



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MERIDIAN
Physician Assistant Studies

Student Handbook

Class of 2028

Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program

Mississippi
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University-
Meridian Riley
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Table of Contents

WELCOME.....	4
General Program Information	4
Section 1: Mississippi State University Institutional Policies	18
Section 2: Student Health and Safety.....	19
Section 3: Student Services and Resources	233
MSU PA PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS	255

WELCOME

Welcome to the Mississippi State University Master of Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program. This handbook provides important information relating specifically to the PA Program. You will find the [MSU General Catalog](#) and the [MSU Graduate Catalog](#) to be the official source of MSU student related policies and procedures.

The Class of 2028 Student Handbook presents the expectations, policies and procedures of the program for your cohort. The students of each cohort will be held to the standards published within the handbook for their respective cohort for the duration of their enrollment in the PA Program, except in situations in which a student decelerates and falls under the purview of subsequent handbooks. Students will receive additional expectations, policies and procedures for the clinical phase of the Program in the Clinical Handbook published for each cohort.

Disclaimer

While every effort is made to provide accurate information at the time of publication, the Program and clinical team reserve the right to make changes as necessary. If changes are made, all students, faculty, and staff will be informed, and published on the Program website. Please be aware this Handbook cannot account for every situation that may arise during your time in the Program, and be assured that should unique situations present, each situation will be handled in a manner that ensures fairness and mutual respect. All University and Program specific policies apply to all students. All final decisions are at the discretion of the Program Director and Associate Vice Provost, except where University policy dictates otherwise.

Mississippi State University-Meridian Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program

This is the *official* student handbook for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program at Mississippi State University-Meridian. It is located on the [PA website](#).

Program Address:

Mississippi State University Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program MSU-Meridian Riley Campus
2214 5th Street
Meridian, Mississippi 39301
Phone Number: 601-696-2320
Email: pa@meridian.msstate.edu

General Program Information

Mission Statement

The Mississippi State University-Meridian Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program will educate highly qualified, competent, healthcare providers who will increase access to care and provide primary care services to the diverse citizens of Mississippi.

Program Goals

The PA faculty, guided by their values and principles, has developed the curriculum to reflect their commitment to the following:

- Recruit highly qualified applicants for enrollment as students in the MSU Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program

- Prepare physician assistant students with the appropriate professional behavior for the clinical practice of medicine.
- Develop and maintain a curriculum that promotes a 90% or better graduation rate for students entering the MSU Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program
- Develop and maintain a curriculum that produces a PANCE first-time pass rate above the national average

The MSU Master of Physician Assistant Program goals and objectives, the strategic plan, and the mission and vision statements are reviewed annually and revised as needed by the program in order to ensure continuous program assessment and improvement are maintained and are consistent with that of Mississippi State University.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Mississippi State University Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program focuses on preparing healthcare providers who will augment and extend healthcare provided by physicians. The program emphasizes the optimal team practice concept of providing accessible, affordable, quality healthcare.

ACCREDITATION

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the recognized accrediting agency that protects the interests of the public and PA profession by defining the standards for PA education and evaluating PA education programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards. The ARC-PA encourages excellence in PA education through its accreditation process, by establishing and maintaining minimum standards of quality for educational programs. It awards accreditation to programs through a peer review process that includes documentation and periodic site visit evaluation to substantiate compliance with the [Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education](#).

The program has achieved Accreditation – Continuing status. Accreditation-Continued is granted 1) when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the Standards, 2) in the case of a program holding Accreditation-Probation when the program has demonstrated that it is once again in compliance with the Standards, or 3) when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional demonstrates compliance with the Standards after completion of the provisional review process. Accreditation-continued status remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards.

Only graduates of programs accredited by the ARC-PA or its predecessors are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) offered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

Certification is required to be eligible for licensure to practice as a Physician Assistant. For details about accreditation as it relates to the MSU MPAS Program, please reference the [MSU MPAS Program Accreditation webpage](#). ARC-PA Standards that apply to specific topics included in the MSU MPAS Student Handbook are denoted by brackets [] and superscript font with the associated Standard noted between the brackets.

PROGRAM DEFINED EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADUATES

MSU MPAS Student Learning Outcomes

MSU has adopted nationally recognized PA Professional Competencies as the basis for the Program Student Learning Outcomes. They outline the knowledge, skills and abilities of graduates at the completion of the program.

Program Learning Outcome 1 (PLO 1): Medical Knowledge

Medical knowledge includes synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion, and disease prevention. PA students must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care. Graduate PAs are expected to:

PLO 1.1: Apply the medical, behavioral, and social science knowledge necessary to effectively evaluate, treat, and manage patients across the lifespan taking into consideration the patient's personal, social and cultural values as well as social determinants of health.

PLO 1.2: Recognize, assess, diagnose, and longitudinally manage medical conditions in patients across the lifespan with various types of presentations evaluated in various practice settings.

PLO 1.3: Provide counseling, patient education, interventions, and appropriate referral for optimal health with health promotion, maintenance, and restoration.

Program Learning Outcome 2 (PLO 2): Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Interpersonal and communication skills encompass the verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. PA students must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients' families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the health care system. Graduate PAs are expected to:

PLO 2.1: Demonstrate communication and skills which facilitates the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and other health professionals through a sensitive and respectful manner.

PLO 2.2: Utilize verbal and nonverbal communication skills in a compassionate and culturally responsive manner to accurately assess patient presentation and effectively deliver the management plan through oral and written methods.

PLO 2.3: Exhibit professional and ethical behaviors and attitudes becoming of a medical care provider.

Program Learning Outcome 3 (PLO 3): Patient care

Patient care includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. PA students must demonstrate effective, safe, high quality, equitable health care practice. PA students must obtain a relevant medical history, adequately perform physical examinations, and implement treatment plans on patients of all age groups, appropriate to the patient's condition. In addition, PA students must demonstrate proficiency in technical procedures and health care that are effective, patient-centered, safe, compassionate, and culturally appropriate for the treatment of medical problems and the promotion of health. Graduate PAs are expected to:

PLO 3.1: Collaborate effectively within interprofessional teams to provide high quality, multi-disciplinary, patient-centered health care for all patients.

PLO 3.2: Develop patient-centered diagnostic and therapeutic intervention plans based on patient care preferences, current scientific evidence, social determinants of health and informed clinical judgment.

PLO 3.3: Perform procedural and technical skills required for entry-level PA practice

Program Learning Outcome 4 (PLO 4): Professionalism

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals in the delivery of health care. Professionalism involves prioritizing the interests of others above one's own. PA students must acknowledge their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism requires that Pas practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency, or mental illness. PA students must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to diverse patient populations, and strict adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Graduate Pas are expected to demonstrate:

PLO 4.1: Foster ethical relationships with all members of an interdisciplinary healthcare team, while acknowledging professional and personal limitations.

PLO 4.2: Describe the role of a physician assistant including ethical and profession standards, as well as, legal and regulatory requirements governing PA practice.

PLO 4.3: Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' disability status, special healthcare needs, and social determinants of health in all interactions.

Program Learning Outcome 5: Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

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

PLO 5.1: Critically evaluate published practice guidelines and research literature to advance medical knowledge and improve patient outcomes.

PLO 5.2: Engage in self-assessment of medical knowledge, professionalism, social interactions and physical limitations to guide on-going professional development and improve patient care.

Program Learning Outcome 6: Systems-Based Practice

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which health care is delivered. PA students must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient. Pas should work to improve the health care system of which their practices are a part. Graduate Pas are expected to:

PLO 6.1: Identify components and utilize resources of the healthcare system to support evidence-based patient care and the application of public health and preventative care practices.

PLO 6.2: Demonstrate knowledge of Mississippi healthcare disparities and social determinants of health to develop evidence-based healthcare strategies to reduce these disparities for individuals, communities, and the state.

CURRICULUM

The MSU-MPAS Program consists of seven (7) continuous semesters of rigorous graduate level training, covering all areas of medicine. The didactic phase of the program provides students with a strong background in basic medical science, stressing the importance of patient evaluation and teamwork in medicine such as clinical medicine, patient assessment, pharmacology, pathophysiology and diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

Traditional classroom lectures are supplemented with case-based learning, team-based learning, group projects, simulated patient experiences, interprofessional education and medical procedure training.

The clinical phase of the program provides students with clinical rotation educational experience. Students are placed with preceptors to mentor the PA student through actual patient interaction. The focus of the clinical rotations is to provide students with experiences to succeed as excellent primary care medicine providers upon graduation.

Primary clinical rotation areas include pediatrics, behavioral medicine, general surgery, women's health, emergency medicine, family medicine, and internal medicine. Students will also have one (1) elective and one (1) preceptorship rotation which will be selected from various medical and surgical subspecialties. Following schematics include a curriculum plan for the entire PA program and a sample week from one semester of the program. [A3.11d, e] rotations is to provide students with experiences to succeed as excellent primary care medicine providers upon graduation.

