

# JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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College of Health & Behavioral Studies – Department of Health Professions



## POLICY MANUAL

(Last revision, May 2025)

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Graduate Physician Assistant (PA) Program! We are part of the James Madison University (JMU) Graduate School and the Department of Health Professions within the College of Health and Behavioral Studies. Our Program is 28-months long and is divided into a 16-month didactic phase and a 12-month clinical phase.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the PA Program, the Department, and JMU in general. It is a supplement to, but does not replace, university, department, and graduate school student handbooks. This handbook serves to clarify the logistic and administrative aspects of both the didactic and clinical phases of the Program. Students are highly encouraged to carefully read this handbook in its entirety. An additional "Clinical Phase Handbook" will be provided during your orientation week for the clinical year.

Upon receipt and complete review of this handbook, each student is required to sign and return the form on the final page acknowledging his/her receipt and review of this handbook. Your signature also denotes your understanding and agreement with the handbook content and policies.

Your journey ahead will no doubt be very challenging yet rewarding. We look forward to guiding your studies and path to becoming successful physician assistants.

Sincerely,

The JMU Physician Assistant Program Faculty & Staff

## About the PA Profession/Program History

### Definition of a PA

A PA is an individual who is licensed by a state and/or credentialed by a federal employer to practice medicine as delegated by and with the supervision of a physician.

### Background & Description of the PA Profession

PAs are academically and clinically prepared to practice medicine under the supervision of a physician. The physician-PA relationship is essential to the PA profession and enriches the delivery of high-quality health care that is patient-centered. PAs make independent clinical decisions and provide a wide range of preventative, diagnostic, therapeutic, and health maintenance services. PAs practice in both primary care and specialty care and in both medical and surgical practice settings. PA practice may also include academic, administrative, and research activities. PAs work in virtually all health care settings, including clinics, hospitals, other health care facilities, schools, and the military.

### Brief Program History

Following a needs assessment and feasibility study that concluded in 1996, James Madison University decided to add a Physician Assistant Program to its other health professions educational programs. The initial faculty members came onboard between 1997 and 1999 to develop the Program and design the curriculum. The Program was initially awarded accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) in March of 1999. The first class of twenty-one students was admitted in May 1999 and graduated in May 2001, receiving a Bachelor of Health Sciences degree with a concentration in Physician Assistant. The program remained at the Bachelor's degree level through the graduating class of 2005. Beginning with the class of 2006, in keeping with the national trend in PA education, the degree awarded by the Program was changed to a Master of Physician Assistant Studies where it remains today. ***Through December 2024, the Program has graduated 578 students!*** The graduates have proceeded to serve as clinical PAs in Virginia, across the U.S., and even internationally. They work in both primary care and specialty practices, in both out-patient and hospital settings, helping the program to meet its mission to, "provide educational opportunities and to foster a culture of wellness for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function as primary care physician assistants, serving the medical needs of the Commonwealth of Virginia and society in general including rural and medically underserved areas".

## Mission, Objectives, Goals/Outcomes, & Competencies

### Mission Statement

To provide educational opportunities and to foster a culture of wellness for students to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and resiliency necessary to function as primary care physician assistants, serving the medical needs of the Commonwealth of Virginia and society in general, including rural and medically underserved areas.

### Objectives

- Objective #1: To provide a curriculum that balances basic sciences, clinical sciences, and supervised clinical experiences in a manner that prepares graduates with a solid foundation upon which to begin their career in medicine
- Objective #2: To promote and demonstrate resiliency and professional practice that is patient-centered primary care in focus, culturally competent, inter-professional in approach, and service-oriented

Goal	Outcomes
Goal #1: A PANCE first-time taker pass rate that is $\geq 90\%$	The Class of December 2024 had a PANCE first-time taker pass rate of 97% (32 out of 33 students)
Goal #2: All graduates who sit for the PANCE will eventually pass, though up to 10% will need more than one attempt to do so	All 2024 graduates (100%) have passed the PANCE (one student passed on their 2 <sup>nd</sup> attempt).
Goal #3: A mean cohort score on the combined PANCE 'Organ System' section of $\geq 70\%$	The Class of December 2024 had a mean score of 81.6% on the combined PANCE 'Organ System' sections
Goal #4: At least 95% of students per cohort will be rated favorably by clinical preceptors on the evaluation of students' professional behavior	The Class of 2024 had 100% favorable ratings
Goal #5: An attrition rate of less than 10%, based upon an average of the past five-years	There is a 1.2% attrition rate over the past five-years (Classes 2020-2024)
Goal #6: An employment rate for graduates will be 95% at six-months after graduation	The class of 2023 had a 100% employment rate at six-months after graduation

### Program Required Competencies

Program required competencies are modeled after the competencies for the PA profession that were developed by four national organizations (NCCPA, ARC-PA, AAPA, and PAEA):

1. Medical Knowledge
2. Interpersonal & Communication Skills
3. Patient Care
4. Professionalism
5. Practice-based Learning & Improvement
6. Systems-based Practice

*More detailed information on these competencies is found in Appendix D, on page 78.*

\*The program's mission, objectives, goals, outcomes, and competencies are in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.12b** which states, "*The program must define, publish and make readily available to enrolled and prospective students general program information to include – evidence of its effectiveness in meeting its goals*".



## Inclusive Excellence – An Inventory of Topics in the Curriculum

Below is a snapshot of some of the courses, lessons, and events related to inclusive excellence that are part of our standard didactic and clinical curricula. In any given year, there will likely be more opportunities offered, but this is a baseline.

PROGRAM PHASE	TIMING	ACTIVITY/EVENT	COURSE (if applicable)
DIDACTIC PHASE	Program Orientation	Presentation/discussion of this inventory	N/A
		Intro to the Graduate School's THRIVE Program	N/A
	Semester 1 (Fall)	Poverty Simulation (via IIHHS)	PA 540 - The PA Profession
		Cultural Competency Lecture/Discussion	PA 540 - The PA Profession
		Cultural Competency Workshop (via IIHHS)	PA 540 - The PA Profession
		Medical Interpreter Training	PA 510 - Physical Diagnosis I
		Sexual Minority Health Learning Modules: Introduction to LGBT+ Terminology, Implicit Bias, & Inclusivity in Clinical Practice	PA 510 - Physical Diagnosis I
		SBIRT Training	PA 510 - Physical Diagnosis I
		Cultural Sensitivity/Empathy in the Medical Interview	PA 510 - Physical Diagnosis I
	Semester 2 (Spring)	History of medical students & development of the Institutional Review Board (i.e., Tuskegee experiments)	PA 551 - Medical Biostatistics
		Sexual Minority Health Patient Simulations	N/A
		Student-Engaged Medical Clinic	N/A
		Suitcase Clinic	N/A
	Semester 3 (Summer)	Access to Healthcare Lecture/Discussion	PA 659 - Healthcare Environment
		Trauma Informed Care	PA 511 - Physical Diagnosis II
		LGBT+ Terminology Overview/Human Sexuality Lecture	PA 624 - Behavioral Medicine
		Student-Engaged Medical Clinic	N/A
		Suitcase Clinic	N/A
	Semester 4 (Fall)	Pediatric Rehabilitation & Common Diagnoses Workshop	PA 623 - Pediatric Medicine
		Pediatric Social Determinants of Disease	PA 623 - Pediatric Medicine
		Student-Engaged Medical Clinic	N/A
		Suitcase Clinic	N/A
CLINICAL PHASE	Clinical Year	Bedside manner and approach to patients lecture	Clinical Phase Orientation
		Socioeconomics & obesity lecture	PA 625 - Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
		Defining what is important for patients (culture, race, religion) lecture	PA 625 - Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
		Cultural competency lecture	PA 643 - Values and Ethics in Medicine
		Trust lecture	PA 643 - Values and Ethics in Medicine
		Language barriers and implicit bias lecture	PA 643 - Values and Ethics in Medicine
		IPE Conference	N/A

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.11d** which states, “The sponsoring institution must demonstrate its commitment to student, faculty and staff diversity and inclusion by making available, resources which promote diversity and inclusion”

## Technical Standards

These technical standards are provided to applicants to the PA program to help them make an informed decision regarding choice of career. To successfully complete the Master of Physician Assistant Studies and thereby be prepared to enter practice as a PA, all PA students must possess abilities and skills in the areas of sensation, communication, motor function, intellectual capability, and behavioral/social proficiency. All PA students must be able to perform in an independent manner and are expected to present academic credentials at or above the minimum standards for admission, as established by the Admission Committee. The following skills are required:

**Sensation**: Students must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational settings. Sensation must be sufficient to receive verbal and nonverbal information while interviewing patients and to perform inspection, auscultation, and palpation techniques during physical examination of patients.

