health and TU Student Health, a private Primary Care clinic with an Urgent Care and several clinics with Cherokee Nation. Kelly and Tim live in the Tulsa area and have 4 children with the youngest 2 being twins and also have one grandson. Since she always had a love for animals, they currently have 3 dogs and 3 cats at home—all rescues. She looks forward to educating excellent Physician Assistants through the NSU PA Program.

David Olson, MSPAS, PA-C

David currently serves as the Director of Clinical Education for the NSU Physician Assistant Program. A native of central Arkansas, he earned his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Central Arkansas before completing his PA training at Harding University. He began his career in Tulsa, Oklahoma, working as a hospitalist with the St. John Hospital system for over a decade, and later gained outpatient experience in a value-based primary care model focused on Medicare patients. For nearly ten years, he has also served as a preceptor for PA students from OU, OSU, and OCU, mentoring the next generation of providers.

⁷ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A2.02

Dan McNeill, PhD, PA-C (Emeritus)

Dr. McNeill has spent 38 years in PA education. He was the Program Director at the University of Oklahoma PA Program for 19 years, followed by being the founding Director of the PA Program at Oklahoma City University, and finally arriving at Northeastern State University in 2018 as Principle faculty, then twice serving as Interim Director. His clinical effort was in emergency medicine and urgent care for more than two decades and in his spare time he served more than a decade as the Medical Director of a charitable clinic in Oklahoma City. His life passions include teaching and when not at a university...SCUBA diving.

Kelsey Riebel, MHS, PA-C

Kelsey currently serves as the Associate Program Director. She graduated summa cum laude from Pittsburg State University with a bachelor of science in biology degree. During this time, she was a KINBRE scholar and participated in undergraduate research with her academic advisor. In 2016, she graduated from the OU-TU School of Community Medicine Physician Assistant Program and went on to practice hospital medicine at Ascension St. John Jane Phillips. She always intended to serve the American Indian population and in 2018 she took an opportunity to do that by offering primary care services for Osage Nation. After a period of time serving abroad in South America, she was thrilled to accept the Clinical Assistant Professor position at Northeastern State University in 2023.

Bruna Varalli-Claypool, MHS, PA-C, DFAAPA

Mrs. Varalli-Claypool is a part-time Clinical Assistant Professor. She retired from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine Physician Associate Program in 2025 and has provided locums PA coverage in remote Alaska villages. Mrs. Varalli-Claypool has over 26 years of clinical experience in Emergency Medicine, Urgent Care and Family Practice. She has served as Treasurer and House of Delegates representative for the Oklahoma Academy of Physician Assistants (OAPA) and a member of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority's Drug Utilization Review Board. Mrs. Varalli-Claypool is an American Academy of Physician Associates Distinguished Fellow and an OAPA PA of the Year and Roger Whittaker award winner. Mrs. Varalli-Claypool earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Central Oklahoma and her master's in health sciences from the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center.

Catherine Wilcox, MHS, PA-C

Catherine currently serves as the Director of Didactic Education at the Northeastern State University Physician Assistant Program. A native of South Louisiana, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in Chemistry from Louisiana State University. Before pursuing a career in medicine, Catherine worked for several years as a laboratory technician in the chemical and oilfield industries. She later attended the OU-TU School of Community Medicine Physician Assistant Program, graduating in 2017.

Following graduation, she began practicing as a Surgical Physician Assistant at the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center, where she specialized in general surgery, vascular surgery, urology, otorhinolaryngology, and orthopedics. During her clinical career, Catherine discovered a passion for education, frequently serving as a guest lecturer and preceptor for PA students.

In 2024, she transitioned from clinical practice to full-time academia, joining the faculty at Northeastern State University as a Clinical Assistant Professor. In her current role, Catherine teaches courses in clinical medicine, clinical procedures, and point-of-care ultrasound, while also having a major role in coordinating and creating the didactic curriculum. She is passionate about creating a supportive learning environment and mentoring students both academically and personally.

Outside of academia, Catherine enjoys training for triathlons, gardening, and spending time outdoors. She is dedicated not only to shaping the future of PA education but also to modeling a balanced and active lifestyle for her students.

Co-Medical Directors

Vishal Mundra, MD

Dr. Vishal Mundra currently serves as a Co-Medical Director for the NSU PA program and has been serving in this capacity since 2023. He graduated from Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi University in India in 2006. He moved to the US to pursue his internal medicine residency and graduated in 2011 from prestigious Cleveland Clinic Florida. He served as a chief resident and was recipient of several awards. He started as a hospitalist at St. John Medical Center in Tulsa. He worked in Tulsa for over a decade. He also served important roles in several committees in St. John Medical Center. In addition, he was also Chief of Medicine for St. John Owasso hospital. Earlier this year, Dr. Mundra joined Stroud Regional Medical Center as Medical Director and Chief of Staff. Currently, he is also pursuing Masters of Business Administration and Masters of Health administration at Oklahoma State University. He wants to further improve his expertise in administrative and clinical medicine. He loves to teach and has been teaching at OU PA school and OSU students for the last several years.

Amanda Oxford, MSPAS, PA-C

Amanda currently serves as Co-Medical Director. She graduated from Northeastern State University with a bachelor of science in biology degree. She then attended AT Still University's Physician Assistant Program, graduating with a master degree in Physician Assistant Studies. Since her return in 2008, Amanda has served her community and the Native American Indian population of Northeast Oklahoma as an Internal Medicine Hospitalist for Cherokee Nation Health Services. She has been actively involved with the NSU PA program since its inception, providing community support, guest lecturing and precepting PA students. Amanda and her husband, Dustin, are the proud parents of teenagers, Ava and Reed.

Administrative support

Laura Brust

Laura serves as one of the administrative assistants for Physician Assistant Studies. She is a wife and mom of two boys and enjoys cooking, staying active, and serving at her church. She also loves spending her free time with friends and family. She has a Business Administration degree from Mississippi College, and her previous work experience includes payroll, the workers' compensation field, and performing a variety of administrative duties.

Saundra Vaughn

Saundra currently serves as the Administrative Secretary for the Department of Health Professions at Northeastern State University's Muskogee Campus. A genuine Okie from Muskogee, she has spent the majority of her career working in administrative roles. She most recently served with the Department of Veterans Affairs for 17 years, working in multiple departments before retiring from the Human Resources department in September 2025. However, Saundra quickly discovered that retirement wasn't for her!

She joined Northeastern State University on June 15, 2026, and currently provides administrative support to the Health Professions Department Physician Assistant Program.

Outside of work, Saundra has been married to her husband, Bill, for 50 years. Together, they have two children, three grandchildren, and three grand pups. Saundra and Bill are proud to call Muskogee, Oklahoma home.

Instructional Faculty

The non-clinical curriculum during the didactic year will be conducted by Northeastern State University faculty with expertise in their discipline. Additional instruction will be provided by physicians, physician assistants, and other health care providers.

Clinical Preceptors

Each student will be assigned a clinical preceptor for each Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE) during the second calendar year of the program. Students are not required to provide or solicit their own clinical sites or preceptors.⁸ Structured clinical practice experiences (clinical rotations) are provided by the program as components of the clinical education curriculum. Preceptors are physicians in their particular field, physician assistants, or other program-approved licensed health care providers.

Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Northeastern State University (NSU) does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, genetic information, or status as a veteran, and to the extent allowed by Oklahoma law, marital status, sexual orientation and gender identity in its programs and activities. These protections extend to employment with and admission to NSU, as well as, participation in university-sponsored programs. NSU policies and procedures regarding allegations of discrimination may be found at the Title IX page of the NSU website.

Student Rights and Program Commitments

Students enrolled in the PAS Program have the right to:

- Have Program policies, academic requirements, and expectations made readily available and applied consistently.⁹
- Receive information regarding the academic standards required to maintain enrollment and progress through the curriculum, requirements for Program completion, and applicable remediation, deceleration, withdrawal, dismissal, grievance, and appeal procedures.¹⁰
- Be evaluated according to published course requirements, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and grading practices.
- Receive appropriate notification of identified academic deficiencies and have access to academic counseling and remediation resources as provided by Program policy.
- Have timely access or referral to available services for personal concerns that may affect their progress in the Program.¹¹
- Have academic records and confidential information protected from unauthorized access in accordance with University and Program policy.¹²

⁸ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.08

⁹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.01

¹⁰ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14a-h

¹¹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.07

¹² ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.17

- Have health records maintained separately from Program academic records and protected from access or review by Program faculty and staff, except as permitted for required immunization and health-screening documentation.¹³
- Obtain healthcare from providers who are not serving as the Program Director, Medical Director(s), or principal faculty, except in an emergency situation.¹⁴
- Participate in the Program as a student and not be required to substitute for or function as instructional faculty, clinical staff, or administrative staff.¹⁵
- Not be required to work for the Program as a condition of enrollment or Program completion.¹⁶
- Not be required to identify, provide, or solicit clinical sites or preceptors.¹⁷

Student Responsibilities

Students in the PAS Program are responsible for:

- Attending all required classes, examinations, assessments, clinical activities, meetings, and other scheduled Program activities in accordance with applicable attendance and absence policies.
- Understanding and complying with the academic, professional, clinical, and administrative requirements described in course syllabi, this handbook, the *University Catalog*, the *Student Handbook*, the *Clinical Handbook*, and other applicable University and Program policies.
- Regularly monitoring their academic performance and course progress through Blackboard and other designated Program systems.
- Completing assignments, examinations, assessments, clinical requirements, and other Program responsibilities by established deadlines and at the level of performance required for progression.
- Seeking assistance promptly when experiencing academic difficulty or other circumstances that may affect their ability to meet Program requirements.
- Communicating promptly with the appropriate faculty member, course coordinator, advisor, and/or Program Director when concerns arise that may affect academic performance or progression.
- Checking their NSU email account daily and remaining informed of Program communications, schedule changes, deadlines, and requirements.
- Maintaining required immunizations, health screenings, certifications, and other compliance requirements throughout enrollment, as applicable.
- Following Program policies regarding prevention and management of exposure to infectious or environmental hazards.
- Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of patients, classmates, faculty, staff, and others and refraining from accessing records or confidential information for which they are not authorized.
- Identifying themselves clearly as a PA student in clinical settings and accurately representing their student role and level of training.¹⁸
- Meeting all requirements for academic progression and Program completion, including demonstration of the Program-defined competencies required for entry-level PA practice.

¹³ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.18

¹⁴ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.06

¹⁵ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.03

¹⁶ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.02

¹⁷ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.08

¹⁸ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.04

Communication Expectations

Clear, timely, and professional communication is an essential component of professional behavior within the PA Program.

- NSU email is the primary method of official communication between students, faculty, and Program staff. Students are expected to check their NSU email daily and respond to Program communications as appropriate.
- Students should use NSU email for questions, requests, notifications, or other Program-related matters
- For Program purposes, communication must be documented through NSU email or addressed during a scheduled formal meeting. Informal conversations, hallway discussions, text messages, or other undocumented communications should not be relied upon as evidence that a request was made, approval was granted, or a concern was formally addressed.
- Text messaging should be reserved for urgent or emergency communication when timely contact is necessary. Text messaging should not be used for routine Program communication, requests, academic matters, or non-Program discussion with faculty or staff. When follow-up or documentation is required, the matter should be communicated through NSU email or addressed during a scheduled formal meeting.
- When important decisions, expectations, or action items arise during a scheduled formal meeting, the Program will document the discussion in the student's record or provide written follow-up.
- Faculty maintain designated office hours. Students are expected to schedule appointments for meetings with faculty, including during posted office hours, so that faculty availability and student contact time can be appropriately managed and documented.
- Faculty will make reasonable efforts to respond to student emails within two business days. Students should not expect responses during weekends, University holidays, or other times when the University is closed. Messages received during these periods will be addressed after normal business operations resume.
- Urgent clinical matters should be communicated according to the procedures outlined in the *Clinical Education Handbook*.

Students are responsible for maintaining appropriate, respectful, and professional communication with faculty, staff, preceptors, classmates, and other members of the University and healthcare communities.

General Professional Expectations

Professional behavior is an essential component of PA education and is expected throughout both the didactic and clinical phases of the Program. Professional behavior is evaluated in conjunction with the knowledge, interpersonal, clinical and technical skills, and clinical reasoning abilities necessary for entry-level PA practice. See Professional Conduct Policy below.

Failure to meet academic or professional expectations may be addressed in accordance with applicable Program policies regarding academic progress, remediation, probation, disciplinary action, deceleration, or dismissal.

Technical Standards Required for Admission to the Physician Assistant Studies Program at NSU¹⁹

Physician Assistant Students, in addition to their academic achievements, exam scores, and fund of medical knowledge, must also be able to demonstrate adequate physical, emotional, and behavioral capabilities to be successful in achieving the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree as well as in their future practice. While some accommodations can be made for persons with some disabilities, it is expected that students enrolled in this program can adequately perform the five technical standards listed below:

Observation

All PA students must be able to adequately observe all demonstrations and lectures within the lecture hall or the laboratory setting. The student must have proficient sensory function to be able to observe a patient from a distance and up close and have the sensory skills to be able to perform an appropriate physical examination of a patient. Sensory skills required for observation include intact vision, hearing, sense of smell, and tactile sensation.

Communication

It is expected that all students admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies Program are able to communicate effectively and sensitively to faculty, staff, patients, and all members of the healthcare team. Communication requires the student to be able to speak clearly so that the student may be understood by others, and that the student possesses the ability to read and write effectively. Communication also requires that the student be proficient in interpreting non-verbal cues such as changes in mood, behavior, activity, or posture.

Motor function

Physician Assistant Students must have adequate strength, gross and fine motor coordination, balance, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision to be able to perform maneuvers and procedures to provide both general and emergent care. It is expected that the student has adequate motor function in order to perform a physical examination which requires the ability to palpate, percuss, auscultate, and perform other diagnostic maneuvers. Examples of actions reasonably required include performing CPR, administering IV medications, applying appropriate pressure to stop hemorrhage, suturing of simple wounds, performing obstetric maneuvers, and opening of airways. It is also expected that a student be able to sit and stand for long periods of time as required in the classroom, laboratory, or clinical setting.

Conceptual and analytical thought and reasoning

It is expected that all students admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies Program have the ability to critically analyze and interpret information from medical literature, laboratory testing, imaging studies, and from the physical examination quickly and effectively, even under high stress situations. It is expected that the student be able to interpret three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of anatomical structures. The student must have good critical thinking skills as would be required in the practice of medicine.