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COURSE CURRICULUM [A3.11d,e]

Physician Assistant Curriculum Mississippi State University		
Year One: Didactic Phase (14 months)		
Course		Credit Hours
Semester: Spring 2023		
PAS 6016	Human Anatomy and Physiology	6
PAS 6026	Patient Assessment	6
PAS 6013	Introduction to the PA Profession	3
PAS 6204	Principles of Pharmacology	4
	Total hrs.	19
Semester: Summer		
PAS 6107	Clinical Medicine I	7
PAS 6023	Clinical Diagnostic Methods	3
PAS 6103	Clinical Decision Making	3
PAS 6213	Behavioral Medicine	3
PAS 6104	Pathophysiology	4
	Total hrs.	20
Semester: Fall		
PAS 6208	Clinical Medicine II	8
PAS 6112	Research Methods I	2
PAS 6022	Clinical Genetics	2
PAS 6113	Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	3
PAS 6102	Clinical Skills	2
PAS 6012	The Art of Medicine	2
	Total	19
Semester: Spring 2022		
PAS 6203	Clinical Practice Issues	3
PAS 6223	Clinical Specialties	3
PAS 8302	Clinical Transitions	2
PAS 6202	Research Methods II	2
	Total	10
Year Two: Clinical Phase (15 months)		
Clinical Rotations (March)		
PAS 8313	Women's Health Rotation	3
	Total	3
Semester: Summer		
PAS 8301	Seminar I	1
PAS 8308	Family Medicine Rotation	8
PAS 8323	General Surgery Rotation	3
	Total	12
Semester: Fall		
PAS 8343	Behavioral Medicine Rotation	3
PAS 8353	Emergency Medicine Rotation	3
PAS 8303	Pediatrics Rotation	3
PAS 8333	Internal Medicine Rotation	3
PAS 8321	Seminar II	1
	Total	13
Spring 2023		
PAS 8332	Seminar III	2
PAS 8363	Elective Rotation	3
PAS 8322	Capstone Project	2
PAS 8312	Summative Experience	2
PAS 8403	Clinical Preceptorship	3
	Total	12
	Total Program Hours	108

EXAMPLE WEEKLY CALENDAR

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00-9:00 AM	Assessments Advising	PE Checkoff Sandlin Creech	Anatomy Vayda	Patient PE Practice Beasley	Pharmacology Hatch
9:00-10:00 AM			**shadow		
10:00-11:00 AM		Writing Bootcamp Sandlin			
11:00-12:00 PM	Director's Hour	Faculty Meeting			
NOON					
1:00-2:00 PM	Anatomy Vayda	Intro to PA Profession Kerian	Patient Assessment Beasley	Physiology Kerian Grant	Assessments/Advising
2:00-3:00 PM					
3:00-4:00 PM	Pharmacology Hatch		Anatomy Vayda		
4:00-5:00 PM					
				PA Excel Tutoring 6-8p	

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PAS 6016 Human Anatomy and Physiology for the Physician Assistant

[6 Credits] Instruction in clinical gross anatomy and physiology for the physician assistant student. The course provides essential knowledge of the major anatomical regions, structures of the body and the physiologic functions related to health and disease.

PAS 6026 Patient Assessment for the Physician Assistant

[6 credits] Instructs students in the methods of performing a history and physical examination. Students develop the knowledge and skills essential for performing a comprehensive medical history and physical examination. The course emphasizes patient interviewing, acquiring a medical database, and performing a comprehensive physical examination.

PAS 6013 Introduction to the Physician Assistant Profession

[3 credits] Instructional course designed to introduce the entry-level physician assistant student to the unique origins, development, practice laws, and workforce trends of the profession. This course allows the student to develop a thorough understanding of the role of the physician assistant.

PAS 6023 Clinical Diagnostic Methods for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Lecture course with three components: radiologic study ordering and interpretation, ECG interpretation, and laboratory study ordering, performance, and interpretation. This course provides skills in ordering/interpreting lab values from chemistry, hematology, immunology, microbiology, parasitology, virology, genetics, and mycology testing for use in clinical practice.

PAS 6012 The Art of Medicine for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Introduces students to clinical ethics, health disparities, and cultural competence as they influence the practice of medicine. The course emphasizes the human factors that affect the delivery of culturally appropriate, patient-centered healthcare for patients across the lifespan.

PAS 6022 Clinical Genetics for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Lecture-based course designed to provide the entry-level physician assistant student with a basic understanding of medical genetics. The course will review basic molecular genetics, molecular terminology, and inheritance patterns. The student will receive instruction in various diagnostic techniques associated with medical genetics.

PAS 6107 Clinical Medicine I for the Physician Assistant

[7 credits] Introduces the student to human disease processes, their origins, mechanisms of action and effects on the human body with emphasis on the clinical manifestations of the disease process. Students will integrate knowledge from Patient Assessment and the basic sciences.

PAS 6103 Clinical Decision Making for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to build upon the skills developed Patient Assessment. The course will utilize problem-based learning techniques, allowing the participant to apply the developing skills of critical thinking, clinical reasoning and problem solving. The course will provide instruction in the development of a thorough, patient appropriate, differential diagnosis.

PAS 6113 Health Promotion & Disease Prevention for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Lecture-based, active learning course where the student is given the opportunity to value prevention as a major aspect of healthcare and to develop skills that integrate health promotion/disease prevention into the role of a physician assistant.

PAS 6104 Pathophysiology for the Physician Assistant

[4 credits] Introduces the student to human disease processes, their origins, mechanisms of action and effects on the human body with emphasis on the clinical manifestations of the disease process. Students will integrate knowledge from Patient Assessment and the basic sciences.

PAS 6112 Research Methods I for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Introduction to basic research techniques needed for clinical practice. Students will develop proficiency in searching, interpreting, and applying evidence-based research in the clinical setting. Students will be instructed in appropriate tenets of intellectual honesty in the academic and professional setting.

PAS 6102 Clinical Skills for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Students are introduced to common skills used in the clinical practice of medicine. This course is designed to prepare the student for supervised clinical practice by introducing procedures commonly performed in the clinical setting.

PAS 6204 Principles of Pharmacology for the Physician Assistant

[4 credits] Basic introduction to the principles of pharmacology and to drug classes of relevance to the physician assistant. The course provides the student with a fundamental knowledge of basic pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetic and pharmacogenomics principles, basic properties, mechanisms, uses, adverse effects and interactions of relevant drugs.

PAS 6208 Clinical Medicine II for the Physician Assistant

[8 credits] Continuation of Clinical Medicine I, designed to prepare the student for supervised clinical practice.

PAS 6203 Clinical Practice Issues for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] The course instructs students in advanced clinical practice issues affecting the physician assistant profession. Topics include billing and coding, the Medicare/Medicaid system, credentialing, clinical professionalism, prescriptive rights, interdisciplinary healthcare practice and state/national licensure, and certification.

PAS 6213 Behavioral Medicine for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Provides students with the ability to explore the psychological parameters of human behavior and identify the relationship of psychological distress to physical illness. Students study the processes underlying human growth and development across the lifespan and how they apply to healthcare.

PAS 6223 Clinical Specialties for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Introduces the physician assistant student to the clinical specialties of surgery, pediatrics, and women's health. Students are instructed in the foundations of these specialties to prepare for clinical practice. Students learn basic knowledge and clinical skills unique to these practices.

PAS 6202 Research Methods II for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Designed to continue the physician assistant student's proficiency in research. This course will refine skills in literature analysis and the formatting of conclusions for the evidence-based practice of evaluation and management of disease processes.

PAS 8302 Clinical Transitions for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Physician assistant students gain knowledge and skills that facilitate the transition from the academic to clinical environment and promote high quality clinical education experiences. Practical learning that simulates the diversity of healthcare disciplines and services encountered during clinical training.

PAS 8308 Family Medicine Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[8 credits] Designed to give students exposure to the spectrum of family medicine outpatient and/or medical practice. Students will learn the principles of routine (well) care, management of acute illnesses, and management of chronic/multiple diagnoses for patients across the lifespan.

PAS 8333 Internal Medicine Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to give students exposure to understand and manage patient problems in an internal medicine practice setting.

PAS 8303 Pediatric Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to give students exposure to the spectrum of pediatric practice, including care of infants, children and adolescents in routine well-child care, inpatient and/or outpatient care and care of acute and chronic illnesses.

PAS 8313 Women's Health Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to give the student practical experience in the diagnosis, evaluation, and management of problems and issues associated with women's health care.

PAS 8323 General Surgery Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to give students experience in the care of patients undergoing elective or acute surgical procedures. The student will perform preoperative history and physicals; assist in the operating room; be involved in immediate postoperative care and stabilization; and assist with postoperative care.

PAS 8343 Behavioral Medicine Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to give practical experience in the diagnosis and management of patients needing behavioral therapy in the clinical setting. Students will develop their ability to recognize psychiatric diagnoses in both the outpatient and/or inpatient settings.

PAS 8353 Emergency Medicine Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] Designed to introduce the student to health care in Emergency Medicine. The student is given the opportunity to understand and manage patient problems across the lifespan in an emergency care setting.

PAS 8363 Elective Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] The elective is designed to give the student additional clinical exposure in a medical/surgical area of their choosing. May be completed in any specialty or subspecialty chosen by the student and approved by the Clinical Coordinator.

PAS 8403 Preceptorship Rotation for the Physician Assistant

[3 credits] The preceptorship is designed to give the student additional clinical exposure in a medical/surgical area of their choosing. This opportunity is often used by preceptors to assess the student for possible employment. May be completed in any specialty or subspecialty chosen by the student.

PAS 8301 Seminar I for the Physician Assistant

[1 credit] This discussion-based course meets when students return from clinical rotations. Students present clinical cases, reflect on clinical experiences, and prepare for the next clinical experience.

PAS 8321 Seminar II for the Physician Assistant

[1 credit] This discussion-based course meets when students return from clinical rotations. Students present clinical cases, reflect on clinical experiences, and prepare for the next clinical experience and transition into clinical practice.

PAS 8332 Seminar III for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] This discussion-based course meets when students return from clinical rotations. Students present clinical cases, reflect on clinical experiences, and prepare for the next clinical experience and transition into clinical practice.

PAS 8312 Summative Experience for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Course curriculum required by accrediting body. The program must conduct and document a summative evaluation of each student within the final four months of the program to verify that each student is prepared to enter clinical practice.

PAS 8322 Capstone Project for the Physician Assistant

[2 credits] Course provides opportunity for completion of a Capstone project with tools and strategies addressed in Research Methods I and II.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A candidate for the MPAS degree must possess aptitude, abilities, and skills in the five areas, along with the technical requirements, discussed below. Reasonable accommodations will be made for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. All individuals must be able to perform these functions independently, with or without a reasonable accommodation. Generally, unless a specific accommodation is approved that does not fundamentally alter program requirements, third parties cannot be used to assist students in accomplishing curricular requirements in the five skill areas or the technical requirements specified below.

Applicants and students must meet and maintain the following technical standards necessary to complete the MSU MPAS curricula. [A3.12e]

Observation and Sensation

The MPAS student must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational and clinical settings. Sensation must be satisfactory to receive verbal and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform inspection, auscultation, and palpation techniques during the physical examination.

Communication

The MPAS student must be able to effectively communicate with and effectively observe patients, family members, and other clinicians. This includes expressive and receptive modes of verbal, nonverbal, and written communication. The student must have the ability to accurately assess receptive communication in order to make appropriate and timely responses. The student must be able to communicate attentively, effectively, and sensitively to others.