**Communication**: Students must be able to communicate effectively and interact with diverse populations, with patients, family members, and other clinicians. This includes expressive and receptive modes of verbal, nonverbal and written communication. Further it includes the ability to accurately assess receptive communication to make appropriate and timely responses. Finally, it includes the ability to listen with attention, empathy, and sensitivity.

**Motor Function**: Students must have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities required of a PA. These include performing a physical examination, utilizing diagnostic instruments and techniques in palpation and percussion. Students must have sufficient stamina to sit, stand, or move within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms, and operating rooms for periods of time lasting up to 10 hours. They must have sufficient coordination to move about patient care environments and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments. All students must arrange their own transportation between educational and clinical settings.

**Intellectual Capability**: Clinical problem solving, a critical ability for PAs, encompasses abilities 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. They must be able to understand and interpret diagnostic testing and treatment regimens.

**Behavioral/Social Proficiency**: Students must possess the ability to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships. Factors included in this requirement are the abilities to prioritize competing demands, to function in stressful circumstances, to exercise good clinical judgment, to act ethically, to be compassionate, empathetic, responsible, and tolerant toward patients, faculty, classmates, and other health care professionals.

**The Office of Disability Services:** Admission decisions are made without regard to disabilities. Students who will be requesting reasonable accommodations based on a documented disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at 540-568-6705 V/TDD for additional information. The mission of the Office of Disability Services is to ensure that all students with disabilities can freely and actively participate in all facets of university life; to provide and coordinate support services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential; and assist students in the developmental process of transition to higher education, independence, and effective self-advocacy. JMU is committed to maintaining and enhancing an environment conducive to the highest level of individual empowerment by fostering a community that values innovation, human dignity, public service, and diversity.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.13e** which states, *“The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to prospective students, policies, and procedures to include – any required technical standards for enrollment”*

## Program Accreditation

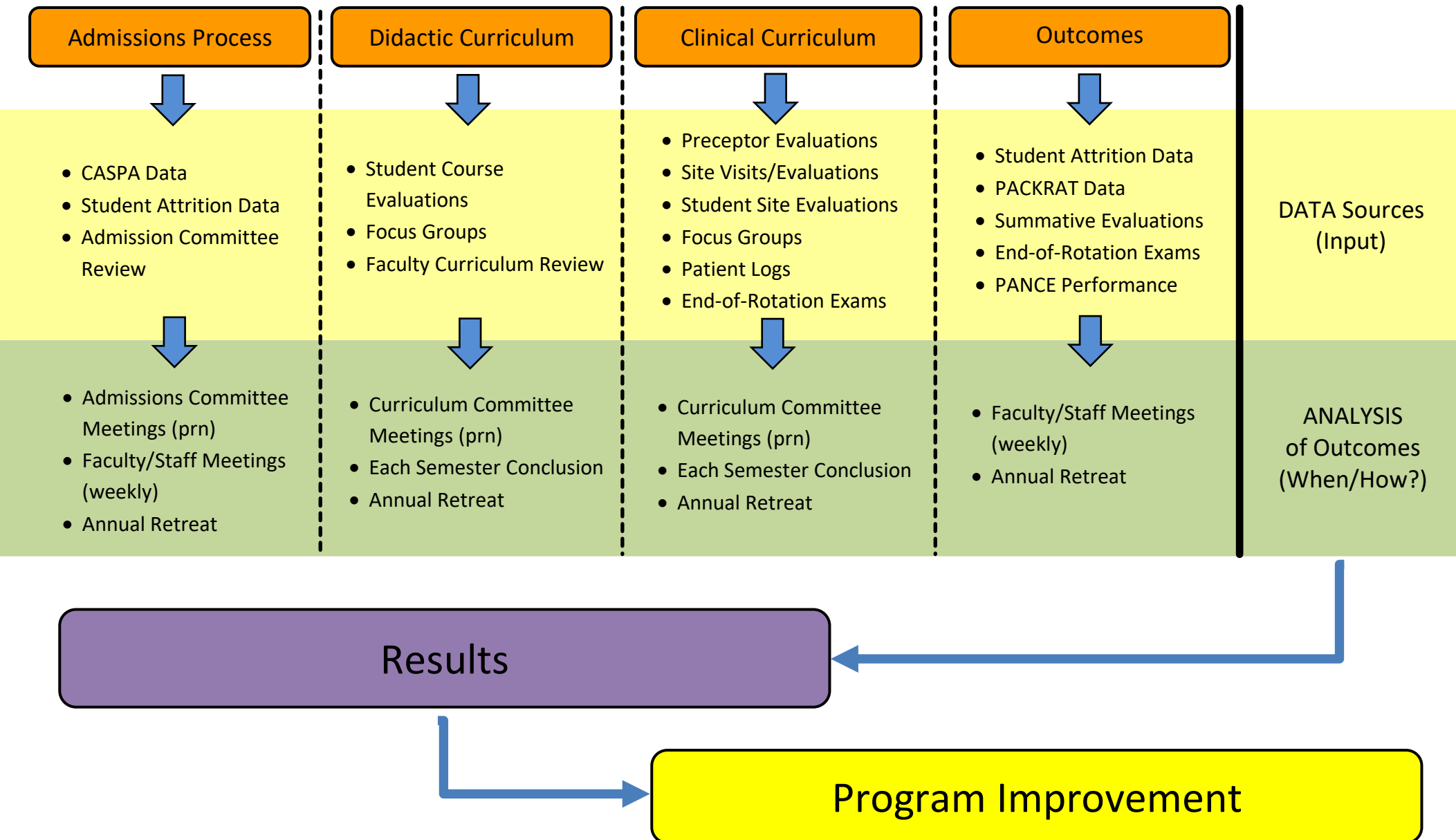
The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **James Madison University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **James Madison University**. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA *Standards*.

Accreditation 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*. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be September 2026. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation *Standards* and ARC-PA policy.

The James Madison University Physician Assistant Program was originally accredited in April 1999 and has been continuously accredited since that time.