Behavioral and social attributes

The Physician Assistant Studies student will have the emotional health to allow him or her to function in a rigorous academic environment. The course of study to become a PA is intense and will require the

¹⁹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.12e

student to be able to handle high stress situations. It is expected that all students are able to approach patients with sensitivity and empathy and to work well with all members of the healthcare team. It is expected that all students have the ability to adapt to changing environments as well as deal with the uncertainties inherent in clinical practice. If a candidate has any spiritual, ethical, personal or constitutional objection to physical contact with any gender identity or expression, such objection may not interfere with the candidate's ability to perform full physical examinations of patients, which is necessary to fulfill the requirements of clinical competence and graduation. Students will also be required to practice and perfect physical examination skills on each other (with the exception of examinations of the genitalia). Candidates shall be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties in the clinical problems of many patients. Because disease recognizes no holiday or day of the week, candidates must be willing to perform in the clinical setting as required by their designated preceptor. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the education process.

Student Services and Resources

Required Supplies

- See the required equipment list [here](#)

Student Services

In accordance with ARC-PA requirements, the Program Director, Medical Director(s), and principal faculty may not participate as healthcare providers for students enrolled in the PA Program, except in emergency situations.²⁰ Students should obtain routine, urgent, mental health, and other healthcare services through providers who are not serving in these PA Program roles. In an emergency or when immediate medical attention is needed, students should go to the nearest emergency department or call Campus Police at 918-444-2468 or 911.

Please see the Division of Student Affairs Website for an extensive list of student services that are available.²¹

Counseling and Mental Health Services

Student Counseling Services is available to assist students with personal, emotional, or mental health concerns that may affect their well-being or academic progress. Services include confidential individual counseling, crisis intervention, referrals to campus and community resources, and educational and wellness programs. During regular office hours, students may schedule an appointment by calling 918-444-2042 or by visiting Student Counseling Services. Appointments are scheduled based on availability and the student's schedule. Additional information is available through NSU Counseling Services.

²⁰ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.06

²¹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A1.04

Students also have access to TimelyCare, a virtual health and well-being service available to NSU students. Using their NSU email address, students may create an account and access available mental health services through the TimelyCare platform.

For urgent mental health needs outside regular office hours, students may contact the CREOKS Behavioral Health Services 24-hour hotline at 918-207-0078. In an emergency or situation involving an immediate threat to health or safety, students should call 911 or report to the nearest hospital emergency department.²²

Disabilities Services

NSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodation in a course are requested to speak with the course coordinator as early in the semester as possible. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact [Student Disability Services](https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/Student-Services/Student-Disability-Services)²³ at (918) 444-2042 or email Student Disability Services at sdsba@nsuok.edu.

Health Services

Physician Assistant students are required to maintain health insurance throughout the program as agreed and verified by the student with post-acceptance requirements.

NSU students have access to both in-person and virtual health services. Sick visits, wellness-related appointments, and other routine health services are available through the Student Health Center on the Tahlequah campus and the NEO Health clinic in Muskogee. NSU pays the student's office-visit copay when a valid NSU ID is presented at the time of the visit. Additional information about in-person student health services is available through [NSU Student Health Services](#)

Students also have access to [TimelyCare](#), which provides virtual medical and mental health services. Students may access this service by visiting TimelyCare, creating an account using their NSU email address, and selecting the appropriate medical or mental health service.

- NEO Health at NSU Tahlequah 918-444-2126. Office-visit copays will be paid by NSU.
- NEO Health in Muskogee 918-683-0470. Office-visit copays will be paid by NSU.
- [Timely Care](#) (Telemedicine)²⁴

Faculty Advising²⁵

The PA program assigns a faculty advisor to each student of the entering class. The faculty advisor assists with academic and non-academic problems and acts as a liaison between the advisee and other faculty members. The program recommends students meet with their advisors on a monthly basis, but it ultimately is the student who determines the full amount of interaction between him/her and their advisor.

²² ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.07

²³ <https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/Student-Services/Student-Disability-Services>

²⁴ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.07

²⁵ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A2.05e

The responsibilities of the faculty advisor include:

- Serving as the student's advisor and academic/professional counselor;
- Overseeing and monitoring the academic progress and professional growth of the student;
- Assisting the student in seeking academic and personal counseling services provided by the institution;
- Serving as an advocate for the student and
- Counseling the student during his/her selection of career within the profession.

Library and Learning Resources

NSU provides PA students and faculty access to medical databases, journals, e-books, and other research resources through the University Library and the PA Program's online library resources. Available resources include AccessMedicine, ClinicalKey, Cochrane Systematic Reviews, MEDLINE, and other electronic journal and e-book collections. The main library also provides a document delivery service from the Tahlequah collection and the Internet based collections that are available to all students.

The PA Program provides enrolled students access to **AccessMedicine**, which includes a broad collection of medical textbooks and educational resources available online. Students may purchase hard-copy textbooks if desired, and individual courses may recommend additional resources.

A [Resource page](#)²⁶ has been specifically created for use by PA program students and faculty. Several medical databases, journals, e-books and other research materials are available on the [PA Resource](#) page.

Information about the library resources on each campus can be found [here](#)²⁷

Main Campus (Tahlequah) Resources

The following offices are headquartered on the main NSU campus in Tahlequah and do not maintain a full-time office on the Muskogee campus. Each office is staffed and is available to answer questions by phone or email. During certain times of the year, the program will arrange for a representative from various departments to have a physical presence on the Muskogee campus for your benefit. Contact the program office if you experience difficulty in accessing a needed service.

Services headquartered on the NSU Tahlequah campus

1. Registrar
2. Financial Aid
3. Physical building for the NSU library
4. Office of the Graduate College

Rowdy's Resource Room

Rowdy's Resource Room is here to assist students in times of need. This resource provides non-perishable food, gently used clothing, and office/school supplies. This donation-based program is a great way for students to give back and support their RiverHawks family.

²⁶ <https://library.nsuok.edu/home>

²⁷ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A1.09

This is open to all NSU students. Resources are available through the [Food Pantry \(NSU-BA\)](#) and [Rowdy's Resource Room \(NSU-Tahlequah\)](#). NSU-Muskogee also houses a resource room.

Program Policies

Attendance and Absence Policy

Attendance is **expected** for all lectures, classes, and academic-related activities. PA Program course coordinators and clinical preceptors will monitor daily attendance and report absences to the Directors of Didactic or Clinical Education. Attendance is a demonstration of professionalism and is a criterion used for recommendation for promotion to the clinical year and graduation. It is required that students observe the following policy:

The Program has an obligation to maintain a positive rapport with guest speakers, clinical sites, preceptors, and other health care professionals who make an essential contribution to the curriculum of the Program. The relationships are vital to the ongoing success and development of the Program and its ability to provide a quality didactic and clinical education. The Program will not tolerate individuals jeopardizing these relationships by displaying unprofessional and discourteous behaviors. Prompt attendance at all program activities is a minimum demonstration of this commitment. Attendance and preparation for all seminars, small group discussions, lectures, and clinical activities designated by the program faculty and preceptors is expected.

Absences in the Clinical Phase

Details of the absentee policy regarding supervised clinical practice experiences is provided in the *Clinical Education Handbook*.

Absences in the Didactic Phase

Definitions:

- Absence is defined as missing any portion of a scheduled class session, lab session, or other required class activity or event within the NSU PA Program Didactic Phase. Absences are recorded based on the number of scheduled instructional hours missed.
- Excused Absence is defined as an absence approved in advance or retroactively by the Program.
- Unexcused Absence is defined as an absence not approved by the Program.
- Tardy is defined as a late arrival to any class session, lab session, or class activity. Any tardiness that is greater than 15 minutes will be considered an absence, and the scheduled instructional time missed will be counted toward the student's cumulative absence hours.

General Expectations

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions and program activities.
- Personal activities should be scheduled outside required class times.
 - Openings during regularly scheduled class time in the Google Calendar should be verified with the Director of Didactic Education.
- Students are responsible for all missed content, regardless of the reason for absence.
 - If the student absence is excused, the Program will work with the student to satisfy missed material. **Please refer to the policy on "Missed Assessments and Assignment Deadlines" for what is considered a non-negotiable absence for which summative evaluations will not be allowed to be postponed or rescheduled.**

Reporting Absences

- Unanticipated Absences (e.g., illness, accident, emergency):
 - Must be reported to the Director of Didactic Education and course coordinator within 24 hours via email.
- Anticipated Absences (e.g., scheduled events, appointments):
 - Must be requested in writing via email at least two weeks in advance to the Director of Didactic Education and course coordinator.
 - Approval is granted on a case-by-case basis and confirmed in writing.
- Approval Required From:
 - Director of Didactic Education and
 - Course or module coordinator

Policy on Excused Absences

- Excused Absences – Limitations
 - Didactic phase students are allowed 24 hours of excused absences per semester.
 - More than 24 hours of excused absences in a semester or more than 96 hours of excused absences during the didactic phase may result in referral to the Student Progress Committee (SPC). A student may also be referred to the SPC when absences, regardless of the total number of hours, result in any of the following:
 - i. Failure to complete required coursework, examinations, skills assessments, or other required academic activities within the established timeframe discussed in the "Missed Assessments and Assignment Deadlines" section;
 - ii. Failure to demonstrate required course or program competencies due to missed instructional or assessment activities;
 - iii. Repeated absences that interfere with the student's ability to meet course or program requirements; or
 - iv. Failure to complete required make-up activities or remediation within the timeframe established by the program.
 - The SPC may consider professionalism probation, academic probation, academic deceleration, or program dismissal depending on the impact on academic performance.
 - Requests for a prolonged excused absence (>3 consecutive days) require a meeting with the Director of Didactic Education.
- Acceptable Reasons for Excused Absence
 - Medical – Illness, injury, or condition that prevents class attendance.
 - i. Students should not attend class or campus activities if they are sick and potentially contagious.
 - ii. Illness of a dependent or serious illness of an immediate family member (spouse/partner; parent; child; sibling; step-relatives; in-laws; grandparents; grandchildren).
 - iii. Access to healthcare or counseling appointments (preferably scheduled outside required activities).
 - Death in the Family – Immediate family member as defined above.
 - Legal/Government Proceedings – Unavoidable participation.
 - University or Program-Approved Functions
 - i. Absences may be permitted for approved functions only after the activity sponsor receives authorization. This approval does not excuse the student from required work but allows for reasonable accommodations from the instructor. Students must contact instructors prior to the event to arrange make-up work.

- Other – Personal emergency, military service, pregnancy and related conditions, disability accommodations, religious holy days, scholarship visits.

Policy on unexcused absences

- Allowances and consequences
 - Didactic phase students are permitted only 16 hours of unexcused absence during the didactic phase.
 - Greater than 16 hours of unexcused absences during the didactic phase will result in immediate referral to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for review.
 - The program may also refer the student to the SPCE before this limit is reached when absences, regardless of the total number of hours, result in any of the following:
 - i. Failure to complete required coursework, examinations, skills assessments, or other required academic activities within the established timeframe discussed in the "Missed Assessments and Assignment Deadlines" section;
 - ii. Failure to demonstrate required course or program competencies due to missed instructional or assessment activities;
 - iii. Repeated absences that interfere with the student's ability to meet course or program requirements; or
 - iv. Failure to complete required make-up activities or remediation within the timeframe established by the program.
 - The SPC may recommend:
 - i. Professionalism probation.
 - ii. Academic probation.
 - iii. Program dismissal, depending on the impact on academic performance and professionalism.
- Impact on coursework
 - If the student absence is unexcused, the student will be responsible for all missed content.
 - The Program may require the student to complete missed examinations or assignments as necessary to demonstrate competency; however, the student may receive a zero for the missed assessment in accordance with the Program's **Missed Assessments and Assignment Deadlines Policy**.
 - This includes all graded and non-graded assessments, practical labs, simulations, and patient encounters.
- Absences from class, including exams and submission of assignments or other course requirements, will be considered unexcused for the following reasons:
 - Weddings
 - Graduations
 - Funerals or medical events of distant relations (extended relatives)
 - Skipping class without prior notice
 - Taking an unplanned personal day
 - Missing class without approval from required program leadership
 - Failure to provide adequate documentation for an absence that requires verification
 - Excessive tardiness
 - Issues involving pets (e.g., pet illness, veterinary appointments, pet emergencies not impacting the student's safety)

Remote Attendance During Illness

- Students who are ill but well enough to participate in class activities may request to attend via Zoom.

- Approval is at the discretion of the Director of Didactic Education in consultation with the course/module coordinator.
- The request must be submitted prior to the class session with the reason for remote attendance.
- Zoom attendance does not automatically remove the absence from the student's record; classification (excused/unexcused) will follow the absence policy.
- Students attending remotely must:
 - i. Have their camera on and remain present for the entire session
 - ii. Participate as required by the instructor
- Remote attendance will not be approved for activities requiring in-person participation (e.g., labs, physical exam sessions, patient encounters, certain assessments) unless explicitly authorized.
- If illness prevents meaningful participation, the absence will be processed as excused following standard procedures.

****COVID-19****

Students must comply with current University, Program, and clinical-site communicable disease requirements.

Care of Program Equipment Policy

Students in the NSU Physician Assistant Studies Program are responsible for treating all program equipment and learning spaces with care and respect. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including referral to the Student Progress Committee.

- **Cadavers and Anatomical Specimens**
 - Cadavers are to be treated with the highest degree of respect and professionalism, recognizing their invaluable contribution to medical education.
 - No photographs, videos, or unauthorized recordings are permitted in the anatomy laboratory.
 - Any damage to specimens or improper handling must be reported immediately to the course director.
 - See anatomy syllabus for more information
- **Anatomical Models and Laboratory Supplies**
 - Models, instruments, and supplies are to be handled gently and returned to their designated storage locations after use.
 - Students are prohibited from removing program-owned models, supplies, or equipment from classrooms or labs without prior written authorization.
 - Lost or damaged items due to negligence may result in the student being held financially responsible.
 - See the [Student Ultrasound Probe Checkout Policy](#)
- **Classroom and Lab Spaces**
 - Students are expected to maintain a clean, orderly, and professional learning environment.
 - Program furniture, AV equipment, and other teaching resources must be used appropriately and left in good condition.
 - All waste (including sharps, biologic materials, or hazardous waste) must be disposed of according to program safety guidelines.
 - Eating and drinking are permitted only in designated areas and never in laboratory

spaces.

Misuse, neglect, or unauthorized removal of program property will result in corrective action, which may include financial restitution, professionalism probation, or dismissal from the program.

Professional Conduct Policy

The Northeastern State University Physician Assistant Studies Program prepares students for a profession entrusted with the health, safety, and welfare of patients. Accordingly, students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior, ethical conduct, sound judgment, and integrity throughout all phases of the Program.

Professionalism is an essential component of PA education and is evaluated in addition to academic and clinical performance. Students must demonstrate the professional behaviors necessary to participate safely and effectively in the educational environment and to enter clinical practice as a physician assistant.

Students are expected to comply with the professional and ethical standards of the PA Program, Northeastern State University, applicable clinical sites, and the PA profession.