Motor Functions

Students must have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities required of a physician assistant. These include but are not limited to performing a physical examination utilizing diagnostic instruments and techniques in palpation and percussion. Students must have sufficient stamina to move safely within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms, and operating rooms for long periods. The student must have sufficient coordination to move about patient care environments, and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments. Students must be able to arrange for transportation between educational and clinical settings.

Intellectual Capability

Clinical problem solving and reasoning requires these intellectual abilities and encompass those to accurately measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, learn, and retain information and make decisions in a timely manner. Students must be able to comprehend two and three-dimensional structures and must be able to understand diagnostic testing and treatment regimens.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

PA students must possess the emotional health required for the use of their intellectual and mental abilities, including logical thinking, good judgment, impulse control, empathy, interest, and motivation. These abilities should be sufficient to assure the development and maintenance of therapeutic relationships with patients and those who care for them. Individuals must be able to maintain emotional health despite stress, uncertainty, and physically taxing workloads and to

adapt to changing situations while handling the responsibilities associated with medical education and patient care.

Technical Requirements

MSU MPAS will consider for admission, progression, and graduation individuals who demonstrate the knowledge and the ability to perform or learn to perform the skills described in this document. Individuals are assessed not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their skills, knowledge, and ability to achieve the learning outcomes of the program's curriculum and to graduate as skilled, safe and effective practitioners of medicine.

Therefore, students must demonstrate competency in the following technical requirements:

1. The applicant/student must have ability to observe and participate in experiments in the basic sciences.
2. The applicant/student must have ability to analyze, synthesize, extrapolate, solve problems, and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments in a timely manner.
3. The applicant/student must have sufficient use of the senses such as vision, hearing, and the somatic sensation necessary to perform a physical examination.
4. The applicant/student must have ability to establish and maintain professional relationships with patients, faculty, and peers.
5. The applicant/student must have ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with patients and colleagues.
6. The applicant/student must have ability to perform routine laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures.
7. The applicant/student must have ability to perform appropriately in emergencies.
8. The applicant/student must have ability to display good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients.

Program Performance Expectations

The Master of Physician Assistant Studies program at Mississippi State University is a full-time professional program designed to prepare qualified candidates for healthcare service under physician supervision via a rigorous academic and clinical curriculum. The course of study is focused and intense. As such, it is important for prospective students to understand the demands of the program in advance in order to assess their ability to successfully complete it.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of skills and competencies considered essential for success in the program. As discussed below, MSU is committed to the full integration of individuals with disabilities or other unique needs into its programs. Thus, as discussed below, the specific methods of instruction or assessment for the skills listed herein may be varied in response to a timely request for a reasonable accommodation. However, these expectations are considered essential and each student is responsible for successfully meeting them, either with or without a reasonable accommodation.

1. Medical Knowledge

- Performance on timed, multiple choice written examinations, including interpretation of images, laboratory values and complex calculations.
- Performance on timed objective structured clinical examinations, including but not limited to responding to written and oral prompts to conduct appropriate history and/or physical examination, order and/or interpret diagnostic studies, recommending rescue and

longitudinal treatment plans, and providing patient education which may include information recall or accessing and applying evidence-based guidelines.

Examples: interpretation of urinalysis, arterial blood gases, routine blood chemistry, magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography, ultrasound, radiographs, electrocardiographs, echocardiograms, body fluid analysis, body fluid cultures, pulmonary function tests, nuclear medicine studies

- Work in clinical settings external to MSU and MSU-Meridian, which requires transportation, timely arrival, and the ability to physically navigate clinical and office settings.

2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Demonstrate general English language proficiency in speaking and writing.
- Present formal and informal presentations as an individual and collaborative in a group.
- Uphold professional communication standards during patient, faculty, staff, and peer interactions.
- Provide oral presentations regarding patient presentation, evaluation and management of mock and/or live patients to faculty and/or preceptors.
- Exhibit written communication and technical writing skills becoming of a graduate medical education student.
- Accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.
- Demonstrate oral communication skills to mock or live patients of diverse backgrounds which establish therapeutic relationship and evoke positive change in patient behavior.
- Maintain demeanor, behavior, verbal and nonverbal communication becoming of a healthcare provider.
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety.

3. Patient Care

- Effectively engage in optimal team-based practice to include various specialties, ancillary services and community resources.
- Demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families.
- Obtain essential and accurate information about their patients through all senses and lines of questioning.
- Make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient presentation.
- Safely perform medical and surgical procedures, including:
 - Incision and drainage of an abscess;
 - Provide safe retraction intra-operatively;
 - Suture surgical and traumatic wounds; and
 - Access and cannulate peripheral and central venous systems.
- Interpret diagnostic images, including radiographs, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, ultrasound, and nuclear medicine studies.
- Demonstrate sensitivities and responsiveness to the culture, age, gender and abilities of individuals.

4. Professionalism

- Discern complex medical legal scenarios, demonstrating fair and equitable judgment in consideration of current applicable guidelines and laws.

- Discern complex ethical scenarios respecting patient autonomy with an attitude becoming of a medical professional.
- Interact with patients, patient families, peers, preceptors, faculty and staff with and without university affiliation, demonstrating cultural competence.

5. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

- Survey published medical journal articles and current guidelines to guide safe and effective medical decision-making.
- Reflect on academic, clinical, and professional performance to create action plans and achieve desired outcomes.
- Utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education.
- Recognize and appropriately address personal psychosocial limitations, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others.

6. Systems Based Practice

- Effectively utilize information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education.
- Partner with supervising physicians, healthcare managers, and other health care providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of healthcare and patient outcomes.
- Accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care.

Section 1: Mississippi State University Institutional Policies

STUDENT RIGHTS

The PA Program faculty, staff and students will comply with university policy and procedures with respect to the following:

Policies

[Non-Discrimination Statement \(OP 3.02\)](#)

[Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment \(OP 3.03\)](#)

[Sexual Misconduct \(OP 3.04\)](#)

[Whistleblower Policy \(OP 1.07\)](#)

[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) \(OP 30.02\) \(A3.20\)](#)

[Students With Disabilities \(OP 91.122\)](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Grievance Procedures \(OP 12.37\)](#)

[Honor Code of Conduct](#)

Disability Support Services

Disabilities And Accommodations

Mississippi State University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) for Mississippi State University collaborates with students who have disabilities to arrange reasonable accommodations.

A. Applying for Accommodations

The best first step in many cases is to submit your accommodation request by visiting www.drc.msstate.edu and click on the “Register with the DRC” link.

You may contact the DRC by emailing drc@msstate.edu or by calling 662-325-3335. You may contact the Director, Chris Dallager at cjd474@msstate.edu or call 662-325-7924 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, conditions related to mental health, chronic illness, attention, learning, autism, brain injury, vision, hearing, mobility, speech, or intellectual disabilities. In the case of short-term disabilities (e.g., broken arm), students and instructors can often work to minimize barriers. If additional assistance is needed, please contact the Disability Resource Center.

The DRC staff, through an interactive process with the student and often with instructors, determine classroom accommodations that are appropriate for students with disabilities. It is important for students with approved accommodations to submit the notification of such to instructors each semester to ensure there is understanding on how the accommodations will be provided. Examples of classroom and testing accommodations are varied, but may include: adapted testing arrangements, extended time on tests, testing in a reduced distraction environment, and assistance with alternative formats of textbooks.

B. Student Responsibilities

Submit the [online notification of accommodations](#) to instructors each semester. The online notification must be provided before a professor/instructor can provide an accommodation. Plan and schedule accommodations with instructors with good communication.

Maintain communication with instructors throughout the semester regarding accommodations, as needed.

If there are any concerns regarding an accommodation not being provided and you need to discuss it with the DRC, please contact Chris Dallager at cjd474@msstate.edu or call 662-325-7924.

Section 2: Student Health and Safety

Student Health [A 1.05, A3.07, A3.09, A3.21]

- a. Every student is required to provide evidence of good health upon matriculation in the PA Program.
- b. Each student must meet the health requirements of each clinical site before beginning a rotation with that organization.
- c. Every student is required to provide a record of current vaccination according to the [CDC Recommended Vaccines for Healthcare Workers and COVID-19 vaccination record](#). In addition, every student must provide a record of tuberculosis screening according to the [CDC recommendations for TB Screening and Testing of Healthcare Professionals](#).
- d. Some clinical sites may impose additional requirements, including but not limited to current drug screen, background check, and/or additional forms or vaccinations. [A3.09a] Additional fees

will be the responsibility of the student. Failure of the student to complete documentation or comply with the institutional requirements could result in forfeiture of the clinical rotation opportunity, delay in graduation at the expense to the student, and/or the inability to successfully complete program.

- e. Program instructional faculty or staff will not access or review student health records, except for immunization records and TB screening results, blood, and/or body fluid exposure reports, drug screening results, criminal background checks and/or any additional information as required for clinical site placement as clearly delineated in the medical release documentation. [A3.18]
- f. Medical or surgical conditions may arise while a student is enrolled in the PA Program requiring a student to be absent from the program. The student is required to provide clearance from a medical provider upon return, attesting to the student's readiness to resume healthcare training. The program will strictly adhere to the recommendations of the medical provider.
- g. Students are required to maintain health insurance coverage and to provide evidence of such to the PA Program. The University offers a health insurance policy. Enrollment forms are available through University Health Services at the following link: [Insurance | Longest Health Center \(msstate.edu\)](#)
- h. A Program principal faculty, Program Director and/or the Medical Director will not participate as healthcare providers for any student in the PA Program, except in an emergency situation. [A3.06]

Student Health Services

- a. MSU - Meridian students may seek medical care through Anderson Regional Medical Center at contracted rates. Address: 1523 22nd Ave, Suite B, Meridian, MS 39301. Phone number: 601-703-8450.
- b. Student Counseling Services offers students the option of seeing a clinician in-person or virtual through a virtual platform, Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. To make an initial appointment for services, please click [here](#) for the virtual waiting room.
 - A clinician will assess and discuss your needs to determine the appropriate service for you.
 - Should you be unable to utilize this platform or have additional questions about our services, please call our office at (662) 325-2091 during normal business hours.
 - For after-hours support, call (662) 325-2091 to speak with a professional, on-call therapist.
 - To obtain confidential assistance for sexual assault or harassment, call the MSU Safe Line at (662) 325-3333.
- c. Students may be referred or may self-refer to Weems Community Health Center for support with personal issues which may impact student progress in the PA Program, at no cost to the student. [A3.10] Students may schedule a confidential appointment by calling the number on the back of the student identification card, 601-483-4821 or 1-800-803-0245.
- d. The Longest Student Health Center is available to all MSU students. [Home | Longest Health Center \(msstate.edu\)](#)

COVID-19 Policy

There is an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 in any place where people are present. Participation in internships, on-campus activities, programs, work, and events may expose individuals, especially those who are unvaccinated, to a risk of contracting COVID-19 which may lead to missed classes (or internship hours). MSU cannot be responsible for that risk and, absent extenuating circumstances, will not modify the requirements of the class/internship. All students are urged to get vaccinated to mitigate risks.

STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY [A1.02E, A3.09a]

Criminal Background Check and Drug Testing

- a) Prior to matriculation, students offered a seat in the MSU Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program must complete a criminal background check and urine drug screen.
- b) A urine drug screen must be negative for all substances, except for legally prescribed medications taken as prescribed, excluding narcotics. Chronic narcotic use precludes providers from maintaining licensure in Mississippi; therefore, any positive opioid report will require prescriber attestation of short-term indication.
- c) Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor may adversely affect a person's ability to obtain licensure as a physician assistant and/or to be admitted to the MSU PA Program. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine an applicant's suitability for the program. Additionally, a subsequent conviction of a felony or misdemeanor while enrolled in the program may be grounds for dismissal.
- d) Students may be required by the MSU PA program and/or clinical sites to undergo repeat drug screening and criminal background checks at any time.
- e) Students are responsible for all expenses related to drug screening, student health requirements and background checks required by clinical sites.
- f) Failing to meet the requirements of the background check or urine drug screen may result in forfeiture of the clinical rotation, delay in graduation at the expense of the student, or inability to successfully complete the program.
- g) Students who, at any point in the program, delay or decline to participate in a requested alcohol and/or drug screening will have that action considered equivalent to taking and failing a drug/alcohol screening and will be subject to the associated consequences.
- h) Applicants accepted into the MSU Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program who answered "no" to questions relating to criminal background in their CASPA application and are found to have a subsequent contradictory criminal background information will be dismissed from the program based on misrepresentation. In the event of a reported incident, a determination about the applicant's/student's continued progress in the academic program will be made by Mississippi State University in accordance with university procedures.

Required Training and Education

1. Biosafety Training [A3.09a]

All students in the Physician Assistant Program are required to comply with required training, consistent with industry standards. To participate in programmatic clinical skill activities and/or clinical site experiences, the following training is required. Failure to complete the training as scheduled by the program or remain current in training may result in grade reduction, course failure, delay of clinical rotations, delay of graduation and/or dismissal from the program.

Required training is outlined below:

- Sharps Safety
- Biosafety Principles
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Basic Life Support (BLS)
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
- Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)
- 10-hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Training

2. Infectious and Environmental Precautions [A3.09]

The PA Program will address Universal Precautions [A3.09] and other methods of prevention as well as student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any educational activities that would place them at risk. The physician assistant program requires all students to be covered by major medical insurance as discussed in Section 29. The student should check with his/her insurance company as to the coverage provided for accidental exposure. It is important for students to realize that medical expenses for care provided by student health services or other health care providers, including laboratory procedures and emergency care are the responsibility of the student and not the physician assistant program or Mississippi State University. Any injury or accidental exposure will not be covered under workmen's compensation since the student is not an employee of the clinical site or Mississippi State University.

In the event the student has an exposure to infectious or environmental hazards [A3.09], follow these [guidelines](#):

- Flush the area thoroughly; wash with soap as appropriate.
- Seek other appropriate medical care (within 2 hours) including a Risk Exposure Evaluation at the site where the exposure occurred. The office to contact will vary by site, but is usually Infection Control, Employee/Occupational Health or the Emergency Department
- Longest Student Health (662-325-4539)
- Workforce Wellness at Ochsner Rush (601-703-4415)
- Anderson Express Care (601-703-8450)
- CDC (1-888-232-6348)
- Perform quick HIV test – This test is usually available at your nearest hospital ER/ Workforce wellness. The rapid HIV test should be performed on the source patient.
- Initiate prophylaxis if indicated. **Therapy should be initiated within 2-4 hours of exposure.
- Complete (in detail) an Incident Report at the site where the exposure occurred.
- Notify the appropriate instructional faculty member.
- Students will complete the occupational exposure form and take this with them to the facility. This form will be placed in the Exxat Patient logging system for access during the Clinical year.
- Notify the Longest Student Health Center (662-325-7539) to have the student's medical record updated accordingly (if appropriate).
- Understand that the effects of infectious or environmental hazard injury or exposure may significantly affect student learning activities. This may include, but is not limited to, taking a leave of absence or withdrawing from the PA Program.

Polices

- [Weather, emergency or Disaster-related incidents \[A1.02e\]](#)
- [Building Evacuations](#)
- [Campus Evacuations Guidelines](#)
- [Earthquake](#)
- [Severe Weather/Tornado](#)
- [Sheltering in Place](#)
- [Smoke or Fire](#)
- [Suspicious Devices or Substances](#)
- [Violence and Threats of Violence](#)

Section 3: Student Services and Resources

Campus Map

Meridian Riley Campus Map Located at: [Maps](#)

Student Parking

Students on the College Park Campus should park in the area designated as Student Parking and will be ticketed for parking in the Faculty/Staff Parking. Fines may be paid in the MSU-Meridian Office of Student Services. Students on the Riley Campus should park in legal parking spaces.

Housing

The MSU-MPAS program does not supply housing for any portion of the program. Students are responsible for securing housing for themselves during the didactic and clinical portions of the program. For local housing options, click [here](#). Costs for transportation to and lodging at distant clinical sites during the clinical phase of the program may be required to meet program requirements in addition to local housing arrangements.

Bulldog Shop

The [Bulldog Shop](#) at MSU-Meridian's Riley Campus in downtown Meridian is a campus store that brings a taste of Mississippi State heritage to Meridian. In addition to the latest in MSU apparel and gifts, the shop offers fresh sandwiches, coffee, snacks and renowned MSU ice cream and cheese.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Use of MSU Information Technology

It is the policy of Mississippi State University to protect critical information in all forms for which it is the custodian and to maintain a robust, proactive, and evolving information security program. This includes protection from a variety of threats such as fraud, embezzlement, sabotage, terrorism, extortion, privacy violation, service interruption, pandemic, and natural disaster. Pursuant to [OP 01.10: Information Security](#), information security is the responsibility of all individuals who access and maintain Mississippi State University information resources, i.e. students, employees, alumni, affiliates, contractors, retirees, and others as appropriate. Each individual must be aware of, committed to, and accountable for their role in the overall protection of critical information.

MSU Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure Policy

Any individual or organization having access to the Internet through MSU, to the MSU campus network, or to MSU servers is bound to abide by all MSU policies and applicable state and federal legislation governing use of the Internet and MSU IT resources. Any violation of applicable laws or policies may result in termination of service which would inhibit program completion. All ITS policies can be found [online](#).

1. Net ID

- Each student will be responsible for activating and maintaining their NetID and NetPassword.
- Your username is your NetID. Each MSU Student, Faculty, and Staff member is assigned a distinct NetID.
- To setup your NetPassword, using a computer connected to the Internet, follow the instructions below:

- Open up an internet browser
 - Go to <http://www.netpassword.msstate.edu>
 - Select “Set your initial NetPassword” and follow the steps
 - Use the same link to change password
 - Your NetID and NetPassword is also used to access the MSU online portals
2. myState
 - This is the main MSU portal that offers single sign-on access to such Web services as Banner, myCourses, and BullyMail. myState is designed to enhance personal productivity by providing customized and personalized access to a variety of university systems and information. MyState log in tips:
 3. Email
 - Student email is handled via Microsoft Office 365. Each email address is derived from each unique NetID: netid@msstate.edu. Email is the primary means of communication for the program, and the student is responsible for checking email daily.
 4. Service Desk Requests
 - ITS normal office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 - Please go to servicedesk.msstate.edu to submit a request for service or report an issue. You may also email your request to servicedesk@msstate.edu.
 5. Wireless Configuration
 - Students may access the wireless network, eduroam, using the NetID and configuration instructions.
 - The MSU wireless network is based on IEEE 802.11b/g/n (i.e. Wi-Fi) technology.
 - In order to use the MSU wireless network, you will need a properly configured wireless 802.11 b/g network adapter for your notebook or hand-held device. Today, most notebooks and laptop computers come with built-in support for 802.11b/g/n. Specific information for configuring your computer or device can be found at the link entitled “Configuration Details.”
 - Antivirus software will help protect your computer(s) from adware, ransomware, spyware, viruses, and other malware that could impact your system's performance, cause you to lose important data, and potentially compromise your accounts and personal information. MSU Policy 01.12 states that everyone in the MSU computing community is required to take precautions to protect their computer and the MSU network from viruses. ITS does not provide antivirus software for personally-owned computers. Please see the following link for no-cost antivirus options to help secure your device: Article - Antivirus Software for Pers... (msstate.edu)
 - MSU provides free software. Access the [List of ITS-provided software \(eg. Adobe, Camtasia, Microsoft Office, Slido\) here.](#)

Libraries [A1.05]

The goal of the Phil Hardin Foundation Librarians at MSU-Meridian’s College Park and Riley Campuses is to support the reading, research and information needs of the faculty, staff and students in Meridian. The MSU-Meridian academic community has access to resources and services offered on the [University Libraries website](#). [A1.05]

MSU PA PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

1.0 Rules, Regulations, and Policies of the University and Affiliate Institutions [A3.01]

Program Rules and Regulations apply to all students, principal faculty, and the Program Director (PD) regardless of location, except in circumstances where differences exist between program policies and those established at clinical rotation sites. [A3.01] In addition to the rules and regulations contained herein, students are expected to adhere to the rules and policies of Mississippi State University, and to the rules, regulations, and policies of any other institution or facility where they may be assigned. Any conflicting policies should be reported to the Program Director. All information herein is subject to change with timely notification to students in writing.