*\*This notice is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.12a** which states, “The program must define, publish, and make readily available to enrolled and prospective students general program information to include – the program’s ARC-PA accreditation status as provided to the program by the ARC-PA”.*

## Logic Model for Continuous Program Self-Assessment



## Program Personnel

### PA Program Faculty

<p>Kristina (Kristy) Liskey, MPAS, PA-C  <b>Director of Clinical Education</b>            4054 Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            liskeykc@jmu.edu 540.568.2609</p>
<p>Sharon F. Maiewski, MS, PA-C  <b>Academic Coordinator</b>            4058 Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            maiewssf@jmu.edu 540.568.2392</p>
<p>Abby Massey, MD  <b>Medical Director</b>            4055 Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            masseyaj@jmu.edu 540.568.6758</p>
<p>Whitney Simmons, MSPA, PA-C  <b>Wellness Coordinator</b>            4050 Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            simmo3wr@jmu.edu 540.568.7522</p>
<p>Ashley Skelly, MMS, PA-C  <b>Admissions Coordinator</b>            4052 Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            skellyaw@jmu.edu 540.568.8168</p>
<p>Laura Tice, MS, PA-C  <b>Principal Faculty</b>            Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            ticelm@jmu.edu 540.568.5645</p>
<p>Gerald (Jerry) Weniger, PhD, ATC, PA-C  <b>Program Director</b>            4056 Health &amp; Behavioral Studies Building            wenigegr@jmu.edu 540.568.8171</p>

### Program Staff

Marissa Zane  
**Office Manager**  
 4060 Health & Behavioral Studies Building  
 zanemj@jmu.edu 540.568.2395

### Human Anatomy Course Faculty

Patrick Kilkenny, MS <b>Lab Coordinator</b>
Lauren Sarringhaus, PhD <b>Lab Instructor</b>
Bisi Velayudhan, PhD <b>Lab Instructor</b>
Roshna Wunderlich, PhD <b>Course Instructor</b>

### Physiology & Pathophysiology Course Faculty

Bisi Velayudhan, PhD <b>Instructor</b>
Tracy Deem, PhD <b>Instructor</b>

### Affiliate Faculty: Student-Engaged Medical Clinic

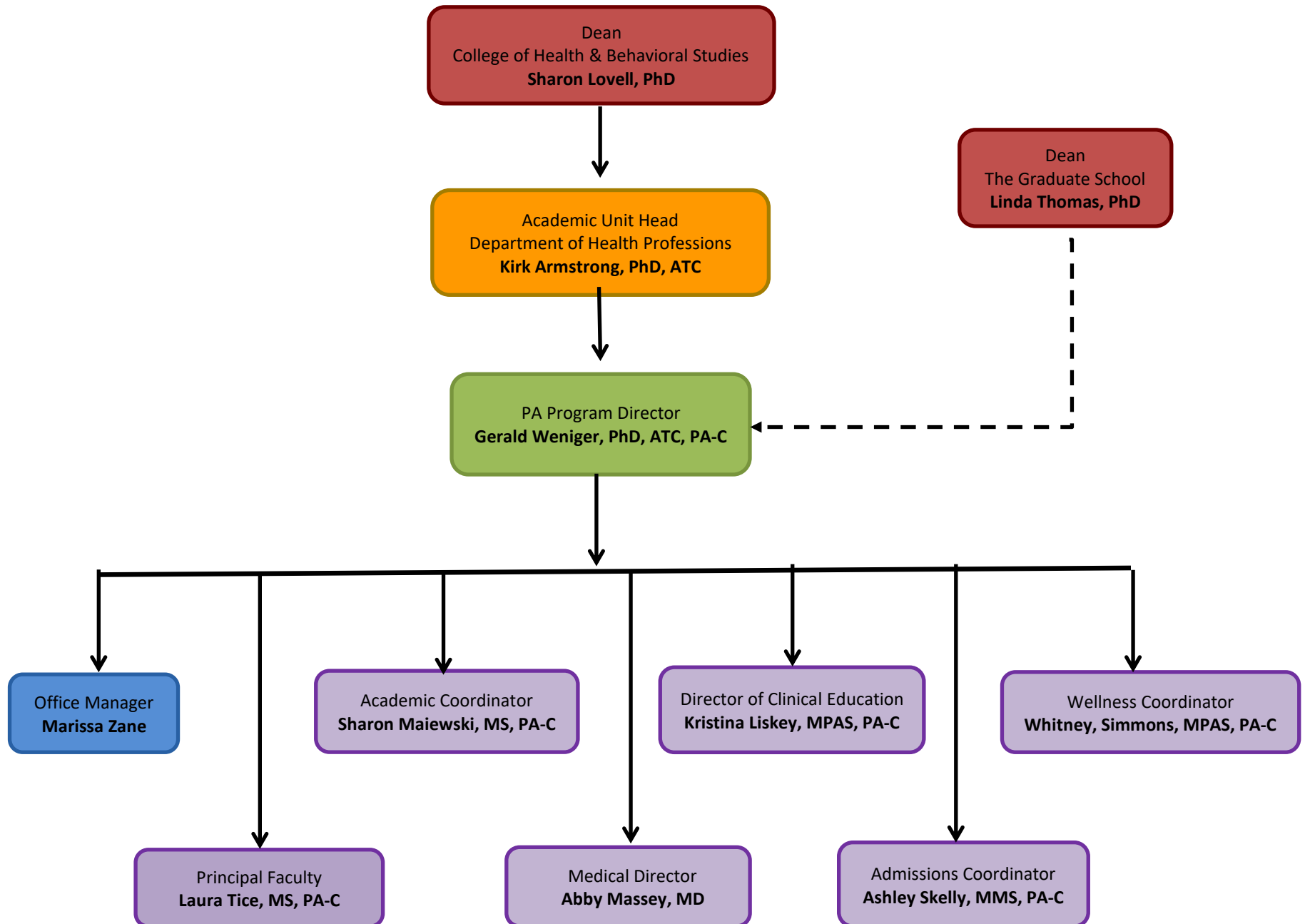
Susan Adamson, FNP <b>Nurse Practitioner</b> Blue Ridge Free Clinic	Kelly Gladin, MD <b>Physician</b> Blue Ridge Free Clinic
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\*This list is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A2.06** which states, “*The program director must be a PA or a physician*”.

\*This list is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A2.07** which states, “*The program director must not be the medical director*”.