Professional Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, accountability, reliability, and ethical behavior.
- Treat patients, families, classmates, faculty, staff, preceptors, healthcare professionals, and others with dignity, respect, and courtesy.
- Communicate in a professional, respectful, and appropriate manner.
- Attend required educational and clinical activities as scheduled and arrive prepared and on time.
- Accept responsibility for their decisions, actions, academic performance, and professional development.
- Respond appropriately to constructive feedback and demonstrate efforts toward improvement when concerns are identified.
- Recognize the limits of their knowledge, skills, and student role and seek appropriate assistance or supervision when needed.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with patients, faculty, staff, preceptors, classmates, and other members of the healthcare and educational communities.
- Protect patient privacy and confidential information in accordance with applicable laws, University policies, Program policies, and clinical-site requirements.
- Clearly identify themselves as a physician assistant student in clinical and patient-care settings and accurately represent their level of education and training.
- Demonstrate concern for patient safety and welfare.
- Work cooperatively and respectfully with members of the healthcare team.
- Follow applicable Program, University, and clinical-site policies and procedures.
- Follow the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession and other applicable professional standards.
- Maintain professional behavior in person and when using electronic communication, social media, learning-management systems, artificial intelligence tools, and other technologies.

Examples of Unprofessional Conduct

It is not possible to identify every behavior that may constitute unprofessional conduct. The following are representative examples and are not intended to be an exhaustive list:

- Academic dishonesty, fraud, falsification, or misrepresentation.
- Falsifying or altering patient, clinical, academic, or Program records.
- Knowingly providing false or misleading information to faculty, staff, preceptors, clinical sites, patients, or other University personnel.
- Misrepresenting oneself as a licensed or certified healthcare professional or failing to identify oneself appropriately as a PA student.
- Conduct that jeopardizes or demonstrates disregard for patient safety or welfare.
- Failure to follow appropriate supervision requirements or clinical-site policies.
- Unauthorized access to patient records, clinical areas, educational records, restricted areas, or confidential information.
- Violating patient confidentiality, HIPAA requirements, FERPA requirements, or other privacy obligations.
- Harassment, discrimination, retaliation, bullying, intimidation, threats, or other conduct prohibited by University policy.
- Disrespectful, abusive, threatening, hostile, or substantially disruptive behavior toward patients, classmates, faculty, staff, preceptors, or others.
- Significant or repeated failure to fulfill assigned academic, clinical, or professional responsibilities.
- Repeated unexcused absences or tardiness.
- Abandoning or leaving a required classroom, laboratory, clinical, or other educational activity without appropriate authorization.
- Failure to comply with established Program, University, or clinical-site requirements after appropriate notification.
- Inappropriate relationships or boundary violations involving patients, faculty, staff, preceptors, or others
- Improper use, intentional misuse, or abuse of University, Program, laboratory, clinical, or patient-care equipment.
- Conduct involving dishonesty, unsafe practice, significant ethical violations, or other behavior inconsistent with the responsibilities of a PA student or future healthcare professional.
- Violation of applicable federal, state, or local law when the conduct has a reasonable relationship to the student's responsibilities, patient safety, professional fitness, or participation in the Program.

Responsibility to Report Serious Concerns

Students share responsibility for maintaining a safe, ethical, and professional educational and clinical environment.

Students are expected to promptly report conduct that reasonably raises concerns regarding:

- Patient safety or welfare;
- Academic dishonesty or falsification;
- Harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or threats;
- Breaches of confidentiality or privacy;

- Impairment or conduct that creates an immediate safety concern; or
- Other serious ethical or professional misconduct.

Concerns should be reported to the appropriate faculty member, course coordinator, Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education, Program Director, or other appropriate University official based on the nature of the concern.

Students are not expected to investigate suspected misconduct. Reports should be made in good faith and should contain information that the student reasonably believes to be accurate.

Professional Appearance and Attire

Professional appearance is an expectation throughout enrollment in the PA Program. Students are expected to maintain a clean, neat, and professional appearance appropriate to a graduate professional program and healthcare environment.

When professional attire is required by the Program, students must wear Program-approved scrubs or professional/business casual attire, as directed by faculty. Professional/business casual attire includes items such as slacks, khakis, skirts or dresses of appropriate length, blouses, collared shirts, sweaters, cardigans, professional tops, and appropriate professional footwear.

Clothing that is excessively casual, revealing, torn, or otherwise inconsistent with a professional educational or healthcare environment is not considered appropriate professional attire. Examples include, but are not limited to, athletic wear, leggings worn as pants, sweatpants, pajama-style clothing, crop tops, clothing with inappropriate graphics or language, and excessively distressed or torn clothing.

Program-approved scrubs or professional/business casual attire are required when guests are present for PA Program activities, including guest speakers, recruiters, alumni, clinical partners, University representatives, accreditors, or other invited visitors. Faculty may designate specific attire for other educational or professional activities.

Students in the clinical phase are subject to these requirements as well as additional attire and appearance requirements contained in the Clinical Education Policies and established by assigned clinical sites.

General expectations include:

- Clothing and scrubs must be clean, in good repair, appropriately fitted, and suitable for the educational or patient-care environment.
- Undergarments, midriff, and excessive cleavage should not be visible.
- Clothing must permit safe and appropriate participation in educational and patient-care activities.
- Personal appearance and hygiene must be consistent with professional and infection-control expectations.
- Hair, facial hair, fingernails, jewelry, footwear, and other aspects of appearance must not interfere with safety, patient care, personal protective equipment, or infection-control requirements.
- Artificial nails are prohibited when inconsistent with infection-control requirements.
- Closed-toe footwear is required in laboratories, clinical settings, and other environments in which exposure or injury may occur.

- Students must comply with additional appearance or attire requirements established by the Program or assigned clinical sites.

A student whose attire or appearance does not meet applicable Program, safety, infection-control, or clinical-site requirements may be required to correct the issue before participating in the activity. If the issue cannot be corrected promptly, the student may be removed from the activity until the requirement is met.

Repeated or significant violations may be documented as a professionalism concern and addressed in accordance with Program policies related to professional conduct and student progression.

Student Identification²⁸

Students must accurately identify themselves as PA students in all clinical and patient-care environments.

An identification badge bearing the student's photograph and student designation will be provided following matriculation. Students must wear required identification during clinical experiences and other activities designated by the Program.

The student's name and designation as a physician assistant student must remain visible when interacting with patients.

Clinical sites may require additional identification, and students are responsible for complying with site-specific identification requirements.

Criticism of Colleagues

Professional relations among all members of the medical community should be marked with civility. Thus, scholarly contributions should be acknowledged, slanderous comments and acts avoided, and each person should recognize and facilitate the contributions of others to the community. The PA student will interact with all members of the health care team in a cooperative and considerate manner.

Social Media and Electronic Professionalism

Students are responsible for maintaining professional and ethical standards when using social media, messaging applications, electronic communication, online forums, and other digital platforms.

The same confidentiality, privacy, professionalism, and ethical requirements that apply in person also apply to electronic communication and social media.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Students must comply with HIPAA, FERPA, University confidentiality requirements, clinical-site requirements, and other applicable privacy laws and policies.

Students may not disclose confidential or protected information through social media or other electronic platforms.

²⁸ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.04

Sharing confidential NSU, HIPAA, or SCPE site information—including protected health information—is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Prohibited disclosures include, but are not limited to:

- Patient information or information regarding a patient-care encounter when the information could constitute protected health information;
- Photographs, audio recordings, or video recordings of patients or patient-care encounters unless specifically authorized as part of an approved educational activity and permitted under applicable privacy requirements;
- Confidential information regarding clinical sites, the University, the PA Program, classmates, faculty, staff, or others when the student is not authorized to disclose that information.

Under HIPAA, students can be held criminally or civilly liable for privacy and information security violations. Any monetary damages incurred as a result of a violation of HIPAA are the sole responsibility of the student.

Misrepresentation and Professional Boundaries

Students may not:

- Represent themselves as licensed or certified healthcare providers before obtaining the appropriate credentials;
- Use the NSU or PA Program name, logo, or identity in a manner that falsely suggests official authorization or endorsement;
- Use social media or electronic communication in ways that violate appropriate student-patient, student-preceptor, student-faculty, or other professional boundaries; or
- Engage in online conduct that violates applicable laws, University policies, Program policies, clinical-site requirements, or professional standards.

Students should recognize that publicly available electronic content may affect professional relationships and perceptions of professional judgment. Students are encouraged to use discretion and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their online presence.

Program Recommendation

Due to the professional nature of the PA career, the Program strongly recommends that students limit personal pictures or posts that could be perceived as inappropriate or unprofessional by the public, employers, or accrediting bodies. The Program discourages posting comments, photos, or videos that are disrespectful, derogatory, harassing, defamatory, or discriminatory toward peers, faculty, staff, preceptors, patients, or clinical partners. The Program also discourages criticizing colleagues, faculty, the Program, clinical sites, or NSU in a way that undermines professionalism or public trust. Finally, the Program discourages students from engaging in cyberbullying or hostile online interactions.

Consequences

Any student found violating confidentiality or engaging in inappropriate social media use will be subject to referral to the Student Progress Committee which may result in a corrective action, up to and including a disciplinary warning, suspension, or dismissal from the Program.

Technology in the Learning Environment

Technology used during classes, laboratories, simulations, assessments, or other Program activities must support the educational purpose of the activity.

Faculty may establish reasonable limitations on the use of cell phones, laptops, tablets, smart watches, artificial intelligence tools, or other electronic devices during educational activities.

Unless authorized by the faculty member responsible for the activity, students may not use electronic devices during instructional activities for unrelated purposes, including personal messaging, social media, entertainment, or other activities that interfere with participation or the learning environment.

Students should notify family members and other appropriate individuals of established methods for contacting them in the event of an emergency during Program activities. Students are instructed to give family/friends the main office phone number (918-444-5464) and program's email address (paprogram@nsuok.edu) for emergencies.

Recording of Educational Activities

Students may not audio record, video record, photograph, livestream, transcribe, or otherwise capture lectures, laboratories, simulations, demonstrations, class discussions, assessments, or other Program activities without specific authorization from the faculty member responsible for the activity.

Exception(s) may include:

- Recording or transcription provided as an approved accommodation through NSU Student Disability Services.

Authorized recordings and transcripts are for the student's personal educational use unless additional distribution is specifically permitted. They may not be shared, posted, reproduced, distributed, or otherwise made available to others without authorization.

Course materials, recordings, transcripts, assessments, or other Program content may be uploaded only to University-approved artificial intelligence platforms or other platforms specifically authorized by the Program.

Recording or photographing patients, standardized patients, cadavers, anatomical specimens, clinical encounters, examinations, assessments, or confidential information is prohibited unless specifically authorized as part of a Program-approved educational activity.

Addressing Professionalism Concerns

Professionalism is evaluated throughout the curriculum using applicable course professionalism rubrics, evaluation tools, and established course requirements. Students are responsible for meeting the professionalism expectations identified in individual course syllabi and assessment instruments.

Professionalism concerns may be addressed initially through feedback, counseling, documentation, course-based evaluation, or other appropriate educational intervention based on the nature and severity of the concern. When a professionalism concern is identified through a course professionalism rubric or

other assessment, the student will be evaluated and managed in accordance with the applicable course requirements and Program policies.

More serious concerns, repeated concerns, failure to demonstrate appropriate improvement, or alleged violations of established professional or ethical standards may be referred to the Student Progress Committee for review.

The Student Progress Committee will consider the nature and severity of the conduct, relevant circumstances, applicable course professionalism evaluations, prior concerns or interventions when appropriate, and the student's response. Actions will be taken in accordance with applicable Program and University policies and may include counseling, corrective action, remediation, warning, probation, suspension, dismissal, or other appropriate action.

Nothing in this policy limits the University's authority to address conduct under applicable University policies or to take immediate action when necessary to protect patient safety, student safety, the educational environment, or the University community.

Statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence:

To ensure that students are not substituting artificial intelligence for critical thinking or research skills, unless explicitly directed otherwise, the use of artificial intelligence is not to be used for any assigned work, formative assessments, or summative assessments. If discovered that students are using this platform without explicit permission from the Program Director or a faculty member, they will be presented to the Student Progress Committee for disciplinary action.

Student Records, Privacy, and Release of Information²⁹

The Physician Assistant Studies Program maintains student academic and Program records in accordance with Northeastern State University policy, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), applicable accreditation requirements, and other applicable laws and regulations. Student records and confidential information are maintained securely and are accessible only to individuals who are authorized to access the information for a legitimate educational or administrative purpose.

Access and Disclosure of Student Records

Personally identifiable information contained in a student's education record will not be disclosed to individuals or organizations outside the University without the student's written consent except when disclosure is permitted or required by FERPA, University policy, or applicable law.

FERPA permits disclosure of student information without prior consent in certain circumstances, including, as applicable, to:

- University officials and individuals acting on behalf of the University who have a legitimate educational interest;
- Program committees and other University personnel involved in the student's education, evaluation, progression, or administration of the Program;
- Accrediting organizations, including the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), when information is required for accreditation purposes;

²⁹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.16, A3.17, A3.18

- Organizations conducting authorized studies for or on behalf of the University;
- Clinical education partners or other entities performing services on behalf of the University when the disclosure is authorized under FERPA and necessary for a legitimate educational purpose; and
- Other individuals or entities when disclosure is otherwise permitted or required by law.

Only information reasonably necessary for the authorized purpose will be disclosed.

Requests from outside individuals or organizations that are not covered by an applicable FERPA exception require appropriate student authorization and will be handled in accordance with University procedures. Students wishing to authorize disclosure of their education records to a parent, family member, employer, or other third party should complete the University's designated consent or records-release process.

Program Data and External Organizations

The Program may provide student or graduate information to organizations involved in accreditation, educational assessment, certification, research, or Program evaluation, including ARC-PA, the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), and the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), when such disclosure is permitted by FERPA, University policy, or applicable law.

Whenever possible and appropriate for the intended purpose, information may be reported in aggregate or de-identified form.

Personally identifiable student information will not be released to professional organizations or other external entities solely because of their affiliation with the PA profession unless the student has authorized the disclosure or the disclosure is otherwise permitted by FERPA or applicable law.

Student Consent for Photographs and Selected Information

During Program orientation, students will be asked to complete a Student Consent and Release for Use of Picture and Select Data form. This authorization governs the specific photographs, information, and uses identified in the form.

This authorization is separate from disclosures of education records that are otherwise permitted or required under FERPA, University policy, accreditation requirements, or applicable law.

Student Health and Immunization Records³⁰

The PA Program does not routinely collect or maintain student immunization records, laboratory reports, or other medical records. Students are responsible for maintaining required health and immunization documentation and providing verification of compliance through the process designated by the Program and/or University.

The Program may maintain documentation verifying that a student has satisfied required health, immunization, screening, or clinical-site compliance requirements without retaining the underlying medical records whenever possible.

³⁰ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.16b, A3.18

In limited circumstances, the Program may need to receive and retain specific health-related documentation necessary to determine or document a student's eligibility to safely participate in Program activities or clinical education.