2.0 Definitions

- a) Program Director (PD) is responsible for managing and coordinating the PA Program for the students, faculty, and staff.
- b) Associate Program Director (APD) serves to support the coordination of activities for faculty, staff, and students
- c) Assistant Program Director of Didactic Education functions as the Academic Coordinator and is the PA Program faculty member serving as a leader for the didactic portion of the Program.
- d) Assistant Program Director of Clinical Education functions as the Clinical Coordinator and is the PA Program faculty member serving as a leader for the clinical portion of the Program.
- e) Principal Faculty are those faculty working at least 50% FTE with primary academic responsibility assigned to the PA program who report to the program director.
- f) Instructional Faculty are the individuals providing instruction or supervision during the didactic and/or clinical phases of the Program, regardless of length of time of instruction, faculty status or rank.
- g) PA Program course is one listed in the Program curriculum sequence and deemed integral to student preparation for the PA profession.

3.0 Student Information

Any change in a student's name, address, telephone number, and/or emergency contact phone number(s) must be reported immediately to the Program Administrative Assistant via MSU email account. This is in addition to reporting changes to the University through Banner.

4.0 Professionalism [A3.14g, A3.16e, B2.19, B4.03e]

- a) Each student is subject to the Mississippi State University Code of Conduct. Refer to the [policy](#) for further detail: [A3.14g, A3.16e]
- b) As future medical providers, Physician Assistants students are expected to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct and behavior. As the student practices and prepares to become a healthcare professional, these standards of conduct and behavior are an integral part of the student assessment, promotion, and completion of the curriculum. In the academic, clinical and associated settings, the MSU PA Program student is expected to exhibit the following behaviors and/or characteristics:
 - a. Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others**
 - i. Acts with integrity in all situations.
 - ii. Displays academic honesty.
 1. Avoids sharing or receiving evaluation information or materials.
 2. Avoids plagiarism and cheating.

3. Submits true and accurate reports.
 4. Completes evaluations objectively and honestly.
 - iii. Follows rules and procedures of all associated organizations.
 - iv. Encourages others to behave honestly and ethically.
 - v. Assumes responsibility for personal actions and performance.
 - vi. Exercises prudent judgement in decision-making.
- b. Personal Improvement and Achievement**
- i. Demonstrates initiative to engage in and improve learning.
1. Present in class and related activities.
 2. Punctual to class and related activities.
 3. Prepared for participation and assessment for class and related activities.
 - ii. Demonstrates initiative to improve competence.
 - iii. Participates in classroom and self-directed learning.
 - iv. Solicits feedback and guidance with poise.
 - v. Performs self-reflection for personal improvement.
- c. Respect to Self and Others**
- i. Actively engages, listens, and participates in activities.
 - ii. Speaks respectfully to and about peers, faculty, staff, and patients.
 - iii. Avoids and disparages vulgar, abusive, or threatening comments or behavior.
 - iv. Present and punctual for all activities and events.
 - v. Works in collaboration with others.
 - vi. Maintains strict confidentiality of patient records or patient encounters (including but not limited to all HIPAA rules and guidelines).
 - vii. Displays cultural sensitivity.
 - viii. Respects the privacy and property of others.
- c) Each student must report to either the Program Director or the Clinical Coordinator any incident of which they are cognizant, and which appears to be unethical or of questionable nature, or in violation of the PA Program Rules and Regulations. Each student must inform the appropriate responsible person(s) and seek guidance if any such incident occurs.

5.0 Electronic Devices and Social Media Policy

- a) The MSU PA Program requires a laptop computer for enrollment; tablets and iPads are not compatible with all software and programs used by the program.
- b) Electronic devices and social media include all electronic-based technologies used as a means of communication and interaction among its users. Examples include, but are not limited to texting, emailing, and social networking. Students must maintain appropriate standards of conduct as it relates to the PA Program and professionalism as a physician assistant student. Failure to uphold these policies may be addressed as a professionalism violation.
- c) Each student must take responsibility and use prudent judgment related to all forms of social media.
- d) Threatening or harassing communication is strictly prohibited.
- e) Each student must not share any identifiable information about patients, other MSU students, faculty, employees, preceptors, or clinical affiliates via electronic means.
- f) All electronic communication with the MSU MPAS Program must be conducted via the free, University-supplied email account.
- g) By using a computer on the MSU IT infrastructure, students acknowledge that they are subject to the terms of the MSU IT policies and that they give their unrestricted consent to the monitoring, copying, and unrestricted distribution of any transmission/communication or image

generated, received by, sent by, or stored in the computer. Noncompliance could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from an academic program, and civil or criminal liability. Review the IT [policy](#) for more information.

- h) A student should exercise prudent judgement when communicating through all forms of electronic communication and social media. Students should be cautious not to place themselves in any position that may compromise, embarrass, or harm themselves, patients, clinical supervisors or staff, faculty, peers, clinical sites, the PA program, or the University. The following information should never be shared through electronic communication or social media:
- a. Confidential MSU information
 - b. Patient information, specific or non-specific
 - c. Images or recordings of academic or clinical activities
 - d. Intellectual or written materials owned by MSU and our partners

6.0 Student Role in Classroom and Clinical Site

- a) The role of the physician assistant student is that of a learner. Therefore, students are not permitted to assume functions that should be fulfilled by organizational employees. The PA Program does not allow students to substitute for:
- instructional faculty (didactic or clinical). No student may be a course instructor of record for any component of the curriculum. [A3.02, A3.03a,b]
 - clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs). This is outlined in the PA Program Preceptor Manual that is provided to clinical preceptors. [A3.03b]
- b) There are multiple physical examination and skill activities that occur throughout the program. In addition to training students in the role of practitioner, having students fill the role of patients during these activities helps them to become sensitive to the patient perspective. Additionally, active participation and repetition reinforce learning. Therefore, the PA Program:
- Requires the participation of students as human subjects during selected courses. It is the expectation of the Program that each student willingly participates in all aspects of the physical exam and technical skills training in a professional and cooperative manner. At various times, students will be asked to wear clothing that will easily allow physical examination by another student.
 - When appropriate, a student may be asked to wear a modestly appropriate tank top and shorts.
 - Appropriate draping will be available during training.
- c) The PA Program does not require students to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors and does not require students to coordinate clinical sites and preceptors for program-required rotations. Students may provide contact information for potential clinical rotations, but this will not be required. All supervised clinical practice experiences will undergo the same clinical site and preceptor evaluation procedures prior to sending a student to that site. [A3.08]
- d) Enrolled students must not be required to work for the program at any phase of the program [A3.03].

- e) The PA Program will record student encounters activities or assessments for the purposes of learning. Students are expected to participate in recorded encounters and agree that such are for use of the PA Program’s educational efforts solely and will not be utilized outside of class for any reason. Posting class related recordings on the internet is a violation of professionalism and could result in dismissal from the program.

7.0 ACADEMIC POLICIES [[A3.14a-h](#), [A3.16a, c-f](#)]

7.1 Requirements [[A3.4g](#)]

- a) Each student is subject to the Mississippi State University Code of Conduct. Refer to the [policy](#) for further detail. [[A3.14g](#)]
- b) According to the MSU MPAS Grading System: Only grades of “A” and “B” indicate satisfactory graduate work. A grade of “C” is considered unsatisfactory graduate work. See further discussion in [Probation](#) and [Dismissal 7.6](#).
- c) Students must complete all courses as published in the program curriculum; no courses for program completion can be substituted for any course outside the program or university. [[B2.01](#)]
- d) To remain in good academic standing in the PA Program, a student must be able to demonstrate all of the following:
- a current cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0
 - satisfactory completion of PA Program administrative requirements
 - satisfactory evidence of acceptable professional conduct

e) Grading System

1. Letter grades in the didactic phase of the Physician Assistant Program are assigned as below:

Letter Grade

A (89.50-100.00)

B (79.50-89.49)

C (69.50-79.49)

F (less than 69.50)

2. The grade of “F” indicates failure in a course.
3. The grade of “I” or “NG” is not a final grade and is recorded for a student with missing requirements at the time grades for the course are reported.
4. Scores of individual assessments will not be rounded. Final grade calculations will be rounded if greater than 0.50.
5. A graduate student who wishes to appeal a grade should refer to the MSU Grade Appeals Policy, Academic Operating Procedure (AOP) 13.14 [Grade Appeal & Academic Review Board | Policies \(msstate.edu\)](#) and appeal to the Academic Review Board.

f) Assessments

1. The Program Director has the option to re-examine any student at any time, or administer any additional test or tests, other than those regularly scheduled, with the objective of arriving at a more accurate evaluation of the student’s academic performance.
2. Examinations will not be administered prior to the scheduled time.
3. If the student misses an assessment for an excused absence, a makeup exam will be administered on the first day of return from absence or as scheduled by the course

director if there are scheduling conflicts. The rescheduled exam may be different in format than the original exam, but it will assess the same learning outcomes.

4. Assessments will not be rescheduled for an unexcused absence.
5. If a student arrives late for an assessment, the number of minutes late will be deducted from the total time allowed on the assessment.
6. A student will not be permitted to enter a testing location to begin an exam after another student has completed a written examination and exited the testing location.
7. Examination feedback may be given to students in a variety of methods, at the discretion of the course instructor.
8. Assessment delivery will vary and may include, but are not limited to, objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), written, electronic, practical or a combination.
9. Students who wish to request a testing accommodation or modification must first review [policy](#). Students requiring University-authorized accommodations should inform course directors at the beginning of the course or upon determination of need.
10. Informal requests for undocumented disabilities or an individual student preference cannot be honored.

1. COMPUTER/ELECTRONIC ASSESSMENTS

- a. All personal belongings (cellphones, books, backpacks, handbags, etc.), except a laptop computer, must be placed in a designated area 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start time for the examination.
- b. All electronic devices must be powered off for the duration of the exam.
- c. Scratch paper may be provided by the proctor. If so, this must be turned in at the completion of the exam with the student's name clearly identified.
- d. If a student arrives late for an assessment, the number of minutes late will be deducted from the total time allowed on the assessment.
- e. No exam content questions are permitted during the examination.
- f. Notify the proctor by raised hand if technical complications occur.
- g. Only the exam window (fully maximized) should be open during the test time; no exceptions unless instructed by the course director.
- h. Students are not permitted to leave the testing area prior to final submission, unless specified by the instructor. The student should report an emergent situation to the proctor and must be proctored while outside the testing area.
- i. After completion of the exam, students must exit quickly and quietly, respecting others. The students should exit the floor on which the assessment is administered.
- j. Students must not congregate outside the classroom.