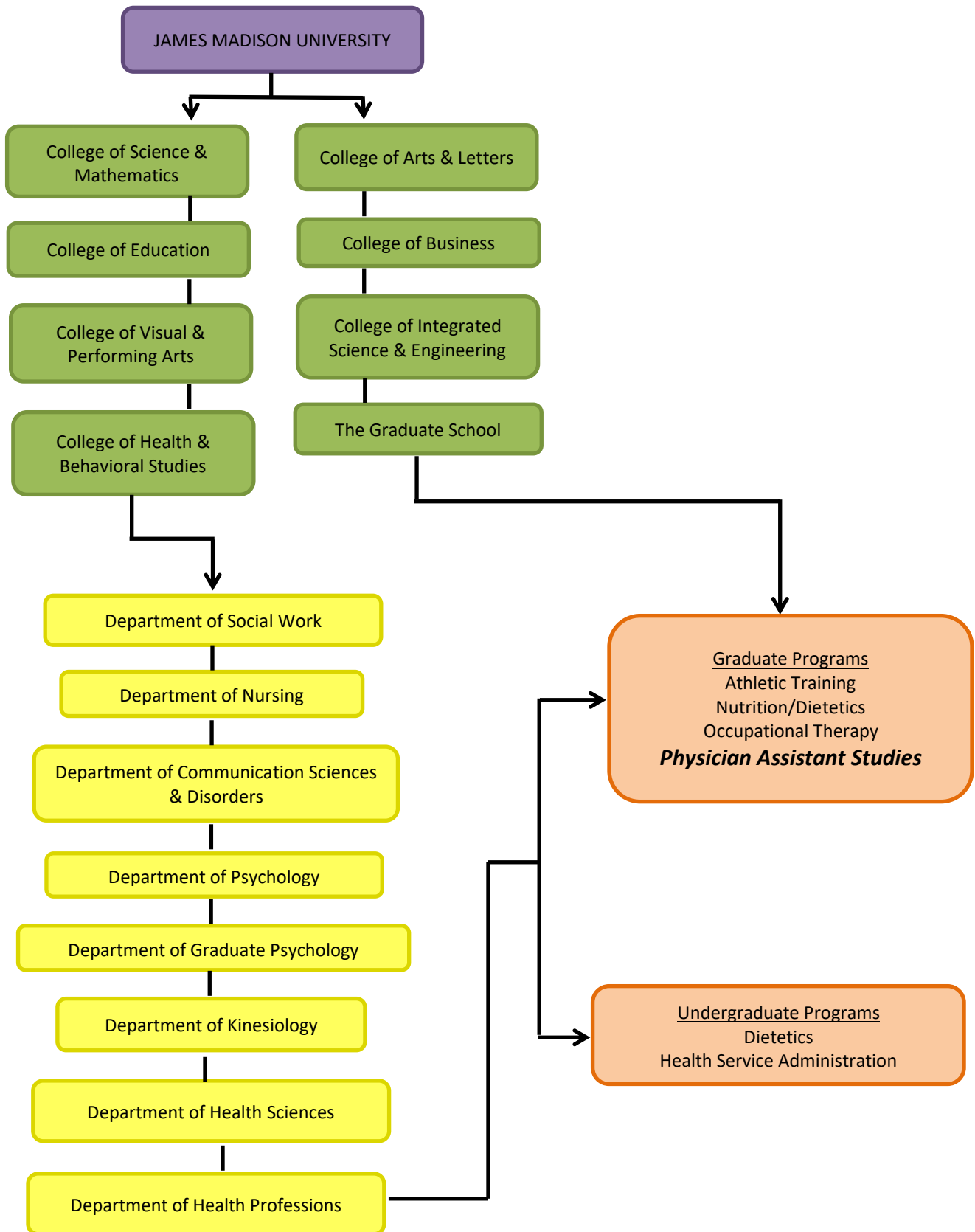
\*This list is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A2.11ab** which states, “*The medical director must be a currently licensed allopathic or osteopathic physician and certified by an ABMS- or AOA-approved specialty board*”

## Structure of PA Program Personnel





## Structure of the PA Program Within JMU



## Calendars & Timelines

- Activities during the didactic phase (first four semesters of the Program) are scheduled in compliance with the academic calendar of The Graduate School (TGS). During the clinical phase (final three semesters of the Program), required activities **do not** adhere to the published academic calendar. This is done to avoid fragmenting the four-week clinical rotation experiences. The PA program provides a clinical year calendar for students well in advance of beginning that phase of the Program.
- In general, the semester lengths are as follows:
  - Fall: 16 weeks
  - Spring: 15 weeks
  - Summer: 12 weeks
- The schedule of classes received with your tuition bill may not always be accurate. Since some instructors in the Department are adjunct faculty to the University, scheduling changes do occur from the time course schedules are submitted for publication. Students will be provided with a more accurate schedule of any changes as they occur. ***The Google online calendar is the source for the most up-to-date class schedule information.***
- ***It is important for you to note that certain courses require your attendance for related activities, so not all unscheduled time is “free time”.*** This may include occasional weekends and evenings, as well as travel time. For example, the Pediatric Medicine course includes newborn nursery visits, and the Clinical Medicine courses require multiple skills workshops. Schedules for these activities will be presented at the start of each course. If you have a schedule conflict, be sure to notify the instructor as soon as possible! ***The instructor has sole authority to grant excused absences.***
- Several courses depend on local practicing physicians, NPs, PAs and other clinicians as guest lecturers. On occasion, patient responsibilities will take precedence, causing a class cancellation and the need to reschedule a lecture. ***The faculty realize these disruptions can be confusing and frustrating and will make every attempt to minimize these changes.*** Please BE FLEXIBLE!
- Please be mindful of the enormous amount of time and energy that is required of faculty to schedule lectures, labs and offsite clinical learning experiences. Rearranging the class schedules affect other outside people, the lab availability, and the faculty's schedules.
- Students admitted to the PA Program must take all courses in the prescribed sequence within a 28-month period. Exceptions to this policy will be honored only if they are obtained in writing from the Program Director. Failure to comply is cause for dismissal from the PA Program. All exams are expected to be taken on the designated day and time.

## Curriculum Sequence: Systems-Based

Fall Semester Year 1		
BIO 513 Human Gross Anatomy with Clinical Applications	9	
BIO 516 Physiology & Pathophysiology	6	
PA 505 History and Physical Exam	6	
PA 540 The Physician Assistant Profession	1	
<i>Semester Total</i>	<i>22 credits</i>	
Spring Semester Year 1		
PA 520 Clinical Medicine I	6	Introduction to Systems Gastroenterology Cardiology Pulmonology Hematology
PA 630 Diagnostic Methods I	2	
PA 532 Pharmacology I	3	
PA 510 Physical Diagnosis I	2	
PA 551 Medical Biostatistics	2	
PA 659 Health Care Environment	2	
<i>Semester Total</i>	<i>17 credits</i>	
Summer Session Year 1		
PA 621 Clinical Medicine II	4	MSK & Rheumatology Dermatology Ophthalmology & ENT Surgery Renal
PA 631 Diagnostic Methods II	2	
PA 533 Pharmacology II	3	
PA 511 Physical Diagnosis II	2	
PA 622 Obstetrics & Gynecology	2	
PA 624 Behavioral Medicine	2	
PA 653 Research Design and Implementation	2	
<i>Semester Total</i>	<i>17 credits</i>	
Fall Semester Year 2		
PA 626 Clinical Medicine III	6	Genitourinary Neurology Endocrine Infectious Disease Emergency
PA 632 Diagnostic Methods III	2	
PA 534 Pharmacology III	3	
PA 512 Physical Diagnosis III	2	
PA 623 Pediatric Medicine	3	
PA 652 Clinical Problem Solving	4	
<i>Semester Total</i>	<i>20 credits</i>	

Spring Semester Year 2		
PA 654 Capstone Project	1	
Rotation Period 1	2	Different course sequence for each student – see below
Rotation Period 2	2	
Rotation Period 3	2	
Rotation Period 4	2	
<i>Session Total</i>	<i>9 credits</i>	
Summer Session Year 2		
PA 625 Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	1	
PA 643 Values and Ethics in Medicine	2	
Rotation Period 5	2	Different course sequence for each student – see below
Rotation Period 6	2	
Rotation Period 7	2	
<i>Semester Total</i>	<i>9 credits</i>	
Fall Semester Year 3		
PA 642 Transition to Practice	1	
Rotation Period 8	2	Different course sequence for each student – see below
Rotation Period 9	2	
Rotation Period 10	2	
Rotation Period 11	2	
<i>Semester Total</i>	<i>9 credits</i>	
<b>Total Credits - Master of PA Studies</b>	<b>103 credits</b>	

### Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences

Course	Credit Hours	Duration
PA 670 Elective Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 671 Family Medicine Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 672 Primary Care Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 673 Internal Medicine Clinical Rotation I	2	4 weeks
PA 674 Internal Medicine Clinical Rotation II	2	4 weeks
PA 675 Pediatrics Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 676 Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 677 General Surgery Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 678 Emergency Medicine Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 679 Behavioral Medicine Clinical Rotation	2	4 weeks
PA 680 Elective Rotation II	2	4 weeks

- The 11 rotating courses listed above are the required supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE). Each SCPE is 4-weeks long and may take place in Virginia or out-of-state.
- Two of the eleven SCPEs are an elective – students will work with the Director of Clinical Education to decide on what works best for them and their interests.
- The Director of Clinical Education determines the SCPE sequence and locations for each student.
- The Program is under no obligation to meet any individual or personal needs of students or student requests. The Program's priority is to provide all students with optimal learning opportunities. This may include sending students to distant sites in states other than Virginia. Previously utilized clinical sites (that we may use again) have been in Michigan, Florida, Kentucky, California, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and more.
- In addition to SCPEs, there are three traditional classroom type courses during the clinical phase: Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Values & Ethics in Medicine, and Transition to Practice. These only meet when students return to campus for 1-week following every two SCPEs.