For example, following a positive tuberculosis (TB) screening result, the Program may need to receive and retain limited documentation related to medical evaluation and clearance, which may include:

- A TB Medical Clearance Form;
- A chest X-ray report; and/or
- A healthcare provider's written documentation of medical clearance.

When the Program needs to retain health-related documentation of this nature, the student will be informed of the information to be maintained and the purpose for retaining it. The Program will obtain the student's explicit written consent prior to retaining the health-related documentation.

Only the minimum information necessary for the identified educational, safety, or clinical-compliance purpose will be retained. Access will be restricted to authorized personnel with a legitimate educational or administrative need to know.

Health-related documentation retained by the Program will be maintained securely and separately from routine academic records to the extent practicable and will be handled in accordance with FERPA, University policy, and other applicable privacy requirements.

Program faculty and staff will not access or review a student's medical records for purposes unrelated to verifying compliance with established Program or clinical requirements.

Confidentiality and Security of Student Records

The Program takes reasonable measures to protect student records from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Access to student records is limited to individuals whose responsibilities require access for legitimate educational, administrative, accreditation, or other authorized purposes.

Student records may be maintained in electronic or physical form using University-approved systems or secure storage mechanisms.

Students are also responsible for protecting the confidentiality of information to which they are granted access and may not access, use, photograph, reproduce, share, or disclose another student's records or confidential information without authorization.

Additional information regarding student privacy, access to records, directory information, and authorization for release of education records is available through the [Northeastern State University FERPA Policy](#).

Student Work Policy

Students are advised against spending regular time at a job or student employment while a student in the PAS program due to the time commitment necessary to succeed in the program.

In order to avoid practices that might conflict with the professional and educational objectives of the PAS program, and to avoid practices in which students are substituted for regular staff, the following policy shall be in effect with regard to service work:

- Students will not be required to work for the program.³¹
- Students may not substitute for or function as didactic or clinical instructional faculty.³²
- Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences and skills may assist faculty in demonstration and laboratory sessions to share their knowledge and skills.
- Students may not be hired as employees for any private or public practice, clinic, or institution to perform any medical services during any time they are part of the Physician Assistant Studies Program including during the time the student is under the sponsorship of a specific practice, clinic, or institution during a SCPE.
- Students may not take the responsibility or place of qualified staff (clinical or administrative) in any medical setting.³³
- Students may not be given any payments, stipends or other remuneration for medical services performed as part of the Physician Assistant Studies Program.
- Students may volunteer their medical services to charitable, humanitarian or community services organizations on their own time. Such activities are not to be considered a component of the curriculum. Students may not represent themselves as PA students of NSU, and NSU accepts no liability from such activities. The student malpractice insurance does not cover non-curricular activities.

Student Travel to Required Rotation Sites³⁴

Students in the NSU Physician Assistant Studies Program are required to travel to assigned SCPE rotation sites. The following guidelines apply:

- Travel Distance
 - Students may be assigned to rotation sites located up to 300 miles from the Muskogee campus.
 - Assignment to sites will be based on program needs, accreditation standards, and clinical site availability.
- Travel and Housing Costs
 - All travel, housing, and related expenses incurred during rotations are the responsibility of the student.
 - The program does not provide reimbursement for travel, lodging, or meals.
- Housing
 - In some instances, students may be required to arrange their own housing for the duration of a rotation.
 - The program may provide general information about housing options near rotation sites but does not guarantee availability or assume responsibility for securing housing.
 - The program will make every effort to assign students to clinical sites in areas where they already have established housing; however, this cannot be guaranteed.
- Compliance and Professionalism

³¹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.02, ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14i

³² ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.03a

³³ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.03b

³⁴ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14j

- Students are expected to report to all assigned sites as scheduled, regardless of distance.
- Failure to meet travel obligations is considered a professionalism concern and may result in referral to the Student Progress Committee for review and action.

Health, Safety, and Clinical Compliance

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program must meet health, safety, and clinical compliance requirements necessary to participate in the didactic and clinical curriculum. These requirements are intended to protect students, patients, faculty, staff, and clinical partners and to ensure students remain eligible for required educational and supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs).

Students are responsible for completing all required screenings, documentation, training, and other compliance requirements by established deadlines and for maintaining compliance throughout enrollment.

Clinical sites may establish requirements in addition to those of the University or PA Program. The Program cannot guarantee placement at a clinical site that waives or modifies its established requirements for an individual student. Failure to meet Program or clinical-site requirements may limit a student's ability to participate in required educational activities and may affect progression or completion of the Program.

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks are mandatory to enhance the health and safety of patients, students, faculty, and staff in the academic and clinical environments, and to adhere to applicable healthcare regulations.

Following acceptance to the PA Program and completion of required enrollment steps, students must complete a criminal background check using the Program-designated vendor by the established deadline. Instructions will be provided prior to matriculation.

Admission to the PA Program is contingent upon satisfactory review of the required background check. Failure to complete the background check by the established deadline may result in withdrawal of the offer of admission.

Background-check reports are maintained electronically by the Program-designated vendor. Access is limited to the student and authorized University or Program personnel as necessary to review eligibility and compliance.

Following the initial background check, students are required to disclose convictions, guilty pleas, or pleas of no contest to criminal offenses, other than minor traffic violations, in accordance with Program and University requirements. Additional background checks may be required during enrollment when requested by a clinical site or otherwise necessary for participation in the curriculum.

A criminal history may affect a student's eligibility for placement at a clinical site. If a student is unable to satisfy the requirements of available clinical sites, the Program cannot guarantee an alternative

placement. Inability to complete required SCPEs may delay progression or prevent completion of the Program.

Students should also be aware that criminal history may affect eligibility for professional licensure or other credentials following graduation. Admission to or graduation from the PA Program does not guarantee eligibility for certification, licensure, credentialing, or employment.

Students with questions regarding how a criminal history may affect professional licensure are encouraged to contact the licensing authority in the jurisdiction in which they anticipate seeking licensure.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Impairing Substances

Students must comply with Northeastern State University policies and applicable laws governing alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, tobacco, and other impairing substances throughout enrollment in the PA Program.

Unlawful possession, use, distribution, or sale of alcohol or drugs is prohibited. Students must also comply with the Program's Drug Screening Requirements and any additional substance-related requirements established by clinical education sites.

Students may not participate in classroom, laboratory, simulation, patient-care, clinical, or other Program activities while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, misuse of prescription or nonprescription medications, or any other substance that may interfere with safe, professional, or effective performance.

Students who use prescription or nonprescription medications are responsible for ensuring that their use does not impair their ability to participate safely in Program activities. Students should not disclose medication information to PA Program faculty for purposes of interpreting a drug-screen result; such information should be provided directly to the testing vendor or Medical Review Officer as outlined in the Drug Screening Requirements.

NSU is a tobacco-free environment. Students must comply with University and clinical-site policies regarding smoking, vaping, tobacco, and nicotine products.

Suspected violations of University substance-use policies or concerns regarding impairment will be addressed in accordance with applicable University and Program policies. A student whose condition raises an immediate safety concern may be removed from an educational or clinical activity pending appropriate evaluation and review.

Students should be aware that drug- or alcohol-related criminal charges, convictions, or other conduct may affect eligibility for clinical placement, professional licensure, credentialing, or employment. Admission to or graduation from the PA Program does not guarantee eligibility for professional licensure.

Drug Screening Requirements

Students must remain compliant with Northeastern State University's drug-free policies throughout enrollment in the PA Program.

All students are required to complete a drug screen at matriculation using the Program-designated vendor. The cost of the initial screening is the student's responsibility and instructions are provided prior to matriculation. Additional drug screening may be required before or during Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs) based on Program or clinical-site requirements. Students are responsible for completing required screenings by established deadlines and for associated costs.

Required drug screens must result in a verified negative or otherwise compliant result following the testing vendor's applicable confirmation and Medical Review Officer (MRO) process. An initial positive or non-negative screen is not considered a confirmed positive until that process is complete. Students must respond promptly to requests from the testing vendor or MRO and provide any requested medical documentation directly to the appropriate testing or medical-review professional.

A confirmed positive drug screen violates the University drug-free policies. The student may be immediately restricted from patient-care or clinical activities and will be referred to the Student Progress Committee and/or the appropriate University process for review and action in accordance with applicable policies.

Students must also satisfy the drug-screening requirements of assigned clinical sites. The Program cannot guarantee placement at a site that waives or modifies its requirements. If a student is unable to meet the requirements of available clinical sites, progression in or completion of the Program may be affected.

Positive Drug Screen

An initial positive or non-negative drug screen will be reviewed through the testing vendor's established confirmation and medical review process. Students should provide information regarding prescription medications or other legitimate medical explanations directly to the testing vendor or Medical Review Officer rather than to PA Program faculty.

A confirmed positive drug screen may result in temporary restriction from patient-care or clinical activities while the matter is reviewed. The Program will consider the verified result, applicable University and clinical-site requirements, patient safety, and relevant circumstances.

A confirmed positive result may be referred to the Student Progress Committee and may result in counseling, additional evaluation or testing, corrective action, probation, restriction from clinical activities, or other action permitted under Program and University policy.

The Program cannot guarantee an alternative clinical placement when a student is unable to meet the drug-screening requirements of available clinical sites. Inability to complete required clinical experiences may affect progression in or completion of the Program.

Immunization And Health Screening Policy for NSU Physician Assistant Studies Students

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Immunizations

Students are subject to University immunization requirements upon enrollment. In addition, the PA Program requires students to maintain immunizations consistent with current recommendations for healthcare personnel.

³⁵ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.09a

Additionally, the program requires that all students maintain immunizations as recommended by the CDC for healthcare providers. The University cannot require the COVID-19 vaccination, but in an effort to protect the health and safety of our students, other providers, and the patients they see we strongly recommend that students are up to date on the most recent COVID-19 vaccine. Refusing this vaccine will not result in punitive actions by the program, but the student may not be able to progress in the program due to clinical site requirements regarding vaccines.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/recommended-vaccines/index.html>

All PA students must have proof of immunization to the recommended CDC vaccine preventable illnesses, to include Hepatitis B, influenza, MMR, varicella, tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, on record with the program prior to matriculation. Immunizations and health screenings must be updated prior to direct patient contact, before starting the clinical year of the program, and yearly thereafter for any student extending enrollment in the program.

- Although the meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine is not required by the PA program, it is *required* by the State of Oklahoma for students living in college-owned and operated residence halls. Therefore, students who are living on the Tahlequah campus must either provide written documentation of meningitis immunization or sign a waiver to indicate they have been informed about this disease and vaccine and have chosen not to be immunized. This form is provided by Student Health Services. Otherwise, the meningococcal vaccine is only for those who are routinely exposed to isolates of N. meningitidis.
- Flu vaccines will be expected to be completed at the appropriate time of each year the student is enrolled in the program.
- The COVID-19 vaccination may be required by rotation sites and if not properly vaccinated, may prevent a student from being assigned to that site. The program cannot guarantee that a student will satisfy requirements for completion of the degree without this and other vaccinations.

Facilities and hospitals may require additional immunizations and titers which students must obtain prior to starting SCPEs at those sites. Information regarding these additional requirements will be made available to students on the student SCPE tracking site.

Failure to comply with the immunization policy for the Physician Assistant Studies Program or any additional immunizations and titers for SCPEs may result in the inability to enter, continue with, or complete the program.

All costs incurred in complying with the above policies and the Tuberculosis Screening and Management Policy are the *responsibility of the student*.

The Program utilizes DISA Healthcare Technology to manage and monitor immunization and screening records. Students can refer to the DISA Healthcare Technology website for information regarding the collection, storage, use, processing, and disclosure of their data.

The immunization policy is subject to change at any time in order to comply with ARC-PA *Standards*, Northeastern State University policies, hospital policies, the CDC guidelines, or state and federal laws. The NSU Physician Assistant Studies Program will make every attempt to notify its students of these changes in a timely manner. Current guidelines and recommendations are reviewed annually at the faculty retreat.

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening and Management Policy

All students are required to complete TB screening upon matriculation and annually thereafter, using either a tuberculin skin test (TST) or interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA). In the event of a **positive TST or positive IGRA**, the following steps must be followed:

Procedure

1. Immediate Medical Evaluation
 - The student must **refrain from attending didactic courses in person (remote access to lectures and course material will be provided) or clinical rotations** until medically cleared.
 - The student must obtain a chest X-ray to rule out active tuberculosis.
 - The student must consult with their primary care provider or a public health authority to determine appropriate clinical follow-up and/or treatment.
2. Documentation
 - Results from the evaluation, including a chest X-ray report, TB Medical Clearance form, and provider letter of medical clearance, must be submitted to the Program's Clinical Director.
 - Students must provide **written documentation** of:
 - TB Medical Clearance Form
 - Chest X-ray report
 - Letter of medical clearance from healthcare provider
3. Ongoing Monitoring
 - If diagnosed with **latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI)**, the student may continue in the program with medical clearance from the student's provider, only if there is **no evidence of active TB**.
 - The student must comply with any ongoing monitoring or treatment plan as directed by their healthcare provider.
 - Annual TB Medical Clearance Form and letter of medical clearance from the student's healthcare provider must be completed in lieu of repeat TSTs or IGRAs.
4. Clinical Site Requirements
 - Some clinical rotation sites may have **additional documentation requirements** for students with a history of a positive TST or IGRA. It is the student's responsibility to comply with all clinical site policies. Failure to comply with clinical site requirements may prevent the student from progressing through the curriculum.
 - Confidentiality
 - All health records and evaluations will be maintained in accordance with HIPAA and FERPA regulations.
5. Non-Compliance
 - Failure to comply with this policy may result in **removal from didactic courses or clinical rotations** and referral to the **Student Progress Committee** for review, which may result in a remediation plan, deceleration, or dismissal from the program.

International Travel ³⁶

The NSU Physician Assistant Program does not currently offer international curricular components or student placements outside the United States. Should international curricular experiences be developed in the future, the Program will publish, make readily available, and consistently apply policies that align with:

- Current CDC health professionals' recommendations regarding international travel.
- All applicable state, federal, and host-country mandates related to health, safety, and professional practice.

³⁶ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.09b

- NSU institutional policies governing student travel and risk management.

Until such experiences are implemented, all required didactic and supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs) occur within the United States.

Prevention and Management of Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards ³⁷

Students may encounter blood, body fluids, infectious diseases, hazardous materials, sharps, chemicals, radiation, or other environmental hazards during their education.

The Program provides instruction regarding prevention of exposure, appropriate use of standard precautions and personal protective equipment, reporting requirements, and procedures to follow when an exposure occurs.

The program will require students to complete blood-borne pathogen and exposure training prior to orientation at matriculation and prior to the start of the clinical phase.