**Failure to comply with these procedures will likely result in a score of zero on the assessment , a professionalism violation and may result in a Honor Code violation.

7.2 Progression [A3.14a-c, B4.03e]

- a) A student must complete all PA Program courses in each semester with a Cumulative GPA > 3.0 to qualify for progression in good academic standing.
- b) The first final course grade of "C" will result in the student progressing on Academic Probation. See [Probation 7.4](#).
- c) The second final course grade of "C" will result in dismissal from the program. See [Dismissal 7.6](#).
- d) Each course within a given semester must be successfully completed prior to progression to the next semester.

- e) All curricular components and other PA Program completion requirements must be completed within 40-months from the date of matriculation into the program. Rare exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Program Director based on compelling hardship.
- f) Professionalism violations may affect progression or academic standing in the program. See [Probation 7.4](#) and [Dismissal 7.6](#).

7.3 Remediation [[A2.05](#), [A3.14c](#), [A3.16d,e](#), [B4.01b](#)]

Students are assessed on the program's established program learning outcomes (competencies), professionalism, and performance on an ongoing basis. The faculty may identify the at-risk student at any time through review of academic performance, advisory sessions, faculty meetings, and/or any other observable behavior. Formative assessments are useful for monitoring a student's learning and provide feedback to the student to improve their understanding of the material. Summative assessments evaluate a student's learning at the end of an instructional unit/module and/or course. Formative and Summative assessments are outlined in each course syllabus.

Remediation in Didactic Courses

- a) **Formative Assessment:** If a student scores less than 80% on a formative assessment, the student is encouraged to contact the course director for content clarification and informal remediation to include identification of areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- b) **Summative Assessment:** If a student scores less than 80% on a summative assessment, the student must contact the course director via MSU email within 48 hours of grade release, acknowledging need for a remediation assignment.
 - The remediation assignment and criteria for satisfactory completion and due date will be provided. Unsatisfactory completion of a remediation assignment, including timely submission, will be treated as a professionalism violation and disqualify the student from reassessment opportunity.
 - Mandatory tutoring provided by the program is required following the summative assessment. Tutoring typically occurs outside of class time. The course director will provide more details regarding duration of tutoring and any assignments associated with tutoring.

Grade Change Reassessment: The student *may* elect to reassess upon successful completion of a remediation assignment. Reassessment method and format may vary.

- Two (2) reassessments are permitted for courses > 5 credit hours.
- One (1) reassessment is permitted for courses < 5 credit hours.
- Three (3) reassessments are permitted per semester across all courses.
- Timing:
 - For written examinations, the program will publish reassessment date opportunities each term.
 - Reassessment of summative OSCE, presentation or written assignment will be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor of record.
 - All grade change reassessments must be completed prior to the last week of any semester, except in the following described instance:
 - The reassessment of the last examination of a course will only be permitted if the student has a final course grade of less than 79.5%; remediation and reassessment must occur within 7 days of grade release of the last assessment.

- **Grade Change Procedure**

- The student must achieve a minimum score of 70% on reassessment to be eligible for grade change, and the maximum recoverable score is 80%.
- If a student scores between 70-79.99%, the raw score will be entered in the gradebook
- If a student scores > 80%, a grade of 80 will be recorded in the gradebook.
- The original score will remain in the gradebook for any student who scores less than 70% on reassessment.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience: Remediation policies will be outlined in detail in the clinical handbook.

Professionalism

Professionalism is a graded component of multiple courses and part of the competency each student is required to attain for completion of the program. The program utilizes Professional Conduct Correction Notes for documenting professionalism deficiencies or violations. [A3.14g, A3.16e, B4.03e]

- 1st Professional Conduct Correction Note: Meet with Program Administration
 - The student will be required to meet with a program administrator to review the violation and strategies for improved professional behavior.
 - Remediation assignments may be required. These assignments may include but are not limited to:
 - Reflective journaling
 - Essay assignments
 - Role play exercises
- 2nd Professional Conduct Correction Note: Meet with Program Director
 - The student will be required to meet with the Program Director to discuss the lapses in professional and additional strategies for improved professional behavior.
 - Remediation assignments as discussed above will be required.
 - The student may be placed on academic probation based on the degree of imprudence and/or potential harm associated with the patterns of behavior.
 - The student may be referred to the Promotion and Retention Committee for review and recommendations.
- 3rd Professional Conduct Correction Note: Review before Promotion and Retention Committee
 - The student will be required to meet with the Promotion and Retention Committee to discuss patterns of unprofessional behavior(s).
 - Remediation assignments as discussed above will be required.
 - The student will be placed on academic probation for professionalism violation(s) unless the student was previously placed on probation. See Section 7.6.
 - The student may be removed from clinical rotations with delay of graduation.
 - The student may be dismissed if the student exhibits unprofessional behavior refractory to counseling and remediation.
- Egregious professionalism violations will require skipping any level of Professional Conduct Correction Note and may warrant disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Egregious professionalism violations include, but are not limited to:
 - behavior that violates program or university policies;
 - behavior that violates state, federal, or local laws and ordinances (regardless of whether or not the student is found guilty of such behavior);

- behavior that poses a risk to or endangers the safety, welfare, and/or security of oneself or others; and/or
- behavior that violates the rights of oneself or others.

7.4 Probation

1. A student will be placed on probation for any of the following:
 - Any final course grade “C” or less.
 - Professionalism violations refractory to remediation efforts or with unsatisfactory remediation efforts.
 - Egregious professionalism violation which include behaviors that violate:
 - Program or university policies
 - State or federal laws
 - Safety or security of self or others
 - Rights of oneself or others
2. A student must meet one of the following conditions to return to good academic standing:
 - In the didactic phase, probationary status for academic reasons must be removed by earning a cumulative GPA > 3.0 in the subsequent term without additional academic or professionalism violation(s) to warrant academic probation.
 - In the clinical phase, probationary status must be removed in the subsequent term with successful completion of all courses and cumulative GPA > 3.0 without additional academic or professionalism violation(s) to warrant academic probation.
 - Probationary status for professionalism reasons must be removed as outlined in the probationary letter.
3. The student will only be placed on academic probation once; any academic or professional offense warranting probationary status for a second time will result in dismissal from the program.
4. To protect the success of the student, individuals who are on probation for academic or professional reasons will be relieved of their programmatic extra-curricular activities, including relief of student government roles.

7.5 Deceleration

- The MSU MPAS Program does not permit deceleration for academic reasons. [A3.14d]
- Students who take a leave of absence for extenuating life events may be granted deceleration on a case-by-case basis. Students are strongly encouraged to meet all program requirements as scheduled. The restart date for a student who has been permitted a leave of absence for extenuating life events will be determined by the Program.

7.6 Dismissal

- a) The following will result in dismissal from the program: [A3.14f]
 1. Final cumulative grade of F in any PA Program course, or failure of a course for any other reason.
 2. Second final cumulative grade of less than “B” (80%) in any PA Program course for any reason.

3. Failure to achieve letter grade B in a clinical rotation course and/or incomplete performance in a second clinical rotation course.
 4. Failing to meet GPA requirements to enter the clinical phase.
 5. Final cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at the conclusion of the PA Program Curriculum.
 6. Failure to successfully complete and pass (80%) any component of the end-of-program Summative Evaluation, including the Capstone Project (PAS 8322) or the Summative Experience (PAS 8312).
 7. Egregious professionalism violation which may include behaviors that violate:
 1. Program or university policies
 2. State or federal laws
 3. Safety or security of self or others
 4. Rights of oneself or others
 8. Persistent unprofessional behavior refractory to remediation.
 9. Any academic or professional offense warranting probationary status for a second time will result in dismissal from the program.
 10. Failure to comply with program or clinical site administrative requirements.
 11. Considering the public responsibility of a Physician Assistant, violations of the Code of Student Conduct and/or Student Honor Code are not tolerated.
 1. Allegations, including academic dishonesty of any kind, will be referred to the appropriate office as outlined in the applicable policy.
 2. A student will not be permitted to transition to the clinical phase of the program until a decision is reached, which may result in delay in graduation.
 3. If the student is found to be responsible for violation of either policy, the student will be dismissed from the program and ineligible for readmission.
 4. Refer to the following MSU [policies](#).
- b) Should a student dispute the dismissal, they should consult the [Probation, Dismissal and Appeal section of the MSU Graduate Catalog](#): The procedures and processes are outlined therein.

7.7 Summative Evaluation [B4.03]

- a) Prior to graduation, students in the PA Program are required to pass the Summative Evaluation, including the Summative Experience course (PAS 8312) and Capstone Project (PAS 8322) to verify that each student has attained the defined program competencies to enter clinical practice. This will consist of topics such as patient care skills, diagnostic interpretation, medical decision-making, interpersonal skills, and professionalism.
- b) The Summative Evaluation will include multiple evaluative components including an End of Curriculum Exam, skills assessments, and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). [C3.04]
- c) The Summative Experience will occur within the final four months of the clinical year, prior to graduation.

7.8 Program Completion [A3.11d, A3.14a, b, B4.03]

In order to complete the PA Program, a student must satisfactorily meet the following guidelines. [C3.04]

- Good academic standing
- Cumulative GPA > 3.0
- Meet MSU graduate school standards for graduation

- Satisfactory completion of every course set forth in the program’s curriculum
- Achieve competency in all learning outcomes of the clinical phase
- Satisfactorily complete the summative evaluation, including successful completion of Summative Experience (PAS 8312) and Capstone Project (PAS 8322) with a minimum grade of “B.”

7.9 Student Evaluation and Input

Student input is valued by the PA Program, and it is crucial for the continual growth and improvement of the program and faculty. At various points in the program, the student will be asked to complete surveys on curriculum, program policies, effectiveness of activities, and other program aspects. Participating in these surveys is expected and is an important part of the participation in the MSU MPAS Program and the evolving professionalism of the student.