\*The curriculum is designed to meet ARC-PA Accreditation Standards **A3.14, B1.02, B1.03, B1.04, B1.07, B2.02, B2.05, B2.08, B2.10, B2.11, B3.03, B3.04, and B3.07.**

## Estimated Program Expenses

A cohort tuition model is used for students in the PA Program. The tuition for this group/cohort of students, and each cohort, thereafter, will be set before the cohort begins the program and will remain the same throughout the seven semesters/28 months of the program. Tuition will not be subject to annual or periodic increases as students' progress through the seven semesters/28 months of the PA curriculum. This will allow candidates to better plan and project the cost of their education in the Program.

If students remain in the program beyond seven semesters, they will be moved to a new cohort and will be charged tuition at the same rate applied to other students in that new cohort.

### Tuition for the cohort beginning Fall 2026

Item	Virginia Resident	Non-Virginia Resident
Didactic Phase (16 months, 74 credits*)	\$58,312	\$69,634
Clinical Phase (12 months, 29 credits*)	\$22,852	\$27,289
<b>TOTAL</b> (28 months, 103 credits)	<b>\$81,164</b>	<b>\$96,923</b>

\*VA Residents @ \$788/credit; Non-VA Residents @ \$941/credit

### Tuition for the cohort beginning Fall 2025

Item	Virginia Resident	Non-Virginia Resident
Didactic Phase (16 months, 74 credits*)	\$56,610	\$69,634
Clinical Phase (12 months, 29 credits*)	\$22,185	\$27,289
<b>TOTAL</b> (28 months, 103 credits)	<b>\$78,795</b>	<b>\$96,923</b>

\*VA Residents @ \$765/credit; Non-VA Residents @ \$941/credit

Included with Tuition: some PA programs maintain numerous fees in addition to baseline tuition. The JMU PA Program tuition is based on a cohort model. There are no hidden course fees, lab fees, insurance fees, or technology fees. Everything listed below is included with the base tuition:

- 1) Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
- 2) Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification
- 3) Electronic Logging System (eMedley)
- 4) Assessment software (ExamSoft)
- 5) UpToDate Subscription – evidence-based clinical decision support
- 6) Materials & supplies for cadaver lab, health assessment lab, skills workshops, etc.
- 7) Patient simulation software (DxR Clinician & NEJM Healer)
- 8) Trained standardized patients, as needed, for OSCEs
- 9) Membership – Virginia Academy of PAs

### Other Costs

The following estimates for additional costs are offered to assist students with planning. These estimates are based on current rates and costs incurred by previous students. Actual costs will vary depending on individual student situations and choices. Travel to, and secondary housing at clinical sites beyond commuting range is the largest expense and varies widely depending on the location of clinical sites, the assignments of individual students, and the housing needs of individual students. The program assists students in finding housing for the clinical phase but does not explicitly provide it. Program tuition includes a student membership with VAPA, but not with AAPA. Membership with AAPA is not required, but strongly encouraged.

Item	Approximate Expense
Medical equipment (oto/ophthalmoscope, stethoscope, white coat, etc.)	\$1,200
Textbooks (approximate – depends on new vs. used)	\$2,000
Drug test & background check (subject to change)	\$80
Membership – American Academy of Pas (optional, but encouraged)	\$75
Laptop computer	\$500 - \$1,000
Annual parking pass, JMU campus	\$300
All associated expenses during the clinical phase (this includes, but is not limited to, travel/gas housing costs, parking fees, etc.).	\$0 – \$20,000 (average: \$10,000)
Registration for the PANCE via NCCPA	\$550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,705 – \$25,205</b>

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.12f** which states, “The program must define, publish and make readily available to enrolled and prospective students general program information to include – estimates of all costs (tuition, fees, etc.) related to the program”.

## Academic Standards & Progress

- **Satisfactory academic progress** is defined as achieving at least a “B” or a “3.0” grade in each course.
- As noted in the Graduate School catalog, PA courses have prerequisites for sequencing that must be met (or waived by the Program Director) prior to taking each class. All students are required to successfully complete all courses in the curriculum in sequence.
- A student must achieve satisfactory academic progress or successfully complete a prescribed remediation for every course in the didactic year prior to beginning clinical rotations.
- Unsatisfactory academic progress is subject to regulations put forth in The Graduate School catalog ([www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/10/general/regulations.html](http://www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/10/general/regulations.html)). See the catalog for the complete, current regulations. Note the following highlights:
  - “If, at any time, a graduate student fails to make satisfactory progress toward the degree, the student may be denied permission to continue in the program. Such a decision may be reached by the student’s adviser, academic unit head, or graduate program coordinator and will be referred to The Graduate School for final action.” Note: Within the MPAS program, failure of a student to achieve a “B” or “3.0” grade in any course may result in review by the Progress Committee. See Academic & Professionalism Review below.
  - “Students who receive two “C” grades or a GPA of below 3.0 will be placed on academic warning (Program probation) and will receive written notification. A student will be dismissed from the degree program if the student receives an “F” or “U” in any graduate course or a total of three “C” grades in his or her graduate program. A student dismissed from the degree program may not enroll in any graduate-level courses for a period of one year. Students who want to return to the university must re-apply and be re-accepted in the usual manner.”
  - “A graduate student will receive a notice of academic warning upon receiving a grade of “C” in any two graduate courses or if the student’s grade point average falls below 3.0. This academic warning will be noted on the student’s transcript. All credits attempted and all grades earned, whether passing or failing, will be used to calculate a student’s grade point average.”

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15a and A3.15b** which states, *“The program must define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available to students upon Admission any required academic standards – requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program”*



## Advanced Academic Standing

Completion of the Graduate Physician Assistant Program requires that students successfully complete all required courses. Generally, credit for the required courses is earned by successfully completing the listed JMU courses while enrolled in the MPAS program. No credit is granted for experiential learning attained prior to entry into the program. In accord with TGS regulations on transfer credit, students who wish to request graduate credit for courses taken prior to entering the JMU graduate program must submit requests to their adviser during the first semester of enrollment. The Transfer of Credit form is available online at <http://www.jmu.edu/gradprograms/forms.htm> or from The Graduate School. However, ***the PA Program does not accept courses taken at other institutions as substitutes for courses required in the MPAS curriculum.*** The required courses must be taken at JMU. All but two courses in the MPAS curriculum are available only to students enrolled in the MPAS program. These two courses are BIO 513 Gross Human Anatomy with Clinical Applications which may be taken by students in the graduate program in biology and HTH 659 Health Care Environment which may be taken by students in the graduate program in Health Sciences. If a student has taken either of these two courses at JMU prior to enrollment in the PA program and has earned a grade of “B,(3.0)” or better in the course, the student does not have to retake the course. Except for the two courses listed above, the PA Program DOES NOT offer any advanced placement.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.13c** which states, “The program must define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available to prospective students, policies, and procedures to include – practices for awarding or granting advanced placement”*

## Comprehensive Examination

- The PA program administers a comprehensive examination to all students approximately midway through their final semester in the Program. It consists of both a written and practical component. The practical component is a case-based scenario that utilizes a mock patient. Student behavior/professionalism is also assessed.
- Students are notified, in writing, of success or failure of the comprehensive examination. In accord with TGS policy, “In the event a student fails the comprehensive evaluation, the student may request a re-examination. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the re-examination must occur within six months of the date of failure. Only one re-examination will be allowed.” *(Although the Graduate School allows the re-examination to occur within six months, the PA Program mandates the re-examination be completed near the end of the student’s final semester in the Program).*
- This same comprehensive exam also serves as the “summative evaluation” required by the ARC-PA. The written component of the comprehensive exam is NOT the PACKRAT.