Blood-borne Pathogen (BBP) Exposure Prevention and Treatment

The best way to prevent exposure to a BBP, is to be informed. Needlesticks and mucus membrane exposures to biologic fluids occur approximately 800,000 times each year in the United States (CDC data). Important steps you can take to prevent disease include the following:

- Using appropriate personal protective equipment;
- Handling needles and other sharps safely;
- Avoiding recapping needles whenever possible;
- Disposing of contaminated sharps immediately in designated sharps containers;
- Using safety-engineered devices when available; and
- Following applicable infection-prevention and clinical-site procedures.

The program will require students to complete blood-borne pathogen training prior to orientation at matriculation and prior to the start of the clinical phase.

Any needlestick, cut, exposure to damaged skin, splash into the eyes, nose, or mouth, or any other incident that exposes the student to the contaminated material will be treated as an exposure incident. Contaminated material is any blood, tissue, or other body fluid that is potentially infectious.

Procedure Following an Exposure

Following a potential blood-borne pathogen exposure, the student must:

- 1. Immediately perform appropriate first aid.**
 - Wash needlestick injuries, cuts, and exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water.
 - Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water.
 - Irrigate exposed eyes with clean water, saline, or an appropriate eyewash solution.
- 2. Report the exposure immediately.**
 - During an SCPE, notify the clinical preceptor and follow the clinical site's occupational-exposure procedure.
 - Notify the Director of Clinical Education or Program Director as soon as possible.
 - During a Program-based activity, notify the supervising faculty member immediately.

³⁷ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standards A3.05a-c

3. Obtain prompt medical evaluation.

- Students should seek evaluation immediately through the clinical site's designated process, NSU Student Health Services, an urgent care center, emergency department, or other appropriate healthcare facility.
- Evaluation should not be delayed while waiting to contact Program faculty or obtain administrative approval.

4. Follow the recommendations of the evaluating healthcare provider regarding testing, post-exposure prophylaxis, treatment, and follow-up.

Management of occupational exposure to HIV should follow current U.S. Public Health Service and CDC recommendations. Because post-exposure prophylaxis may be time-sensitive, prompt evaluation is essential.

PA Program faculty do not provide medical evaluation, treatment, or post-exposure prophylaxis to enrolled students except when emergency assistance is necessary.

Students must complete any Program or clinical-site incident documentation required following an exposure. The Program does not require students to submit detailed medical records resulting from the evaluation unless specific documentation is necessary to establish eligibility to return to educational or clinical activities.

Financial Responsibility Following Exposure or Injury

PA students are students rather than University employees for purposes of their educational activities and are not covered by Workers' Compensation solely by virtue of participation in the PA curriculum.

Students are required to maintain health insurance as established by Program policy. Costs associated with evaluation, testing, treatment, medications, follow-up, copays, deductibles, coinsurance, or other expenses resulting from an exposure or injury are the responsibility of the student unless otherwise covered by the student's insurance or another applicable source.

OSHA and Environmental Hazards Prevention and Treatment

At the time of matriculation, students will receive a presentation on the federal laws overseen by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The presentation will also deliver content identifying environmental hazards present in the medical workplace and how/when to get treatment if exposure to such a hazard is encountered.

Students must comply with applicable safety requirements, including use of personal protective equipment and clinical-site procedures governing hazardous chemicals, radiation, infectious materials, and other identified hazards.

If an environmental or occupational exposure occurs, the student should:

- Remove themselves from ongoing exposure when safe to do so;
- Perform immediate first aid or decontamination as appropriate;
- Notify the supervising faculty member or clinical preceptor;
- Follow the emergency or exposure procedures of the University or clinical site;
- Seek appropriate medical evaluation when indicated; and

- Notify the Director of Clinical Education or Program Director of significant clinical exposures or injuries.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

At matriculation and prior to starting SCPEs, all students, without exception, will be responsible for completing HIPAA training and returning a completed certificate to the Program. The program will provide documentation to each SCPE site upon request. Any breach of patient confidentiality will result in the student being brought before the Student Progress Committee. In addition, violation of patient confidentiality may result in civil or criminal action against the student, and any expenses that are incurred will be at the sole expense of the student.

Personal Safety and Security ³⁸

Student safety and security is of utmost importance while on the NSU campus and at assigned SCPE sites. The program conducts routine site visits to evaluate the safety of students and faculty at clinical sites. If an incident occurs where you feel you are in danger, clearly communicate your distress by any means possible, remove yourself from the situation, and call 911. If on a SCPE you feel unsafe for any reason, you are to immediately contact the Director of Clinical Education or Program Director by phone or email.

Students should maintain situational awareness and use reasonable personal-safety practices, including:

- Parking in well-lit areas when possible;
- Using available security escorts or shuttle services when appropriate;
- Avoiding isolated areas when traveling alone;
- Securing laptops, electronic devices, and other valuables;
- Remaining aware of surroundings when entering or leaving clinical facilities; and
- Promptly reporting suspicious activity or safety concerns to the appropriate security personnel.

For the NSU Muskogee campus, the appropriate 24-hour contact number for Campus Police is **918-444-2468**. Calls to this main line will be routed to the appropriate campus officer.

³⁸ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A1.02e

Academic Standards

Overall Evaluation of Student Performance

The faculty of the PAS program are charged with the responsibility to determine the clinical and professional capabilities of every student. Throughout the program, formative and summative evaluations are performed to measure the student's competence and identify areas of weakness. Faculty advisors give support and advise the student to help achieve success based on individual evaluations.

The faculty, who are represented by the Student Progress Committee, are required to identify any student's failure to comply with published University and program policies and requirements deemed necessary for professional competency and make recommendations to the Program Director.

In addition to academic evaluations, the student's professional behaviors will be considered as part of the overall evaluation of student performance in the clinical setting. Specifically, each SCPE syllabus identifies and defines professional behaviors as an assessment on the mid- and end-of-rotation evaluations by the preceptor. Thus, training in professional behavior is integral to the education of the PA student. Poor evaluations indicating a problem in a student's professional behavior will be considered as academic issues and will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for action, up to and including dismissal.

Academic/Professional Misconduct

The hallmark for all physician assistant students is professional and academic integrity. The administration and faculty adhere to these standards and believe it is the obligation and responsibility of the program to impart these values to the student as an emerging professional. As such, the program enforces [*NSU's Policies for Academic Misconduct*](#)³⁹ and expects that the student is responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the requirements for academic integrity and classroom conduct.

Student Progress Committee

The Student Progress Committee (SPC) is a standing committee of the Physician Assistant Studies Program responsible for evaluating student academic, clinical, and professional progress and supporting student progression and success through early identification, review, and intervention. The SPC applies established Program policies related to progression, remediation, academic standing, and professionalism.

Membership and Meetings

The SPC is chaired by one of the Program's Co-Medical Directors. Membership is established in accordance with the Program Administrative Procedures. The SPC conducts regularly scheduled reviews of student progress and may meet on an ad hoc basis when a student concern requires timely review.

³⁹

https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/StudentServices/ConductandDevelopment/Handbook/default.aspx?_ga=2.75037653.639417202.1696339046-1471510025.1633707611book.aspx

Scope of Review

The SPC may review students for academic, clinical, or professional concerns, including concerns identified through:

- course or assessment performance;
- cumulative or semester academic performance;
- remediation or reassessment outcomes;
- SCPE performance and preceptor evaluations;
- end-of-rotation examination performance;
- identified competency or learning-outcome deficiencies;
- attendance or compliance concerns;
- professional behavior; or
- other information relevant to the student's ability to meet Program progression and completion requirements.

When reviewing a student, the SPC will consider the student's overall academic, clinical, and professional record and any prior remediation, probation, deceleration, or other progression actions.

Actions and Recommendations

In accordance with applicable Program policies, the SPC may implement or recommend actions including, but not limited to:

- continued academic progression;
- academic warning;
- remediation or additional academic support;
- academic or professionalism probation;
- repetition of a course, SCPE, assessment, or other curricular requirement;
- academic deceleration;
- leave of absence;
- referral for additional review or support;
- dismissal from the Program;
- progression into the clinical phase; or
- recommendation for graduation.

When Program policy requires a recommendation to the Program Director, the SPC will forward its recommendation and supporting information to the Program Director for final Program action.

Student Participation

Students whose academic, clinical, or professional progress requires formal SPC review may be asked to meet with the committee. Student appearances before the SPC will be arranged by the committee chair and confirmed in writing.

Temporary Suspension Pending Review

When an immediate concern presents a significant risk to patient safety, student safety, or the integrity of the educational or clinical environment, the Program Director may temporarily suspend a student from didactic or clinical activities pending formal SPC review.

Appeals

Students may appeal an applicable action or decision in accordance with the Appeals section of this handbook. Dismissal appeals follow the Program's Dismissal Appeals process; grade appeals follow the

NSU grade appeal process; and matters governed by Graduate College or University policy follow the applicable institutional appeal procedures.

Evaluation of Student Academic Work

Letter Graded Evaluation

All didactic phase courses will be evaluated by a letter grade according to the following grading scale. Each letter grade is worth a corresponding number of numerical points that factor into the grade point average. The grading scale is as follows:

- A** – Excellent, 4 grade points each semester hour
- B** – Above Average, 3 grade points each semester hour
- C** – Average, 2 grade points each semester hour
- D** – Below Average, 1 grade point each semester hour
- F** – Failure, 0 grade points each semester hour
- I** – Incomplete
- W** – Withdrawal
- AW** – Administrative Withdrawal
- P/F** – Pass/Fail
- N** – Grade not submitted

All clinical phase courses will be evaluated by a letter grade according to the following scale. Each letter grade is worth a corresponding number of numerical points that factor into the grade point average.

- A** – Excellent, 4 grade points each semester hour
- B** – Above Average, 3 grade points each semester hour
- C** – Average, 2 grade points each semester hour
- D** – Below Average, 1 grade point each semester hour
- F** – Failure, 0 grade points each semester hour
- I** – Incomplete
- W** – Withdrawal
- AW** – Administrative Withdrawal

Methods of Student Evaluation

Case Studies

Students may be assigned case studies as either individual or group work. These assignments are designed to develop critical reasoning skills and utilize team-based learning techniques to allow students to apply concepts learned in their courses to real-life scenarios they may encounter in their professional practice after graduation.

Clinical Notes

Students will be required to write clinical notes, which will be graded on both format and content related to patient encounters. These assignments may be incorporated into an OSCE or assigned as standalone tasks. Clinical note writing provides students the opportunity to demonstrate medical knowledge, apply clinical reasoning skills, and document patient encounters in a professional and appropriate manner.

End of Curriculum Examination (EOC)

Students will complete the End-of-Curriculum Examination (EOC), a comprehensive written assessment administered by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). This examination evaluates students' mastery of the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the program, providing an objective measure of their readiness for clinical practice and eligibility for certification.

End of rotation examinations (EOR)

Students will complete End-of-Rotation (EOR) examinations administered by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) at the end of each clinical rotation. These written assessments evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of core clinical concepts related to each rotation. EORs provide an objective measure of students' medical knowledge, critical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, and readiness to apply clinical principles in patient care.

Lab Practicals

Students will be required to complete laboratory practicals. During these examinations, they may be asked to identify anatomical structures on cadavers, models, photographs, or radiographs.

MCQ Examinations/Quizzes

Students will complete multiple-choice examinations and quizzes throughout their educational experience. These assessments are designed to evaluate their medical knowledge, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities in various topics.

OSCE/ Performance Checkoffs/Skills Checkoffs

Students will complete objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), performance checkoffs, and skills checkoffs. These assessments may be conducted with standardized patients or utilize classroom partners. During these experiences, students may be required to conduct a simulated patient encounter or demonstrate specific examination techniques, skills, or procedures. These evaluations are designed to assess students' clinical and technical skills, medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, and professional behaviors in a controlled environment.

Oral Presentations

In some courses, students may be required to deliver an oral presentation, often accompanied by a PowerPoint or similar visual aid. This format provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate not only their understanding of the subject matter but also their professionalism behaviors and interpersonal skills.

PACKRAT exams

The PACKRAT exam is a 225-question, multiple-choice examination that allows for student self-assessment and program evaluation. This examination is created by PA educators and exam experts and provides data to students and the program on student progress and how they compare with their peers. The examination provides reports by student, by class, by topic and task, including national comparative statistics. This examination is given at the conclusion of the didactic phase and again near the end of the clinical year. Completing the exam is mandatory and is an ungraded component of the curriculum.

Problem-Based Learning Exercises (PBLs)

Students will participate in problem-based learning (PBL) exercises, working in small groups to analyze real-world clinical or professional scenarios. These exercises allow students to apply course concepts,

develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and enhance teamwork and communication in a collaborative, guided environment.

Professional Behaviors

Professional behaviors will be assessed continuously in both the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Students will be evaluated on their ability to interact respectfully and effectively with patients, healthcare providers, and peers.

Reading Assignments/Homework/ Web-based Trainings

Students will be assigned reading or homework, which can include video- or web-based modules to be completed prior to class. These assignments ensure students are adequately prepared for participation in all in-class activities. These assignments may be assessed in various ways, including, but not limited to, in-class quizzes.

Research/Reflection Papers

Students will be assigned research papers or reflection papers throughout the program. These papers may vary in length and topic, as determined by the course instructor. Research papers provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate critical thinking, academic writing, information literacy, and the ability to communicate complex ideas in a structured, evidence-based manner. Papers may be evaluated on content, writing style, grammar, and overall presentation.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience Evaluation

During the clinical phase of the program, students are evaluated using a supervised clinical practice experience evaluation to assess medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities. Evaluation instruments include, but are not limited to, preceptor evaluations, patient logs, end of rotation examinations, and observed structured clinical exams (OSCEs). Detailed information regarding assessment and evaluation during the clinical phase is outlined in the *Clinical Education Handbook*.

Professional Development Oral Examination (PDAT)

The PDAT is an oral examination that will assess the students ability to apply professional development competencies in realistic clinical scenarios. Students will be evaluated on clinical judgement, ethical reasoning, professional integrity, advocacy, systems-based thinking, interprofessional communication, emotional resilience, and compassionate patient interaction. During this examination, students will be presented with 9 clinical scenarios in which the student will be required to think aloud and demonstrate how they would act in real time.

Examinations and Assignments

Examination Decorum

Students are expected to maintain decorum and demeanor that are consistent with accepted academic and professional standards during examinations.