Honest, objective feedback is encouraged and expected.

8.0 Clinical Phase Requirements

- To enter the clinical year and begin supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs), the student must:
- Successfully complete all components of the didactic phase with cumulative GPA > 3.0.
- Successfully complete the Clinical Transitions course requirements, including clinical orientation and successfully demonstrate competency in the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)
- Successfully and satisfactorily complete the required safety trainings (Sharps Safety, Bloodborne Pathogens, Biosafety Principles and Practices and 10-hour OSHA training)
- Meet Technical Standards as published in the Student Handbook
- Be current on all university tuition and fees
- Provide documentation of the following:
 - Background Check acceptable to clinical sites
 - Urine Drug Screen acceptable to clinical sites
 - Medical Clearance
 - Immunization record based on current CDC guidelines for healthcare workers and site-specific vaccination requirements [A3.09a]; additional health requirements specific to the clinical site
 - Proof of current health insurance
 - Copy of current government identification
 - BLS, ACLS, PALS certification

9.0 Clinical Year Policies

Clinical year policies will be outlined in the Clinical Handbook.

The Program is responsible for clinical site recruitment for supervised clinical practice experiences.

Students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. [A3.08]

10.0 Compliance Training and Certifications

Students are required to complete industry-specific training throughout the program. The program provides a framework for the student to successfully complete the requirements for all scheduled programmatic activities. For training or certifications missed for any reason, the student assumes financial responsibility for completion. Delay in completion of the required training or certifications may result in a delay in participation of program requirements, graduation, and/or result in additional

programmatic costs to be incurred by the student. Each student is required to complete the following trainings in accordance with a schedule provided by the program:

- Sharps Safety training
- Biosafety training
- Blood-borne pathogen training
- HIPAA compliance training
- 10-hour OSHA training
- BLS certification from an American Heart Association (AHA) sponsored organization and
- ACLS and PALS certification

11.0 Identification [B3.06]

In all supervised clinical practice experience areas during the didactic and clinical phases, each PA student must be readily identifiable at all times. This is achieved through the following:

Display of program-approved nametag, identifying the wearer as a MSU Physician Assistant Student

Display of program approved patch on the white coat worn during clinical training

Verbal introduction of self as a "Physician Assistant Student"

Display of clinical site issued identification

While participating as a student of the MSU PA Program, the student must identify oneself as such, and is prohibited from identifying by any other title, profession, or practice, or under any other professional license.

12.0 Liability Insurance

The University will purchase liability insurance on behalf of each student after receiving payment from the student for such coverage. This coverage will extend to claims made against the students during their supervised clinical practice experiences. This policy does not cover a student for clinical or other activities that are not directly associated with the PA Program or assigned supervised clinical practice experiences. The student should request further information from the University's Risk Management Officer if they have any questions related to liability insurance. MSU is a self-insured entity.

13.0 Program Schedules

- a) The academic calendar for the MSU MPAS Program is different from the standard academic calendar published by the university. The academic calendar for the MSU MPAS Program will be distributed to all students and is subject to change.
- b) Director's Hour Attendance is mandatory. Unexplained or unexcused late arrival, early departure or absence will result in a professionalism violation.
- c) The Clinical Phase calendar for the MSU MPAS Program is different from the standard academic calendar published by the university. The Clinical Phase calendar will be distributed to all students and is subject to change.
- d) Each student will also receive individualized rotation schedules which are subject to change.

14.0 Attendance / Participation

- a) Punctuality, full attendance and participation is required in all program scheduled activities and experiences.
- b) There will be additional PA Program learning activities outside of regularly scheduled courses. All students are expected to attend and participate in these events, meeting all attendance

standards. Students will be given advanced notice regarding activities outside of the regular schedule. Excused absence policies will apply. Unexcused absences will result in a professionalism violation.

- c) For classroom instruction, students are expected to be seated in the classroom, before the course activities begin, and shall remain for the duration of each class.
- d) Students are expected to promptly return from breaks. Returning to class late from breaks will be treated as late arrivals, and professionalism standards and attendance policies will apply.
- e) Missing more than 15 minutes of a class meeting, continuous or in segmented time frames, will be considered absence for which policies regarding excused and unexcused absences will apply.
- f) The program will follow [MSU OP 12.09](#): Class Attendance and Reporting Absences.
- g) Excused Absences are defined in [MSU OP 12.09](#):
 - a. These approved excused absences are not subject to instructor discretion in course attendance penalties:
 - i. Participation in an official university activity with authorization from an appropriate administrator sponsoring the activity. If the validity of the activity is questionable, the matter should be referred to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for final resolution.
 - ii. Death in a student's immediate family to include a student's parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, spouse or partner, as well as natural, adopted and/or in-law children.
 - iii. Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
 - iv. Religious holy day.
 - v. Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
 - vi. Required participation in military duties.
 - vii. Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
 - b. Documentation of the above excused absences requires signed documentation from the appropriate source (e.g. medical provider, court agent, military supervisor, religious calendar etc.) verifying the student's absence. All documentation must be submitted to each relevant course instructor(s) and program administrative assistant upon returning to class.
- h) Reporting Absences
 - a. All absences must be reported to all affected course instructors and program project coordinator.
 - b. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructors via email by 10:00am on the day of the absence.
 - c. Extenuating circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the program.
 - d. Failure to report an absence will be regarded as an unexcused absence.
 - e. Abuse or fraudulent documentation of the Attendance and/or Reporting Absences policies is an Honor Code violation and will be referred to the Honor Code Office. Additionally, this behavior will be considered as an egregious professionalism violation and is grounds for dismissal from the program.
- i) If a class session or laboratory is canceled, students are responsible for the planned activities and assignments as listed in the syllabus or communicated from the instructor via MSU email or Canvas.
- j) Excused absence from course work or clinical assignments due to attendance at national conferences, state conferences, or other such professional meetings is at the discretion of the PA

Program. Requests for an excused absence should be submitted with a schedule of the planned activities a minimum of six (6) weeks in advance.

- k) Regardless of the reason for the absence, a student will be required to complete a missed assessment on the first day upon return or as previously arranged with the course instructor. The exam/assignment may be in a different format but will assess the same learning outcomes.
- l) Regardless of the reason of absence, a student will be required to submit missed assignments on the published due date unless alternate arrangements are made with the course instructor prior to the due date.
- m) Chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness to educational activities is a professionalism violation, and the professionalism policies apply.

15.0 Inclement Weather and Program Activity Cancellation

- a) For the didactic portion of the curriculum, if severe weather threatens the University, MSU Meridian's executive vice president and head of campus will decide if the University will close or will remain open. For more details, refer to the [University Maroon Alert website](#).
- b) For the clinical portion of the curriculum, if severe weather threatens the clinical rotation site, the appropriate individual(s) will decide if the clinical site will open or will remain open. If the site is closed, the student should regard this in the same manner as if the University was closed. The student should immediately report the closing to the Clinical Coordinator via email.

16.0 Leave of Absence

- a) In the event a matriculated student in the PA Program encounters a situation which requires a prolonged absence from the program, the student may either withdraw from the program or request a Leave of Absence.
- b) A request for a Leave of Absence must be submitted in writing to the Program Director with adequate information to provide a compelling reason the leave of absence should be granted. At minimum, the request should outline the circumstances, timeline in which the student expects the circumstances to change, and the student's plan of action for successful return with specific dates.
- c) In no instance will a student be granted more than one leave of absence as a matriculant of the program. In the event the student is indisposed, the written requirement may be waived, or the Program Director may initiate the action independently.
- d) The Program Director, in consultation with the Program Faculty, may grant or deny the Leave of Absence request. In an effort to keep the student on track with their cohort and to support student success, conditions will be determined individually and changes to the plan of return may be proposed by the Program Director.
- e) If a Leave of Absence is taken for medical reasons, a new medical clearance form must be provided to continue in the program.

17.0 Withdrawal

A student wishing to withdraw from a course or the program must follow MSU guidelines [A3.14e], as established in the [MSU Catalog](#),

Withdrawing from a course results in automatic withdrawal from the PA program, unless the student submits sufficient justification to the PA Program Director and receives approval for a Leave of Absence.

A student may voluntarily withdraw from the PA Program at any time.

Any student who withdraws or is dismissed from the PA Program and later wishes to rejoin the program must meet the published admissions requirements and procedures for the cohort intended to join and

participate in the complete application process. Applicants for re-admission are evaluated in the same manner as all other new applicants.

18.0 Disciplinary Procedures

All other disciplinary matters are handled pursuant to typical [MSU operating policies](#).

19.0 Dress Code

- a) Students are expected to be well-groomed and appropriately dressed in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of ambassadorship and professionalism necessary to represent the MSU MPAS Program with integrity. Business casual is expected for routine classroom activities; program scrubs will be permitted as directed by course instructor.
- b) Students should have excellent daily hygiene that includes clean teeth, hair, clothes, and nails.
- c) Professional attire is mandatory for students when participating in all circumstances in which a student will have contact with patients.
- d) Professional Attire is required except when outlined by the program or course director:
 - a. Clothing should be conservative fashion with nametag as noted in the "Identification" policy above.
 - b. Clothing should be clean, pressed, and in good condition.
 - c. Shoes must be clean and in good condition.
 - d. Shoes must be closed toe and heel.
 - e. Heels of shoes should be no higher than two inches.
 - f. Facial hair must be neatly groomed.
 - g. All students must be fragrance-free (includes abstaining from wearing cologne/perfume).
 - h. All body art and piercings must be concealed.
 - i. During any live or simulated patient encounter or assessment
 - j. Wear minimal jewelry (limit of 2 earrings per ear, no facial or visible body jewelry)
 - k. No pins, bracelets, long necklaces, dangling earrings or large rings
 - l. Fingernails should be kept clean and trimmed not to exceed ¼ inch past the end of the finger.
 - m. Nail polish, artificial nails/wraps or acrylic overlays are not permitted for reasons of infection control.
 - n. Hair longer than shoulder length must be pulled back and contained in a suitable manner.
- e) Hospital Scrubs are not to be worn in clinical areas unless approved by the clinical preceptor.