\*This policy is in accordance with The Graduate School catalog which states, “*a formal assessment of mastery, designed to appraise the student’s competence is required of each JMU student in order to complete his or her program of graduate study*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B4.03** which states, “*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 meets the program competencies required to enter clinical practice*”.

## Continuous Enrollment

- All students enrolled in graduate degree programs must enroll each regular semester for a minimum of one graduate credit hour. This registration must continue with no breaks from enrollment in the first graduate program course to graduation. This policy does not include summer sessions.
- It is preferable that students enroll in courses relevant to their graduate program to facilitate timely completion. If it is not possible to do so, however, The Graduate School has established a one-credit continuous enrollment course, **GRAD 597**. The tuition for this course is \$50.00. No grade will be assigned for this course.

Course:

### **GRAD 597. Continuance**

*1 credit.*

To remain in good standing in their program, all graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment each semester in their program from entry until graduation. This course allows those students who are not intending to register for any other courses during the current semester to continue in their program in good standing. Course may be repeated as needed.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15c** which states, “The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission – requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program”*

## Course Load

The university defines academic load for graduate students as:

<u>Status</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
Full time	9 or more
Three-quarter time	6
Half time	5
Less than half time	4 or less

The curriculum is designed so that PA students always maintain full-time status. PA students are required to register for and complete the PA curriculum in sequence, as courses are offered.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15c** which states, “The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission – requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program”*

## Disability Services

- JMU abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for students with documented disabilities.
- The mission of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) is to assist the University in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience. If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact ODS. ODS will provide you with an Access Plan Letter that will verify your need for services and make recommendations for accommodations to be used in the classroom.
- ODS is located in the Student Success Center
  - [www.jmu.edu/ods](http://www.jmu.edu/ods)
  - 540-568-6705

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.04** which states, “The sponsoring institution must provide academic support and student services to PA students that are equivalent to those services provided to other comparable students of the institution.”*

## Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

James Madison University adheres to and annually informs students of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. This act, with which the institution intends to fully comply, was designated to protect the privacy of educational records. Under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) students have certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

- **The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the university receives a request for access.** The student should submit to the registrar, dean, head of the academic unit or other appropriate official written requests that identify the record(s) he or she wishes to inspect. The university official will plan for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the university official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
- **The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.** The student may ask the university to amend a record that he or she believes is inaccurate or misleading. The student should write the university official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record he or she wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the university decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the university will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- **The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.** One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the university in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the university has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the university may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. The following is considered "Directory Information" at James Madison University and may be made available to the general public unless the student notifies the Office of the Registrar in person or in writing within five days after the first day of class registration: Student's name, telephone numbers, addresses, place of birth, major and minor fields of study, college of major and year (first year, sophomore, etc.), enrollment status (full-time/part-time) including credit hours, dates of attendance, degree sought and time, degrees conferred, awards and honors conferred, participation in officially recognized activities

and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, fraternity and/or sorority and educational societies.

- **The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by James Madison University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.**

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

**Family Policy Compliance Office**

**U.S. Department of Education**

**400 Maryland Avenue, SW**

**Washington, D.C. 20202-4605**

**<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html>**

For more detailed information concerning JMU's records policy see: **[Policies and Procedures, Policy 2112, The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.](#)**

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, "The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations".*

## Grade Review Procedures

Grade Change Review Procedure: *If a student disputes a grade for any other reason than error in grade assignment or calculation, the student can initiate a formal grade review process.* The grade review process described below can also be initiated to dispute a failing assessment of any comprehensive activity, including, but not limited to, comprehensive examinations and thesis/dissertation defenses. To activate the grade review process, the student must follow these steps:

1. The student submits a Grade Review Form to the appropriate professor by Monday of the third full week of classes in the regular semester that follows the semester for which the contested grade was given. In the case of a comprehensive assessment review, the Grade Review Form is submitted to all members of the comprehensive exam committee. The student must attach a written explanation of reasons for the appeal, including any documentation relating to the disputed grade. Requests for review of spring semester or summer session grades must be initiated no later than the Monday of the third full week of classes in the subsequent fall semester.
2. The student meets with the course instructor by Friday of the third full week of classes to attempt to resolve the concern. In the case of a comprehensive assessment review, the student may pursue a resolution entirely through email correspondence or may elect to request a face-to-face meeting with the committee chair.
3. If the student and the course instructor (or committee chair) reach an agreement that the grade should be changed, the course instructor or committee chair changes the grade by submitting a Grade Change form to the appropriate academic unit head or graduate program director for that individual's signature. A copy of this signed Grade Change form will be forwarded to The Graduate School. For graduate students whose grade of "C," "U" or "F" is to be changed, notice of the grade change must be sent to The Graduate School before that change occurs.
4. If no resolution is reached, the instructor (or committee chair) signs the Grade Review form and records a written response on the reverse side of the form. The instructor (or committee chair) returns the original copy of this form to the student, retains a copy of the form for his or her personal records and forwards a copy to the relevant academic unit head or graduate program director by Friday of the fourth full week of classes.
5. The student must contact the relevant academic unit head or graduate program director by the Friday of the fifth full week of classes to request review of statement and response.
6. The academic unit head or graduate director meets with the student and confers with the relevant course instructor (or committee chair).
7. The academic unit head or graduate program director signs the Grade Review form and records a written response on the reverse side of the form by Friday of the seventh full week of classes. The student receives the original copy of this form. The relevant course instructor receives a copy of the form and the sender retains a copy of the form.
8. If all involved parties agree that the grade should be changed, the course instructor or committee chair submits a Grade Change form to the academic unit head or graduate program director and the appropriate individual signs the form. A copy of the form will be forwarded to The Graduate School. Notice of the grade change must also be sent to [The](#)



Graduate School before the grade change occurs for graduate students who have a grade of “C,” “U” or “F” changed to some other grade.

After the review process outlined above has been completed, a student can also request that the form, documentation and responses be reviewed by the dean of the college in which the course was taught, or the comprehensive assessment was administered. The college dean’s responsibility is only to ascertain whether all parties have had an opportunity to present all relevant facts and have received a fair and impartial hearing at each level.

To enter this phase of the process, a student must follow this procedure:

- 1 The student contacts the dean by Friday of the eighth full week of classes and requests that the dean review the overall process.
- 2 The dean of the relevant college reviews the process to be sure the student and the instructor (committee) have had a fair hearing.
  - If the relevant college dean believes that due process was not followed during the review process, he or she consults with the relevant professor and academic unit head or graduate director to resolve the dispute.
- 3 The dean sends a written response to all involved parties by Friday of the 10<sup>th</sup> full week of classes. This written response is appended to the Grade Review form. The dean returns the original copy to the student, retains a copy, and sends a copy to the relevant academic unit head or graduate director and the relevant instructor or committee chair.
  - If it is agreed that the student’s grade should be changed, the relevant course instructor or committee chair submits a Grade Change form to the academic unit head or graduate director. The recipient then signs the form and forwards a copy to the dean. Notice of the grade change must also be sent to The Graduate School before the grade change occurs for graduate students who have a grade of “C,” “U” or “F” changed to some other grade.