Any student engaged in academic misconduct during an examination is subject to disciplinary action as described in the [Northeastern State University Student Handbook](https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/StudentServices/ConductandDevelopment/Handbook/default.aspx?_ga=2.75037653.639417202.1696339046-1471510025.1633707611book.aspx).⁴⁰

⁴⁰https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/StudentServices/ConductandDevelopment/Handbook/default.aspx?_ga=2.75037653.639417202.1696339046-1471510025.1633707611book.aspx

Personal Belongings

Personal belongings are not permitted at a student's testing area during an examination. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones and other communication devices
- Watches of any kind or other wearable electronic devices
- Tablets, computers, and other electronic devices
- Recording, audio, or filming devices
- Books, notes, study materials, and other unauthorized reference materials
- Backpacks, handbags, purses, and other bags
- Hats, caps, or other brimmed headwear, unless worn for religious purposes or pursuant to an approved accommodation
- Sunglasses, unless required pursuant to an approved accommodation
- Coats, jackets, and other outerwear not being worn during the examination
- Food and beverages, unless specifically permitted by the Program or pursuant to an approved accommodation

All personal belongings must be stored in the location designated by the examination proctor before the examination begins.

Once an examination has begun, students may not access their personal belongings until they have completed and submitted the examination and have been released from the testing environment by the proctor. Students may not access personal belongings during a break while an examination remains active, including scheduled breaks associated with standardized examinations.

Students who require access to medication, food, medical equipment, or another medically necessary item during an examination must make appropriate arrangements with the Program prior to the examination or through the applicable University accommodation process.

Leaving the Testing Room

Students are not permitted to leave the testing room while an examination is in progress except for:

- an emergency;
- a documented medical need or approved accommodation; or
- a scheduled break that is part of the administration of a standardized examination; or
- when otherwise authorized by the examination proctor.

Students leaving the testing room under an authorized circumstance must follow the directions of the examination proctor and may not access personal belongings, electronic devices, study materials, or other unauthorized materials while the examination remains active.

If a student leaves the testing room for any reason other than an authorized circumstance, the student's examination will be considered complete and submitted for final grading. The student may not re-enter the testing room or access belongings stored in the testing room until released to do so by the proctor.

Examination Procedures

- For PA Program course examinations, students may be given assigned seating at the discretion of the faculty.
- Once an examination has begun, faculty and proctors will not answer questions regarding examination content.
- Students will not be allowed to temporarily leave an examination after the first student completes the examination and leaves the testing site.
- Examination content is secure. Students are not permitted to view, copy, reproduce, photograph, record, retain, distribute, or otherwise access examination content except as authorized during administration of the examination.
- Examination item performance will be reviewed by the course coordinator and other faculty as appropriate. Based on item analysis, an examination item may be removed, re-keyed, or scored using more than one accepted response. As a result of post-examination item analysis, an individual student's examination score may increase, decrease, or remain unchanged.
- Within a reasonable timeframe, examination scores will be posted after all students have completed taking the examination and the question analysis has been conducted.
- No grading adjustments will be made for mismarked answers.
- The final course grade will be forwarded to the registrar and entered into NSU records.

Exam Disruption

Safety is the first priority. Examination security and academic integrity will be maintained to the extent reasonably possible without compromising student safety.

In the event that an examination is disrupted by a fire alarm, severe weather, electrical outage, building emergency, or other unexpected event, the instructor or proctor will provide instructions based on the circumstances.

Students must remain calm and comply promptly with instructions intended to protect student safety and examination security.

Unless otherwise directed by the instructor, proctor, emergency personnel, or University officials, students should follow these procedures during an evacuation or other disruption:

1. Immediately stop working when instructed or when an alarm requiring evacuation sounds.
2. Do not communicate with other students about the examination.
3. Leave examination materials at the testing station unless instructed otherwise.
4. Do not access personal belongings, including cell phones, electronic devices, notes, or study materials, while the examination remains active. Students should leave personal belongings in the testing room unless instructed otherwise for safety or evacuation purposes.
5. Exit the room in an orderly manner and proceed to the location designated by the instructor, proctor, or emergency personnel.
6. Remain with the examination group unless directed or permitted to leave.
7. Do not discuss examination content or communicate electronically with others while awaiting further instructions.
8. Students may return to the testing room only when authorized by the instructor, proctor, or appropriate University personnel.
9. If the examination can safely resume while examination security has been maintained, the instructor may allow students to continue the examination.

10. If the examination cannot be resumed or examination security has been compromised, the instructor will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include ending, rescheduling, or otherwise addressing the interrupted examination.

Failure to comply with instructions during an examination disruption may be addressed under applicable Program policies related to examination administration, academic integrity, or professional conduct.

Late to Examination Policy

If a student is late to an examination, they will be permitted to take their examination as long as no other student has completed the examination. If another student has already completed the examination, then the student may undergo a different assessment directed by the course instructor. The student will not be excused from other lectures or class activities to complete their examination. A written warning will be issued for the first offense. If the student is late for a second examination, the student will undergo an assessment directed by the course instructor for a maximum score of 70%. Any student who is late for 2 or more examinations (in the didactic phase) will be referred to the Student Progress Committee.

Missed Assessments and Assignment Deadlines

Students are expected to complete examinations, practical assessments, assignments, and other required course activities on the dates and by the deadlines established by the Program and course faculty. Because of the sequential and intensive nature of the PA curriculum, scheduled assessment dates and deadlines will not ordinarily be changed for individual students except as provided by this policy, an approved accommodation, or applicable University policy.

Notification of Absence

A student who anticipates being unable to attend a scheduled examination, practical assessment, or other required assessment must notify the Director of Didactic Education or Director of Clinical Education, as applicable, before the scheduled assessment begins.

When an emergency or other circumstance makes advance notification impossible, the student must notify the Program as soon as reasonably possible.

Failure to provide timely notification may be considered when determining whether a makeup assessment will be permitted.

Circumstances Supporting a Makeup Assessment

Requests for a makeup assessment will be considered individually based on the circumstances presented.

Circumstances that may support approval include, but are not limited to:

- illness or injury of the student;
- hospitalization or other medical emergency involving the student;
- an accident or emergency occurring while the student is traveling to the assessment;
- death, funeral, serious illness, or significant emergency involving an **immediate family member** (spouse/partner; parent; child; sibling; step-relatives; in-laws; grandparents; grandchildren).;
- an approved University absence or accommodation; or

- another extraordinary circumstance that, in the judgment of the Program, reasonably prevented the student from completing the assessment as scheduled.

The Program may require reasonable documentation supporting the absence.

Routine or foreseeable personal activities are not approved reasons for rescheduling an assessment. Examples include vacations, elective appointments that could reasonably be scheduled at another time, recreational activities, weddings, graduations, celebrations, and other planned personal events. Students should not make travel arrangements or other commitments that conflict with scheduled examinations, assessments, or required Program activities. A conflict created by a planned personal event does not obligate the Program to provide an alternate examination date, make-up assessment, or extended deadline.

Determination and Appeal

The Director of Didactic Education or Director of Clinical Education, as applicable, will determine whether a makeup assessment is approved based on the individual circumstances and any supporting documentation.

A student whose request is denied may submit an appeal to the Program Director. The Program Director's decision is final **at the Program level**.

Nothing in this policy limits a student's rights under applicable University policies or procedures, including applicable grievance, accommodation, or grade-appeal processes.

Makeup Assessments

When a makeup assessment is approved:

- The date, time, location, and format of the makeup assessment will be determined by the Program Director, Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education, course coordinator, or designee.
- The makeup assessment may differ in format or content from the original assessment while evaluating the same course objectives or competencies.
- Students are expected to complete the makeup assessment at the time assigned by the Program.

When a makeup examination or other graded assessment is **not approved**, the student will receive a score of zero for the missed assessment unless otherwise required by applicable University policy.

Missed Assignment Deadlines

Deadlines for papers, projects, and other assignments are established by the course coordinator and course syllabus. Students who are unable to meet an assignment deadline because of an emergency or other extraordinary circumstance must notify the appropriate faculty member or Program director as soon as reasonably possible.

Approval of an extension and any applicable grading consequences will be determined in accordance with the course syllabus, this policy, and applicable University policies.

Student Progression and Standing⁴¹

Physician assistant education is competency-based. Students are expected to demonstrate satisfactory academic and professional progress throughout the curriculum and must successfully complete each required course and curricular component in order to progress in the Program.

To remain in good academic standing and progress in the Program, students must meet the following standards:

- Students must maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.
- A student whose cumulative graduate GPA falls below 3.0 will be subject to applicable Graduate College requirements in addition to PA Program academic progression policies.
- A final course grade below C constitutes failure of the course. Failure of a Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) constitutes a course failure.
- Students must achieve a Pass, Satisfactory, or other designated minimum performance standard on non-letter-graded assessments, assignments, or curricular requirements for which successful completion is required.
- Performance below an established minimum standard on an individual examination, assignment, practical assessment, or other graded activity constitutes an academic deficiency and may require faculty consultation, remediation, or other academic intervention as specified by the course syllabus or Program policy.
- An individual assessment deficiency does not, by itself, constitute failure of the course unless otherwise specified by the course syllabus or Program policy.
- A final course grade below C cannot be remediated through reassessment or additional coursework within the completed course. Any opportunity to repeat the course or continue in the Program following a course failure will be determined by the Student Progress Committee in accordance with applicable Program progression, deceleration, and dismissal policies.

Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition⁴²

Definitions

Delayed Graduate

A delayed graduate is a student who requires additional time beyond the original cohort's scheduled program completion or graduation date but remains a member of the original matriculating cohort.

Delayed graduation does not, by itself, constitute deceleration or attrition.

Delayed graduation may result from:

- remediation or reassessment;
- repetition of a didactic course;
- resolution of an incomplete grade;

⁴¹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14a

⁴² ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14d

- repetition or completion of an SCPE;
- completion of another type of outstanding curricular requirement;
- a temporary delay in progression;
- an approved leave of absence that does not require reassignment to a subsequent cohort.

A delayed graduate must remain eligible to complete all Program requirements within the applicable 48-month maximum completion timeframe.

Deceleration

Deceleration is the loss of a student from the entering cohort who remains matriculated in the PA program. A decelerated student remains eligible to continue in the PA Program with the designated subsequent cohort and is not required to reapply through the PA Program admissions process.

Depending on the duration of the interruption, a decelerated student may be required to complete applicable institutional readmission through the Graduate College or re-enrollment requirements before resuming coursework. Institutional readmission through the Graduate College or re-enrollment for administrative purposes does not constitute reapplication through the PA Program's competitive admissions process.

Deceleration may occur during either the didactic or clinical phase and may result from academic or non-academic circumstances. Deceleration does not permit a student to complete the curriculum on a reduced or part-time course load.

A student who decelerates is considered attrition from the cohort from which the student decelerated and will subsequently be tracked with the cohort with which the student re-enters.

Academic Deceleration

Academic deceleration may occur when a student cannot appropriately continue with the current cohort because of academic concerns but is permitted to continue in the Program with a subsequent cohort.

Academic deceleration requires approval of the Student Progress Committee (SPC) and is not guaranteed. A student may receive only one academic deceleration opportunity during enrollment in the PA Program.

Circumstances may include:

- failure to meet academic or clinical progression requirements;
- unsuccessful remediation;
- failure to demonstrate required competencies
- a Student Progress Committee determination that the student may continue in the Program but cannot appropriately progress with the current cohort.

Academic Deceleration During the Didactic Phase

A student approved for academic deceleration during the didactic phase will restart the didactic curriculum with the next academically appropriate cohort.

Once academic deceleration is approved:

- the student is not required to reapply for admission to the PA Program;
- re-entry with the designated subsequent cohort is approved provided the student completes any applicable institutional readmission through the Graduate College or re-enrollment requirements and continues to meet all other Program and University requirements;
- the student will be required to repeat all didactic courses, including courses previously completed successfully as repetition is necessary to preserve curricular sequence, maintain or demonstrate competency, and support successful progression with the subsequent cohort;
- the student will be placed on continuous academic probation upon re-entry for the remainder of the program; and
- the student remains subject to all Program academic progression and dismissal requirements.

A student who has academically decelerated may be subject to dismissal by the Student Progress Committee for subsequent failure to meet Program academic progression requirements.

Academic Deceleration During the Clinical Phase

Academic deceleration during the clinical phase requires approval of the Student Progress Committee and is not guaranteed.

Once academic clinical deceleration is approved:

- the student is not required to reapply through the PA Program admissions process;
- the student may be required to complete applicable institutional readmission through the Graduate College or re-enrollment requirements before resuming the curriculum;
- the student will be placed on continuous academic probation upon re-entry for the remainder of the program;
- any unsuccessful SCPE or other required curricular component must be successfully repeated or remediated;
- previously completed SCPEs and other curricular requirements will not automatically be repeated solely because of deceleration; and
- the Student Progress Committee will establish an individualized re-entry plan identifying the appropriate point of re-entry and any additional SCPEs, courses, assessments, or other curricular requirements that must be repeated.

The Student Progress Committee may require repetition of previously completed curricular components when necessary because of the nature of the academic or clinical deficiency, time elapsed, curricular sequencing, competency requirements, or other educational considerations.

A student who has academically decelerated remains subject to all Program academic progression and dismissal requirements. Subsequent failure to meet Program requirements may result in dismissal from the Program.

Non-Academic Deceleration

Non-academic deceleration occurs when a student who is otherwise eligible to continue cannot remain with the current cohort because of an approved leave of absence or other non-academic interruption.

Examples include:

- medical or personal leave;
- military leave;
- family circumstances; or
- another approved interruption that prevents continued progression with the current cohort.

Non-academic deceleration does not, by itself, constitute academic deficiency, academic probation, or disciplinary action.

The Program will establish the student's appropriate point of re-entry and determine whether previously completed curricular components remain valid. Previously completed coursework or clinical experiences will not automatically be repeated solely because of non-academic deceleration. Repetition may be required when necessary because of curricular sequencing, elapsed time, competency requirements, prerequisites, or other applicable Program or University requirements.

Non-Academic Deceleration During the Didactic Phase

Because the didactic curriculum is sequential and required courses are generally offered once each academic year, a student is decelerated when an interruption prevents continued progression with the original cohort and requires the student to resume the curriculum with a subsequent cohort.

A brief interruption that can be accommodated without disrupting the required curricular sequence does not constitute deceleration. If completion is delayed but the student remains with the original cohort, the student may instead be classified as a delayed graduate.

Following non-academic didactic deceleration, the Student Progress Committee will determine the student's appropriate point of re-entry and any coursework or other curricular requirements that must be repeated.

Non-Academic Deceleration During the Clinical Phase

A student is decelerated during the clinical phase when the student is formally reassigned from the original cohort's clinical curriculum to the clinical sequence of a subsequent cohort.

A clinical-phase leave of absence of three consecutive months or less may result in delayed graduation if the student can return and complete the remaining curriculum without reassignment to another cohort.

A clinical-phase leave of absence exceeding three consecutive months requires deceleration to the next academically appropriate cohort.

Clinical deceleration does not automatically require repetition of the entire clinical phase. The Program will determine which previously completed SCPEs, courses, assessments, and other curricular requirements remain valid.

Attrition

Attrition is the permanent loss of a student from a matriculating cohort.

Attrition includes:

- voluntary withdrawal;
- dismissal;
- other permanent separation from the Program;
- failure to return from an approved leave of absence; and
- deceleration to a subsequent cohort.