20.0 Faculty Advising

- a) Each PA student will be assigned a faculty member to serve as an advisor. Students are encouraged to meet regularly with their advisors, and advisors may request additional meetings with students as they deem necessary.
- b) Meetings
 - a. Advisee meetings in the didactic phase should be scheduled at least one (1) meeting each semester.
 - b. It is the responsibility of the student to contact their advisor to initiate routine meetings.
- c) Each faculty member must provide timely access or referral of students to services addressing personal issues, which may affect their progress in the PA Program.

- a. Weems Community Mental Health Counseling Services are provided to all students free of charge.
- b. Contact information is found on the back of all MSU Meridian ID Badges. [Weems Community Mental Health Center](#) 601-483-4821, or 1-800-803-0245 [A3.07]
- c. [Virtual counseling services](#) are offered through the University.
- d. The [Dean of Students Office](#) can also offer support and assistance in how to seek counseling, as well as assistance in navigating other personal or academic challenges.

21.0 Gathering Student Data

The MSU MPAS Program is committed to developing and maintaining an excellent learning experience. Therefore, the program will collect and analyze data for continuous self-assessment. Student participation is expected as part of professionalism obligations. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Program evaluations
- Graduate surveys
- Course and instructor evaluations
- Preceptor and clinical site evaluation

22.0 Transportation and Housing

During their tenure in the PA Program, each student is responsible for their own housing and transportation to and from all assigned program activities. Required rotations can occur outside of the region or state. In addition, each student is also responsible for any expenses incurred during all program activities including food, parking, and any other incidentals. Clinical rotations may occur outside the commutable area, and the student is responsible for associated housing expenses.

23.0 Outside Employment

- a) Students are strongly cautioned against accepting any outside employment while enrolled in the MSU PA Program. The rigor and continuity of the Program is such that employment may detract from course responsibilities and impair academic and/or clinical performance. Each student should also realize there may be requirements for evening, night, or weekend program activities. [A3.14i]
- b) Employment responsibilities are not considered an acceptable excuse for violation of the Attendance policy.
- c) A potential conflict of interest may occur when a clinical training site is also the student's place of employment. In such cases, the student must notify the PA Program prior to beginning the clinical rotation. At the Program's discretion, the student may be reassigned to an alternate clinical experience. In no instance may a student's training overlap with employment.
- d) It is not permissible for students to receive payment by their preceptor for the tasks they perform while on clinical rotations. While on clinical rotation, students may not provide services within the clinical supervisor's practice apart from those rendered for their educational value and as part of the clinical instruction experience. [A3.02]
- e) Students are not permitted to perform clerical, instructional, or administrative work for the program or supervised clinical practice experiences during the didactic or clinical years [A3.02, A3.03a,b]

24.0 Indebtedness

All financial indebtedness incurred at MSU must be paid in full before the University awards the Master of Physician Assistant Studies Degree. Students with outstanding debts to MSU may be prevented from registration in subsequent semesters. This does not include student educational loans secured through the Financial Aid Office.

25.0 Incident or Injury

- a) In case of an emergency, call 911 immediately.
- b) In the event of an incident that may place a PA Student in harm's way, but no injury has occurred, the PA student must notify the Program as soon as possible. Contacting the PA Program can be accomplished by:
 - a. calling the Program during office hours at (601)-696-2320, and/or
 - b. calling the Program Director at (601)-484-0160.
- c) In the event of an incident resulting in an injury to a PA Student occurring during a PA Program activity, the appropriate PA Faculty member must complete the Incident Report Form. Click [here](#) to access the University Incident/Liability Claim Reporting Form.
- d) Once the student has received proper medical care as sought by the student, the PA Program is to be notified within 24 hours.

26.0 Weapons

- a) It is the policy of the MSU Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program to follow the safety guidelines as determined by MSU policy. Except when carried by law enforcement, weapons of any kind are inappropriate in a healthcare setting, and this includes healthcare educational programs.
- b) Patients, students, faculty and staff must feel safe. Anything overt or hidden that may be construed as making a reasonable individual uncomfortable or feel unsafe is explicitly prohibited.
- c) Please refer to the [MSU OP 91.120](#).
- d) While off-campus at clinical rotations, the policies of the institution supersede the policies of the University and should be strictly followed.

27.0 Student Grievances [A3.14g]

Any student issue not addressed elsewhere in University Policy (such as Sexual Harassment and Grades), that cannot be satisfactorily resolved under the student's own power should be addressed with the Office of the [Dean of Students](#) or the [Graduate School](#).

28.0 Other Situations

- a) Any other situation or condition not clearly addressed in the Student Handbook should be brought to the attention of the Program. Each concern will be considered independently according to the merits of the case. Each concern will receive thorough review and be managed in a manner as closely aligned to the policies and procedures of the program and university as possible.
- b) If any of the PA Program Rules and Regulations comes into conflict with the student's religious or other beliefs, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate their concern with the appropriate Program Faculty or Program Director immediately. These Rules and Regulations may be amended periodically by the Program.
- c) In an effort to provide the highest quality education opportunity, these Rules and Regulations may be amended by the Program with written notification to the student.

29.0 Disciplinary Procedures

All other disciplinary matters are handled pursuant to normal [MSU operating policies](#).

Requirements of Accepted Applicants

Prerequisite Screenings

- Accepted applicants must pass, with standards acceptable to medical facilities, a criminal background check and urine drug screens.
- New convictions while enrolled in the program, misdemeanor or felony, will result in dismissal from the program.
- Students who do not complete, falsify, or do not pass screening will forfeit their seat, and the seat deposit will not be refunded.
- Students are responsible for all costs related to screening.
- Students are advised that results of criminal background checks and other required background screening will be released to third parties involved in their clinical education.

Medical Clearance & Immunizations

Applicants offered a seat in the MSU MPAS program must undergo a physical examination, immunizations and/or titers, TB testing, and completion of Health Forms prior to the start of the program. Requirements are based on current [CDC guidelines for healthcare workers](#) including immunizations and [Tuberculosis Screening](#).

Failure to comply with the timeline provided by the program without written permission and compliance plan, will result in seat forfeiture or dismissal from the program. Failure to comply during the course of the program may result in delayed graduation and/or dismissal due to failure to comply with program requirements. Under no circumstance will students be permitted to participate in clinical experiences without medical clearance. Students are required to comply with clinical site requirements where clinical experiences are gained during the didactic and clinical phases. There are wide variations of requirements regarding testing, screening, and vaccinations. The inability of the student to meet clinical site requirements, and the inability of the PA program to place the student at another approved location within a reasonable time period, may result in rescheduling the clinical experience, delay in their graduation, and/or the inability to successfully complete the program. Additional expenses are the responsibility of the student.

Most clinical sites have COVID-19 vaccination requirements. The mandate may apply to all full-time and part-time workers, vendors, medical and allied health students, contract employees, agency nurses, and volunteers. Students may be required to demonstrate proof of vaccination before participating in activities which occur in these facilities.

Health Insurance

Applicants offered a seat in the MSU MPAS program must provide proof of major medical insurance. Insurance may be acquired through a family major medical policy or through a private insurance agency. It is highly advisable that the insurance plan chosen offers appropriate coverage throughout the state of Mississippi. The student should check with his/her insurance company as to the coverage provided for accidental exposure. It is important for students to realize that medical expenses for care provided by student health services or other health care providers, including laboratory procedures and emergency care, are the responsibility of the student and not the physician assistant program or Mississippi State

University. Any injury or accidental exposure IS NOT covered under workmen's compensation since the student is not an employee.

The physician assistant program strongly advises all students to acquire disability insurance, to provide protection in the event of a long-term illness or injury.

Failure to comply prior to the start of the program can result in seat forfeiture. Failure to comply while in the program can result in a delay in graduation or dismissal from the program.

Student Handbook

Statement of Understanding [A3.01, A3.14]

Student Name: _____

A. Working with Diverse Groups

I understand that as part of the educational experience in the MSU MPAS Program, I will work with individuals representing a variety of cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation and socioeconomic backgrounds. I agree to participate in such educational experiences with individuals regardless of their background.

B. Health Status

I have reviewed the MSU MPAS Program Technical Standards, and, to the best of my knowledge, I do not have any condition (physical or mental) which will compromise my ability to perform the duties expected of me as a student in this program.

C. BLS & ACLS Certification

I understand that current American Heart Association BLS and ACLS certifications are required prior to beginning the clinical phase of the program and that it is my responsibility to maintain certification during the entire clinical curriculum and will provide the appropriate documentation.

D. Clinical Rotations Agreement

I understand that the MSU MPAS Program assigns all clinical rotations and that there is no guarantee I will be assigned to a specific location or preceptor. I also understand that clinical rotation sites are subject to change, sometimes without advanced warning. During the clinical curriculum, PA students may have to relocate for periods of time due to availability of clinical sites. Students are expected to provide their own transportation and housing.

E. Communications

I understand that email is the primary means of communication for the MSU MPAS Program. I will check my MSU email account on a daily basis and respond in a timely manner. Course-related communication may occur in CANVAS or via MSU email. Furthermore, I understand that I may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to respond to faculty or staff communications in a timely manner.

F. PA Program Student Handbook

I know how to access the online version (pdf) of the MSU MPAS Program Student Handbook, have reviewed it in its entirety and have had all my questions satisfactorily answered. Furthermore, I attest that I understand and agree to comply with all provisions outlined in the Student Handbook.

By my signature, I indicate that I have reviewed and know how to access a final copy of the Student Handbook. I understand the contents. I understand I am bound by the policies and procedures provided in the Student Handbook, current graduate school catalog, and university policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

January 2019. Revised August 2022, December 2022, December 2023, November 2024, December 2025

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Didactic Handbook Class of 2028

Administrative Signatures of Approval



Pamela Vuyda, DMS, PA-C Program Director

Date: 4/2/2026 _____



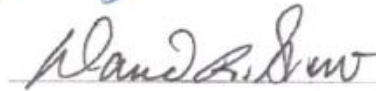
Lesley Clack, ScD, CPH, Dean of School of Health Professions

Date: 5/20/26 _____



Joan Lucas, JD, General Counsel

Date: 4/9/26 _____



David Shaw, PhD, Provost and Executive Vice President

Date: 5.21.26 _____