There is no further review beyond the dean of the relevant college. The entire process will not extend past the end of the semester following the contested grade except for grades given for summer session courses.

*Revised September 2015*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15g** which states, “*The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission policies and procedures for student grievances and appeal*”

## Graduation Requirements

Graduation is subject to regulations put forth in the Graduate School Catalog. See the catalog for the complete, current regulations ([www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/10/general/regulations.html](http://www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/10/general/regulations.html)).

Note the following highlights:

- The office of the Dean of The Graduate School, assisted by the graduate faculty, have responsibility for final approval of graduate degrees to be awarded. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that courses selected are acceptable to the program being pursued. A student cannot graduate with a GPA below “3.0”. Students should keep in mind that earning a “B-” grade may bring the GPA below 3.0 and prevent the student from graduating.
- The Graduate School mandates general degree completion requirements in order for students to receive their graduate degrees. Each graduate student is responsible for meeting the requirements. They are listed in the Graduate School Catalog. Only a few are highlighted here:
  - Have satisfied any conditions of his or her admission, such as provisional or conditional admission. *Note: PA students must provide evidence of completing conditional admission requirements (prerequisite courses or health care experience) to the PA Program. The Program will notify the Graduate School.*
  - Complete the graduate program with an appropriate GPA. The standard for graduation is a “3.0” or higher GPA.
  - Successfully complete a comprehensive assessment or equivalent as determined by the individual graduate program. The graduate program must notify The Graduate School that the student has successfully completed the comprehensive assessment procedure.
  - Enrolled students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of all available avenues of learning, including accessing the JMU faculty, staff and other students, as well as the library, laboratories and other facilities that nurture the academic experience.
  - In addition to meeting the general completion requirements set forth by The Graduate School, each student must meet the graduation requirements of the individual graduate program.

### Application for a Graduate Degree

- Students are responsible for notifying both their major academic unit and The Graduate School when they plan to graduate. In order to graduate, students must complete the Application for Graduate Degree form available online at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/current/forms.shtml> or from The Graduate School by the published deadline. Students are responsible for consulting The Graduate School web site regarding deadlines for applying for graduation.
- The Application for Graduate Degree form must be approved by the student's advisor and the academic unit head or graduate program coordinator. Students are responsible for obtaining all necessary signatures to complete the Application for Graduate Degree form. Students must complete all requirements of their program of study. Students must complete all the conditions of the original admission in their degree program, e.g., conditional admission, at

least one semester before they are scheduled to graduate before they can be permitted to graduate.

- A student who fails to meet program requirements the semester in which he or she applied to graduate must submit a new graduation application.

#### Attendance at Commencement

Students are expected to attend graduation exercises both at the University level and AT the Program's own "White Coat Ceremony". Both of these take place in mid-December. A student unable to be present for the graduation exercises must notify The Graduate School no later than 15 working days before commencement.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15a** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission any required academic standards,".*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15b** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program"*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15c** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration"*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15d** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal"*

## Grievances, Discrimination, & Sexual Harassment

Student grievances and/or concerns should be directed to the appropriate area:

- Grades – The Graduate School Catalog: <https://www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/15/index.shtml>
- Discrimination and Retaliation Complaint Procedures: <https://www.jmu.edu/jmu-policy/policies/1324.shtml>. The JMU Student Handbook contains additional information on student rights: <http://www.jmu.edu/judicial/handbook.shtml>
- Sexual Misconduct: <https://www.jmu.edu/jmu-policy/policies/1340.shtml>
- Title IX Sexual Harassment: <https://www.jmu.edu/jmu-policy/policies/1346.shtml>
- Policies and Procedures of The Graduate School can also be helpful for rules that govern all graduate faculty & graduate students:  
<http://www.jmu.edu/grad/files/Policies%20and%20Procedures%20September%202015.pdf>
- For student grievances against faculty that do not concern grades, discrimination, or harassment, the program follows the general university policy stated in the graduate catalog.  
<https://www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/15/academic-policy/academic-policy.shtml#GrievanceProcedureforStudents>

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02j** which states, “The sponsoring institution is responsible for defining, publishing, making readily available and consistently applying to students, its policies and procedures for processing student allegations of harassment”*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15g** which states, “The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission policies and procedures for student grievances and appeals”*

## Laboratory Safety

- All students are required to review an online lab safety tutorial and complete a post-test. Details regarding this will be sent to students during PA Program orientation.
- The lab safety policies apply to any lab setting at JMU, but primarily affect PA students for the Health Assessment Lab (HBS 4034) and the Practical Applications Lab (HBS 4005).

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02g** which states, *“The sponsoring institution is responsible for documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs”*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.08** which states, *“The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply policies addressing student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any educational activities which would place them at risk.”*

## Withdrawal

The Office of the Dean of Students must approve such withdrawal requests, set the official withdrawal date, and notify other university offices of the withdrawal. Strict compliance with this requirement is mandatory. Students who withdraw without receiving official approval will receive a grade of "F" for all courses in which they are enrolled.

A student who voluntarily withdraws from his or her graduate program without receiving official approval will receive a grade of "F" for all courses in which he or she is enrolled. A student voluntarily withdrawing with official approval will receive a grade of "W," "WP" or "WF" in all courses. A grade of "W" will be assigned to students who withdraw from a course after the add/drop deadline but before the end of the course adjustment deadline. A grade of "WP" or "WF" (according to the status of the student at the time of withdrawal) will be assigned to students who withdraw after the course adjustment deadline at the discretion of the instructor.

It may also be necessary for a graduate student to withdraw due to extenuating circumstances. Withdrawal for extenuating circumstances must be approved by the student's graduate director and the dean of The Graduate School. A student who withdraws because of extenuating circumstances will also receive a grade of "W," "WP" or "WF" in all courses.

Students who withdraw from their graduate program will be responsible for tuition as determined by the Office of the Registrar and may be subject to a change in their financial aid status. For more information, see the section of the catalog on "Withdrawal Refunds."

Non-degree seeking students enrolled in an on- or off-campus course must also withdraw from the university by securing a Withdrawal Application form from the Office of the Dean of Students. This form must be completed and returned to the Office of the Dean of Students, which will process the official withdrawal. Any adjustment in charges will be calculated from the last date of attendance.

No adjustment in charges will be made unless the withdrawal form is received by the Office of the Dean of Students within 30 days after the student leaves the campus or does not attend classes.

Withdrawal from a graduate program is the equivalent of withdrawal from the university.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15b** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program"*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15d** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal"*

## Student Progress Committee & Remediation

The Student Progress Committee (SPC) is comprised of the PA Program core faculty members. The purpose of the SPC is to ensure that the academic and professionalism standards of the PA Program and The Graduate School are being met, and to assist students in meeting those standards. The SPC will take action if a student earns a “C” or “2.0” in a course. However, the SPC may also act whenever a student is in academic jeopardy or exhibiting signs of poor professionalism, conduct, or behavior. Examples include course grades below “B” or “3.0”, a GPA of below “3.0”, known or suspected professionalism/behavior problems, or impending academic problems that may arise before or after a grade is posted. Only SPC members and invited guests may attend committee meetings. If invited, students are expected to attend. Multiple meetings may be required. The purposes of such meetings are as follows:

- To identify the source of the student’s academic or professionalism/behavioral difficulty.
- To recommend remediation strategies by which the student can overcome the difficulties and succeed in the program. Recommendations of the SPC for remediation will be submitted by the Program Director to the Department Head for decision.