A student who decelerates is considered attrition from the original cohort, even though the student remains approved to continue in the PA Program with a subsequent cohort.

A delayed graduate is not considered attrition from the original cohort unless the student is subsequently decelerated, withdraws, is dismissed, or otherwise permanently separates from the Program.

Academic Consequences of Academic Deceleration

A student who is decelerated for academic reasons will be placed on continuous academic probation upon re-entry and will remain subject to regular review by the Student Progress Committee.

A student who has academically decelerated is ineligible for:

- PA Program honorific awards;
- scholarships administered by the PA Program;
- leadership positions within the PA student society; and
- PA Program-funded student travel.

Repeated Coursework and Financial Responsibility

Students are responsible for applicable tuition, fees, and other educational expenses associated with repeated coursework, SCPEs, or other curricular requirements.

Eligibility for financial aid is determined separately by the NSU Office of Student Financial Services. Repeated coursework, leave of absence, delayed graduation, or deceleration may affect satisfactory academic progress, attempted credit hours, enrollment status, maximum financial aid timeframe, and eligibility for federal or other financial assistance.

Students whose progression requires repeated coursework or deceleration are responsible for consulting with Student Financial Services regarding the financial implications of the change.

Academic eligibility to continue in the PA Program does not guarantee continued eligibility for financial aid.

Graduate Academic Forgiveness and Repeated Coursework

Repeated graduate coursework is subject to the NSU Graduate College Academic Forgiveness Policy in effect at the time the coursework is repeated.

The application of Graduate Academic Forgiveness to repeated coursework does not alter PA Program progression, remediation, competency, probation, or deceleration requirements.

Curricular Requirements Following Deceleration

Following deceleration, the Student Progress Committee will establish an individualized re-entry plan identifying the student's appropriate point of re-entry and any courses, SCPEs, assessments, or other curricular components that must be repeated.

Previously completed curricular requirements will not automatically be repeated solely because a student has decelerated, except when repetition is specifically required under the Program's academic didactic deceleration policy.

Otherwise, repetition may be required when necessary because of:

- the academic or clinical deficiency that resulted in deceleration;
- curricular sequencing or prerequisite requirements;

- the amount of time elapsed since the curricular component was completed;
- the need to maintain or demonstrate current competency; or
- other applicable Program, University, accreditation, or regulatory requirements.

Academic consequences associated with repeated coursework, including calculation of the graduate GPA and application of academic forgiveness, are governed by applicable University and Graduate College policies.

Financial responsibility and financial aid eligibility for repeated coursework are governed separately by applicable University and financial aid policies.

Voluntary Withdrawal ⁴³

A student who voluntarily withdraws from the program for any reason must re-enter the admissions process. Requests to re-enter the program following a voluntary program withdrawal will be determined by the Admissions Committee. All medical and emergency withdrawals will follow NSU's policy.⁴⁴

Program Dismissal ⁴⁵

Dismissal from the PA Program may occur when a student fails to meet academic, clinical, professional, or other requirements necessary for progression or Program completion. Students who fail to meet Program requirements will be reviewed in accordance with the applicable progression, remediation, probation, deceleration, and other applicable Program policies.

Grounds for Dismissal

Circumstances that may support dismissal include, but are not limited to:

Academic or Clinical Grounds

- Failure to meet applicable Graduate College academic-standing requirements, including failure to restore the cumulative graduate GPA to the required minimum within the applicable probationary period.
- Failure of a repeated required course or SCPE, or inability to successfully complete a required course or SCPE under an approved progression or re-entry plan.
- Repeated academic or clinical deficiencies demonstrating an inability to meet Program progression requirements, including accumulation of three didactic course failures.
- Failure to demonstrate required Program competencies after required remediation, reassessment, or other opportunities provided under applicable Program policy.
- Failure to successfully complete required remediation, reassessment, or curricular requirements within established Program timelines.
- Inability to complete all Program requirements within the maximum Program completion timeframe.

⁴³ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standards A3.14e

⁴⁴ <https://policies.nsuok.edu/StudentAffairs/MedicalorEmergencyWithdrawal.aspx>

⁴⁵ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14f

- Failure to meet academic or clinical progression requirements following academic deceleration or another approved progression plan.

Clinical-phase dismissal considerations, including SCPE and end-of-rotation examination deficiencies, are addressed in the Clinical Education Handbook.

Professional or Disciplinary Grounds

Dismissal may also be considered for serious or repeated violations of professional, ethical, safety, or conduct expectations, including:

- academic or professional misconduct;
- dishonesty, falsification, or misrepresentation of academic, clinical, or patient-care information;
- conduct that jeopardizes patient, student, faculty, staff, or public safety;
- breach of patient confidentiality or other privacy requirements;
- serious or repeated violations of the Program's Professional Conduct Policy;
- failure to comply with required health, safety, clinical-site, or compliance requirements when the noncompliance prevents continued participation or progression;
- repeated unexcused absences, tardiness, or failure to attend required Program or clinical activities; or
- other serious or repeated professional conduct demonstrating failure to meet the professional behaviors required for progression and entry-level PA practice.

Decision-Making Process

Students with academic, clinical, or professional concerns that may warrant dismissal will be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for review.

The SPC will consider the student's overall academic, clinical, and professional record, including the nature and severity of the concern, prior deficiencies, remediation or reassessment efforts, probation or deceleration history, and other relevant circumstances.

Following review, the SPC may recommend an appropriate action to the Program Director, including continued progression, remediation, probation, deceleration, or dismissal.

The Program Director will review the SPC recommendation and determine the final Program action. A student who is dismissed will receive written notification of the decision and applicable appeal procedures.

When an immediate concern presents a significant risk to patient safety, student safety, or the integrity of the educational or clinical environment, the Program Director may temporarily suspend the student from didactic or clinical activities pending SPC review.

Effect of Dismissal

Dismissal terminates the student's eligibility to continue in the PA Program. Any resulting University or Graduate College enrollment status will be governed by applicable institutional policies.

A student dismissed from the PA Program who later seeks admission must reapply through the regular competitive admissions process and is not guaranteed readmission.

Appeal

A student may appeal a Program dismissal in accordance with the Dismissal Appeals policy.

Academic Monitoring

If a didactic or clinical student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.5, the Program will initiate student support measures. This support will be customized to suit each student's unique needs and challenges, but at a minimum will consist of an initial meeting with his or her advisor and additional tutoring as necessary.

Academic Probation

Academic probation is a formal notification from the Student Progress Committee of unsatisfactory academic progress and occurs when a student fails a course by receiving a final course grade lower than a "C" during the academic program and/or obtains a cumulative GPA below the minimum 3.0 GPA during any semester of the academic program. Academic probation ends when a student successfully repeats the failed course and/or achieves the required minimum GPA of 3.0 for the probationary period.

Please note that for any student who has been placed on academic probation and is recommended to decelerate for academic reasons, that student will remain on continuous academic probation with the PA program for the duration of their enrollment and will be subject to regular review by the Student Progress Committee. Once the student's cumulative GPA reaches the retention standard of 3.0, they will be in good academic standing with the institution.

Academic Readmission

Students returning after an approved leave of absence or deceleration may be required to complete applicable institutional readmission through the Graduate College and University re-enrollment requirements. These administrative requirements do not require reapplication to the PA Program.

Students who have been dismissed from the PA Program must reapply through the regular competitive admissions process and are not guaranteed readmission.

See the Leave of Absence Policy; Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy; and applicable University policies for additional requirements.

For information on dismissals and refunds, consult the [NSU Student Handbook](#)⁴⁶ and the NSU [refund policy](#) published on the website.^{47, 48}

⁴⁶https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/StudentServices/ConductandDevelopment/Handbook/default.aspx?_ga=2.111089986.639417202.1696339046-1471510025.1633707611

⁴⁷ <https://offices.nsuok.edu/financialaid/FinancialAidPolicies/RefundPolicyWithdrawalPolicy.aspx>

⁴⁸ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A1.02h

Completion Deadlines ⁴⁹

The PA Program curriculum is designed to be completed according to the published curricular sequence. Students must successfully complete all required curricular components and remain eligible for completion within the Program's maximum 48-month completion timeframe.

Didactic Phase

The didactic phase is designed to be completed in four semesters. All required didactic coursework must be successfully completed before a student begins Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs).

Remediation, reassessment, resolution of an incomplete grade, or another temporary interruption may delay a student's progression into the clinical phase. A delay that can be accommodated without requiring reassignment to the curricular sequence of a subsequent cohort may result in delayed graduation.

When an interruption prevents the student from continuing in the required curricular sequence with the student's current cohort, the student's progression will be addressed in accordance with the Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy.

Clinical Phase

The clinical phase consists of seven core SCPEs and one elective SCPE. Each SCPE is six weeks in duration. The Summative Seminar course is completed during the final portion of the curriculum and includes the Program's summative assessment process.

Remediation, repetition or completion of an SCPE, an approved leave of absence, or completion of another outstanding curricular requirement may extend a student's clinical-phase completion date.

A clinical-phase interruption that can be accommodated without reassignment to a subsequent cohort may result in delayed graduation. An interruption requiring reassignment to the clinical sequence of a subsequent cohort constitutes deceleration and will be managed in accordance with the Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy.

Graduation and Commencement

Students must complete all Program and University degree requirements before the degree may be conferred.

Eligibility to participate in a University commencement ceremony is governed by applicable University requirements. When Program completion is delayed, the timing of commencement participation does not determine whether the student is classified by the Program as a delayed graduate or as having decelerated.

Leave of Absence

Approved leaves of absence are governed by the Leave of Absence Policy and the Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy.

⁴⁹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14b

During the didactic phase, because required courses are sequential and generally offered once each academic year, a leave that prevents continued progression with the student's current cohort may require deceleration.

During the clinical phase, the effect of a leave on progression will be determined according to the duration of the interruption, remaining curricular requirements, availability and sequencing of SCPEs, and the requirements established in the Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy.

An approved leave of absence does not extend the Program's maximum 48-month completion timeframe unless otherwise required by applicable law or University policy.

Incomplete Grades

A grade of Incomplete (I) may be assigned when circumstances prevent determination of a final course grade by the end of the enrollment period. An Incomplete is not intended to provide additional time for a student who has simply failed to complete assignments or other course requirements by established deadlines.

Circumstances that may support assignment of an Incomplete include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness, emergency, or other approved circumstance that prevents the student from completing required coursework;
- completion of required remediation or reassessment that extends beyond the end of the enrollment period;
- an unavoidable delay in completion or receipt of required clinical documentation;
- a delay in receipt of a required preceptor evaluation or other evaluation that is outside the student's control;
- outstanding clinical logs, documentation, assessments, or other required SCPE components that must be reviewed or completed before a final grade can be determined; or
- another circumstance in which the course coordinator determines that the student has not yet completed all requirements necessary for assignment of a final grade.

Failure to complete assignments by established deadlines, in the absence of an approved or otherwise qualifying circumstance, does not constitute sufficient reason for assignment of an Incomplete.

A student who receives an Incomplete must complete all outstanding requirements within the timeframe established by the Program and applicable University policy. An Incomplete that is not resolved within the determined timeframe will be converted to the grade required by University policy.

Incomplete Grades During the Clinical Phase

A student may receive an Incomplete for a SCPE when all requirements necessary to determine the final course grade have not been completed or received by the end of the rotation or enrollment period.

Examples include outstanding preceptor evaluations, required clinical logs or documentation, remediation or reassessment activities, or other required SCPE components.

When the outstanding requirements are completed and reviewed, the Incomplete will be replaced with the appropriate final course grade based on the student's performance and successful completion of all SCPE requirements.

An Incomplete does not guarantee successful completion of the SCPE. After all outstanding requirements are completed and reviewed, the student must meet all requirements and minimum performance standards established for successful completion of the SCPE. If those requirements are not met, the final grade earned under the applicable SCPE grading policy will be assigned, and the student will be subject to the Program's policies governing SCPE failure and academic progression..

Depending on the circumstances leading to the Incomplete, the student's academic performance, or the effect on progression, the Student Progress Committee may be involved in determining the appropriate academic or progression plan.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted when significant circumstances temporarily prevent a student from continuing in the PA Program. A leave of absence constitutes formal authorization for an interruption in progression but does not waive or eliminate curricular or competency requirements required for completion of the Program.

Medical and personal leaves of absence may ordinarily be approved for a period not exceeding one academic year. Military leave is governed separately as described below and is subject to applicable University policy and federal and state law.

The effect of a leave of absence on the student's cohort status, anticipated completion date, and curricular progression will be determined in accordance with the Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy.

A leave that can be accommodated without reassignment to a subsequent cohort may result in delayed graduation. When an interruption prevents continued progression with the student's current cohort and requires reassignment to a subsequent cohort, the student will be considered decelerated in accordance with Program policy.

A change in the anticipated Program completion date may delay graduation, eligibility to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE), and eligibility for professional licensure.

Requesting a Leave of Absence

Except when circumstances make advance notice impracticable, a student requesting a medical or personal leave of absence must submit a written request to the Program Director. The request should identify the reason for the leave and, when reasonably possible, the anticipated duration of the absence.

The Program may request appropriate supporting documentation when necessary to evaluate the request or establish conditions for safe and effective return to the curriculum.

Until a leave has been formally approved, students should continue to attend scheduled curricular activities and fulfill academic responsibilities to the extent reasonably possible.

A leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of avoiding academic consequences, including an anticipated course failure or other academic progression action.

Effect on Enrollment and Progression

Students taking a leave of absence must complete all applicable University and Graduate College withdrawal, enrollment, or administrative requirements.

Depending on the duration of the leave, a student may become inactive with the Graduate College and may be required to complete institutional readmission through the Graduate College or re-enrollment procedures before returning. Completion of an institutional readmission or re-enrollment process does not constitute reapplication through the PA Program's competitive admissions process.

The Program will determine the student's appropriate point of re-entry in accordance with the Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy. Previously completed coursework, SCPEs, or other curricular requirements will not automatically be repeated solely because of a medical or personal leave. Repetition may be required when necessary because of curricular sequencing, elapsed time, competency requirements, prerequisites, or other Program or University requirements.

Students returning from leave are subject to applicable Program and University policies and curricular requirements in effect at the time of re-entry, except where otherwise required by applicable law or University policy.

Return From Leave

A student must notify the Program Director in writing of the intent to return at least 20 business days before the anticipated return date, unless a shorter notice period is approved by the Program Director. This notice period allows the Program to establish the student's re-entry plan and complete any necessary Program or University processes before the student resumes academic or clinical activities.

The Program may require documentation reasonably necessary to support return to participation when applicable, such as documentation establishing the student's ability to safely resume required academic or clinical activities. Any such requirements will be administered consistent with applicable University policies and accommodation requirements.

Failure to return from an approved leave or to communicate with the Program regarding continued absence may result in withdrawal or other action in accordance with applicable Program and University policies.

Financial Responsibility

Students are responsible for understanding the financial consequences associated with a leave of absence, including potential effects on tuition, financial aid, enrollment status, and student loan obligations.

It is the student's responsibility to consult with the appropriate University financial services offices regarding the financial implications of an approved leave and any subsequent re-enrollment, repeated coursework, or extension of the Program completion date.

Military Leave

The PA Program's Military Leave Policy is currently under institutional review.

Until that review is complete and a Program-specific policy is formally approved, military leave, return from military service, and readmission will be administered in accordance with applicable University policy and federal law and guidance.

When military service interrupts a student's progression through the PA curriculum, the Program will work with the appropriate University offices to determine the student's enrollment status, appropriate point of return, and any necessary curricular reintegration requirements consistent with applicable University and federal requirements.

Military service will not, by itself, be considered an academic deficiency or disciplinary matter. Any effect of military leave on the student's cohort status or progression will be addressed in accordance with applicable University and federal requirements and, where appropriate, the Program's Delayed Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Policy.

Remediation Policies⁵⁰

Remediation for a Failed Course - Didactic

Students are expected to meet the academic and professional standards of the PA Program throughout the didactic phase. When a student does not meet required academic or professional expectations, the Student Progress Committee may require an individualized remediation or progression plan.

A remediation plan may include, but is not limited to:

- reassessment of identified areas of deficiency;
- referral to appropriate student support services;
- directed or self-directed study;
- tutoring or other academic support, which may be at the student's expense; or
- other activities determined by the Student Progress Committee to be appropriate for correction of the identified deficiency.

A final failing course grade cannot be corrected through remediation alone. When a student fails a didactic course, the Student Progress Committee will review the student's academic performance and determine the appropriate progression action, which may include probation, course repetition, deceleration, or dismissal in accordance with applicable Program policies.

⁵⁰ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14c

If the Student Progress Committee permits the student to repeat the failed course, the student will enroll in the same course, using the same course name and course number, when the course is next offered or at another academically appropriate time determined by the Program. The repeated course is subject to the Graduate College Academic Forgiveness Policy in effect at the time of repetition.

The Student Progress Committee may also require remediation of identified deficiencies before, during, or in conjunction with course repetition. Successful completion of remediation activities does not replace the requirement to successfully complete a failed course when course repetition is required.

A student who accumulates failures in three didactic courses before completion of the didactic phase will be subject to review by the Student Progress Committee and may be dismissed or academically decelerated in accordance with the Program's academic progression and deceleration policies.

All required didactic courses must be successfully completed before a student begins Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences.

Information related to performance in the clinical phase is found in the *Clinical Education Handbook*.

*Remediation for a Failed Exam - Didactic*⁵¹

For Clinical Anatomy, Clinical Assessment and Counseling I-III, Clinical Medicine I-III, Laboratory Medicine and Radiologic Principles I-III, Medical Physiology, and Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics I-III, if a student scores below 69.5% on an examination, a remediation exam will be required. For Clinical Assessment and Counseling I-III, remediation will be required for non-passing scores (as detailed in the syllabus) on the performance checklists. For other PA didactic courses, the need to remediate an examination will be determined by the course or module coordinator. Remediation examinations are to prove competency in the subject matter and are not factored into the final course grade. If a student fails to meet the remediation standard of an exam (at least 69.5%), the student will be referred to the Student Progress Committee to determine the appropriate course of action.

Reassessment methods may include written examinations (open- or closed-book), skills reassessments, or other competency-based evaluations as determined by the course or module coordinator. Remediation of an examination or failed Clinical Assessment and Counseling course component necessitates the student meeting with the Director of Didactic Education or course director to address areas of deficiency and to determine an appropriate remediation plan, including content review and reexamination. All remediation efforts require formal documentation, including a written remediation plan and subsequent reassessment outcome. All remediation efforts and outcomes, including successful and unsuccessful remediation, are documented in the student's academic record using a standardized remediation documentation form. These records are maintained in the student's official academic file within a secure, program-designated system and are accessible only to authorized program personnel in accordance with FERPA and institutional policy.

Remediations Related to the Clinical Year - see clinical handbook

⁵¹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.16d

Student Success Program

The student success program has two components: the didactic component and the clinical component. Below are the procedures for each component.

Didactic Student Support Procedures

Goals:

1. Identify students who need extra support based on exam performance within each clinical medicine system module
2. Create a remediation plan to address the concepts that were misunderstood based on missed exam items
3. Document the interaction

Plan:

1. The system or module coordinator will identify students whose test scores indicate they could benefit from extra support in the system or course.

Action Plan:

- a. Students will be identified using ExamSoft generated “At-Risk Students” which includes the students who scored in the bottom 27% of the cohort for a particular exam.
 - b. Students in the bottom 27% who score 80% or above on the exam will not be identified as needing extra support.
2. Those students will be offered an opportunity to review their Strengths and Opportunities report (includes missed exam items) with the system or module coordinator.

Action Plan:

- a. Students will meet within 7 days of the exam.
 - b. The system coordinator will not compromise the integrity of the exam by revealing the question and stem verbatim, but rather will discuss main themes and main concepts that require review and clarification.
3. Documentation

Action Plan:

- a. The system or module coordinator will document the encounter using the student encounter form.
 - b. The form will be stored in the student’s electronic file.
4. Special circumstances
 - a. Student failure of exam/Remediation of Clinical Medicine exams
 - i. If a student is identified as an “At-Risk Student” and fails a clinical medicine exam with a score of 69.4% or below, the student will need to remediate the exam. See “Remediation for a failed exam - Didactic” policy
 - b. Confidentiality
 - i. We will strive to maintain confidentiality of student performance as well as integrity of the exam.
 - ii. The students will be emailed privately regarding their student support.
 - iii. Students will only be allowed to participate in this program if they are “identified as a student who can use additional support” as defined by #1 above.

Clinical Student Support Procedures

Goals:

1. Identify students, at several stages of their education, who may be struggling with specific topic areas

2. Create a remediation learning path to strengthen those topic areas
3. Reassess the student's performance to ensure the information has been learned
4. Identify and ameliorate areas of the didactic and clinical curriculum that need improved based on student performance data

Plan:

1. Identify students, at several stages of their education, who may be struggling with specific topic areas
 - a. End of Curriculum Exam: score of ≤ 1465
 - b. Preclinical PACKRAT: score ≤ 110
 - c. End of Rotation Exam: Fail any EOR exam
 - d. Post Clinical PACKRAT: score ≤ 145
2. Create a remediation plan to strengthen those topic areas
 - a. Any student identified as "at-risk" based on their scores on the aforementioned exams will be entered into a remediation path as outlined below.
 - i. Topic areas of knowledge gaps identified
 1. Use the "Feedback by Keyword" section to identify specific topic areas that need reinforcement for the following exams:
 - a. End of Curriculum Exam
 - b. Preclinical PACKRAT
 - c. End of Rotation Exam
 - d. Post-clinical PACKRAT
 - ii. Remediation assignments will be created based on the student's areas of underperformance. This may include assigned review material, assigned practice questions, or other means of remediation.
3. Reassess the student's performance to ensure the information has been learned
 - i. Review the student's performance on the remediation assignment. The student is expected to earn a grade of 70% or better on the assignment.
 - b. If the student continues to struggle in a specific content or topic area
 - i. Student Progress Committee meeting will be held to discuss next steps
4. Identify and ameliorate areas of the didactic and clinical curriculum that need improved and revised based on student performance data
 - a. Use data from exams in item number one to identify areas in the curriculum (didactic or clinical) that need improved, revised, and otherwise bolstered
 - b. Use course and end of rotation evaluations to identify areas in the curriculum that need improved

Program Completion Requirements ⁵²

Credentials Awarded

NSU Physician Assistant Studies program graduates are awarded a Master of Science (MS) in Physician Assistant Studies. Program graduates are qualified to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

Graduation Standards

In order to graduate from the PAS program, each student must satisfactorily complete all of the following:

⁵² ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14b

- all required didactic coursework;
- all required and elective Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs);
- required patient encounter logging and documentation requirements;
- all required assignments, assessments, and curricular activities;
- any required remediation or reassessment; and
- the Program's summative evaluation, which assesses the student's achievement of the competencies required for entry into clinical practice.

For purposes of graduation, satisfactory completion requires:

- successful completion of each required course and SCPE according to the minimum passing standard established for that course;
- successful completion of all required non-letter-graded curricular components according to their established performance standards;
- successful completion of the Program's summative evaluation according to the established performance standards; and
- a cumulative graduate grade point average of at least **3.0**.

Standards for successful completion of individual courses and SCPEs are established in the applicable course syllabus, and the *Clinical Education Handbook*. Students are informed in advance of applicable evaluation methods and minimum performance standards.

Students who successfully complete all PA Program curricular and graduation requirements will be recommended for graduation in accordance with applicable Program and University procedures.

Program Completion⁵³

A student is required to complete all elements of the PA curriculum and be eligible for graduation within 48 months of the student's initial date of matriculation. For a student who remains with the original matriculating cohort, including a student classified as a delayed graduate, the 48-month completion timeframe is calculated from the student's initial matriculation date. If a student is decelerated (aka recycled), the 48-month window begins at the new matriculation date.

Complaints, Grievances, Appeals^{54, 55}

Student Complaints and Grievances⁵⁶

Program Process

The NSU PA Program is committed to maintaining open communication and addressing student concerns in a fair and timely manner. While students always have the right to utilize the university-wide grievance process, the Program encourages students to first seek resolution at the program, department, or college level whenever possible.

⁵³ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14b

⁵⁴ <https://offices.nsuok.edu/studentaffairs/studentcomplaints.aspx>

⁵⁵ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14h

⁵⁶ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standards A1.02g, A3.14g

Internal Complaint Resolution

- 1) Initial Discussion – Students are encouraged to first bring concerns directly to the individual(s) involved, if it is appropriate and safe to do so.
- 2) Program-Level Resolution – If the concern cannot be resolved informally, students should submit the concern in writing to the Program Director, Director of Didactic Education, or Director of Clinical Education (depending on the nature of the concern). The Program will review and address the complaint in a timely manner.
- 3) Department/College-Level Resolution – If the concern is not resolved within the Program, the student may elevate the issue to the Dean of the College of Science and Health Professions (or designee) for review and resolution.

Escalation to University Process

If resolution cannot be achieved within the Program, Department, or College, or if the complaint involves issues that require university-level oversight (such as discrimination, accessibility, sexual assault/harassment, or violations of free speech), students should use the Report Concern link found on the NSU website footer. The Dean of Students may also be contacted for guidance (918-444-2120; studentaffairs@nsuok.edu).

The Program's goal is to resolve as many concerns as possible internally, while also ensuring that students are aware of and retain access to the broader university grievance and complaint processes.

University Process

Students may issue written grievances addressing a number of concerns. Each grievance will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the person responsible for the resolution of the complaint. Complaints may be filed for issues such as, but not limited to, discrimination, accessibility issues, sexual assault/harassment, violations of free speech, and many other concerns.

Students who have complaints should utilize the [Report Concern](#) link, found on every page of the NSU website, at the very bottom of the page, in the footer. If you need guidance about this process, please reach out to the Dean of Students at 918-444-2120; studentaffairs@nsuok.edu.

Academic Course Concerns or Complaints

Students who wish to express a concern about a course or academic issue are encouraged to follow this process. Students who want to file a course grade appeal should consult the next section.

- First, conference with the faculty member. Most concerns can be handled through dialogue with the course instructor.
- Second, if the instructor is unable to resolve the issue, the student may talk with the program director (or program chair). If the student does not know who the program director (or program chair) is, s/he can contact the registrar with the course prefix and number, and that office can provide the information.
- Third, if the program director (or program chair) is unable to resolve the issue, then the student is welcome to contact the associate dean. If the student does not know who the associate dean is, s/he can ask the program director (or program chair) or contact the registrar.
- Fourth, if the associate dean is unable to resolve the issue, the student may contact the college dean.

It is important that the student initiate action (not parents, partners, or other relatives) and begin at the faculty or department chair level as most issues can be resolved there.

Appeals

General Provisions:

- Appeals must be initiated by the student, not by family members or other representatives.
- Appeals will be reviewed promptly, and written decisions will be provided at each step.
- Failure to appeal within the specified timeframe waives the student's right to further review.

Dismissal Appeals

The NSU PA Program recognizes the right of students to appeal dismissal from the Program. The following procedures ensure a fair, consistent, and timely process:

- Grounds for Appeal:

A student may appeal dismissal from the Program on the basis of:

- Procedural error in the dismissal process,
- Misapplication or misinterpretation of Program policy, or
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the original decision.
- Appeal Procedure
 - Written Appeal Submission – The student must submit a written appeal within five (5) business days of notification of dismissal. The appeal must clearly state the grounds and provide supporting documentation.
 - Associate Dean Review – Appeals will first be reviewed by the Associate Dean for the College of Science and Health Professions, who will issue a decision in writing.
 - Dean Review – If unresolved, the student may appeal the Associate Dean's decision to the Dean of the College of Science and Health Professions. The Dean's decision represents the final level of appeal within the Program.

Grade Appeals⁵⁷

Students wishing to appeal a course grade should follow the [NSU grade appeals process](#).^{58, 59} An exception to the NSU grade appeals process is that the Program Director must be consulted prior to taking the issue to the Dean of the College of Science and Health Professions.

Graduate Appeals

Appeals related to Graduate College requirements (e.g., GPA, probation, progression) may be submitted to the Graduate Council under Graduate College procedures.⁶⁰

University Appeals

In most cases, the applicable university policy related to your complaint will include an appeals process. However, if your case does not fall under one of those categories and/or if no appeal process is written,

⁵⁷ <https://academicaffairs.nsuok.edu/gradeappealpolicy011420.pdf>

⁵⁸ https://offices.nsuok.edu/_resources/documents/unused-pdfs/Grade-Appeal-Policy011420.pdf

⁵⁹ ARC-PA 6th Edition Standard A3.14h

⁶⁰ https://gradcollege.nsuok.edu/_resources/documents/Appealform.pdf

students may direct a request for appeal to the appropriate Vice President and/or designee (918-444-2120; studentaffairs@nsuok.edu) for review. The Vice President and/or designee will then determine who should address the appeal and direct the appeal as needed for review and resolution.



**Gregg Wadley College of Science and Health Professions
Department of Health Professions
Physician Assistant Studies Program**

Policies and Procedures Handbook and Agreement to Abide

I have read the policies, rules and regulations found in this latest version of the Northeastern State University Physician Assistant Studies Program Policies and Procedures Handbook and agree to abide by them.

I understand the academic standards of the Physician Assistant Studies Program. I also understand **I must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA** each semester to remain in good academic standing with the institution and have a 3.0 at the conclusion of the course of study to be eligible for graduation.

NAME (Signature): _____

NAME (Print): _____

Date: _____