If the committee sees no reasonable hope of success in remediation of the problem/s, it may recommend to the Dean of TGS or the Dean of CHBS that the student be denied permission to continue in the program. The final action rests with the Dean of TGS and/or the Dean of CHBS.

### REMEDICATION

Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, remediation is limited to the following options:

#### Didactic Phase

- Successfully completing a prescribed remediation exercise to be determined by the SPC. The timing and required level of success will also be defined by the SPC.

#### Clinical Phase

- Didactic courses in the clinical year will follow the same guidelines as didactic year courses.
- Remediation for deficiencies in knowledge, skill, or professional behavior will be corrected by repeating the rotation course, using an elective rotation as remediation, or successfully completing a remediation exercise designed by the SPC.

The remediation option, the timing, and the required level of performance will be determined by the SPC.

- By policy of TGS, the original course grade of “C” or “2.0” is not removed by remediation or by repeating a course. The original grade remains on the student’s transcript, and all course grades are calculated as part of a student’s GPA. Graduation requires a cumulative GPA of “3.0” or above.
- The Program Director will inform the student, in writing, of the recommendations, conclusions, and/or courses of action of the committee.
- The Program Director will place a copy of the remediation plan in the student’s academic file.

- Such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Written reprimand/warning in student's academic record with expectations for improvement.
  - Program probation with remediation, including re-taking exams, completing assignments, repeating clinical rotations, or other required educational activities (written paper, oral presentation, watching a video, journaling or self-reflection).
  - Grade adjustment.
  - Deceleration.
  - Program dismissal.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standards **A3.15a, A3.15b, A3.15d, and A3.15e** which state, *"The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission any required academic standards, requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program, policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal"*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, *"The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct."*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B4.02e** which states, *"The program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a timely manner and according to its defined and published policies and procedures, to identify and address any deficiency in meeting program competencies in professional behaviors."*



## Academic Dishonesty, Honor Code, & The Honor Council

All incoming students are required to watch a web-based video containing information about the JMU Honor Code. Students must then pass an exam that is based on that material. The exam must be completed by the end of the student's first semester at JMU. The video and exam are available at: <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/test.shtml>

Academic dishonesty includes many potential offenses, including:

- plagiarism
- looking over someone's shoulder while taking an exam
- using a phone or smart watch to cheat on an exam
- using prohibited resources (textbooks, internet) during an open book exam
- collaborating on assignments that are meant to be done individually
- obtaining ANY course related materials from previous classes, including but not limited to, old assignments or old exams

Research studies show that students cheat for several reasons:

- 1) the enormous pressure they feel to do well in a graduate program
- 2) they believe it "does not hurt anyone"
- 3) they feel that "everyone does it" and therefore it is socially acceptable and the "norm"
- 4) they are unaware that what they are doing constitutes cheating

Examples 1-3 from above are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. While you may be under a lot of pressure, the proper response should be to seek help/guidance, not to cheat. And cheating is not a victimless crime.... you are hurting yourself by not learning the material, you are hurting potential future patients by not learning the material, and you are hurting your classmates and the PA profession by trying to meet standards in a dishonest way.

More explanation is needed regarding example #4 ("being unaware what constitutes cheating"): PA students have always "passed things down" from one cohort to the next in an effort to help the class behind them. This concept itself is not wrong, in fact it is encouraged via the student "buddy system". What makes something wrong is the actual **content of what is passed along**. Tips about how to get around campus, where to get an apartment in town, or even nuances about guest lecturers and scheduling can all be valuable information to pass on. What is not acceptable to pass on is ANY specific information about assignments, quizzes, exams, etc. Taking photos or screenshots of a Canvas exam to pass along is CHEATING. Sharing charts/tables/diagrams with the next class is CHEATING. Sharing responses to completed case studies with the next class is CHEATING.

There is also a "gray area" of things that are often shared, and this comes in the form of information about clinical rotations. Again, info about a hospital system, about parking, or about certain expectations of a preceptor are typically fine to share. But telling someone in the class behind you that "this rotation sucks" or "this preceptor is awful" is not helpful information. It may not be wrong/cheating, but it is still not helpful. Such information only causes 1<sup>st</sup> year students to bombard the Director of Clinical Education with requests/complaints about which specific

rotations they do or do not want to go to. ***The fact of the matter is that quite often, different students have very different experiences at the same site or with the same preceptor.*** You never know what kind of events are occurring in the personal life of a preceptor that could be affecting them for a short period of time. Sometimes student & preceptor's personalities simply clash. This does not make it a bad site. Sometimes a certain chaotic time of the year affects a medical practice and the employees. We could go on, but hopefully you get the picture.

Accusations of cheating and all other matters related to academic dishonesty will be referred to the Honor Council: <https://www.jmu.edu/honorcode/code.shtml>

Violations could result in any number of penalties, not excluding ***dismissal from the Program.***

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, *"The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity and professional conduct."*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.18** which states, *"The program curriculum must include instruction in the principles and practice of medical ethics".*

## Advising

1. Each student is assigned to a PA faculty advisor. Advising sessions may be initiated by either the student or the advisor. Though students are not required to seek advice, they are required to meet with their advisor at least once per semester during the didactic phase, and as needed during the clinical phase.
  - The once per semester meetings during the didactic phase are part of a self-reflection on behavior and professionalism that is very important to professional growth as a future clinician.
2. Advising focuses on two areas – academic progress and career development. In the academic area, advisors work with the student to identify the source of any academic difficulty and to assist the student in overcoming that difficulty. Advisors approve elective courses and serve as directors and instructors of the scholarly project required for the master's degree (PA 654). Prior to graduation they attest to whether the student has met all requirements for the degree. In the area of career development, advisors serve as a resource for students as they work through issues of the specialty and location they would like to work in following graduation.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.04** which states, *“The sponsoring institution must provide academic support and student services to PA students that are equivalent to those services provided to other comparable students of the institution*

## Attendance & Participation

### Background & Purpose

Due to the rigorous nature of PA education and the need to generate graduates who are competent medical providers, all academic activities are considered important educational opportunities. Consistent attendance, punctuality, and active participation are components of professional behavior and are expected of students for all classes, laboratories, skills workshops, and exams. These expectations reflect a student's dedication to serving as healthcare professionals. However, extenuating circumstances where students are unable to attend required academic activities do occur. This policy defines associated expectations for attendance, punctuality, and class participation.

### Policy

- Multiple modalities are utilized by the program to ensure program outcomes are being met. To maximize learning, students must actively participate in all learning activities, such as required readings and other preparations needed before class, class discussions, class assignments, team-based case studies, and laboratory skill sessions. ***Failure to actively participate in program requirements is considered unprofessional behavior.***
- Consistent punctual attendance is a component of professional behavior. As such, in-person attendance **is expected** for all academic activities.
- The program also realizes that sometimes family responsibilities and unexpected life events may occur. Therefore, during the Didactic phase (fall, spring, summer, fall) each student is allowed **two days per semester** for which they may miss class with no questions asked. The student is responsible for notifying the program using the procedures outlined below.
- Failure to report an absence is considered unprofessional and may result in professionalism consequences as determined by the Student Progress Committee.
- Students should use professional judgment when taking absences. ***Students who accrue three or more absences in a single semester will be referred to the Student Progress Committee***, who may initiate discussions with the student about their ability to progress in the program.
- Often, but not always, course lectures are recorded – this is at the discretion of the instructor. The purpose of such recordings is for the student to have the opportunity to review class material again. ***However, recorded lectures do not take the place of attending class in-person.*** Therefore, the expectation is that a class recording is not to be used as an excuse to miss class in-person.
- Many courses contain “unrepeatable components” such as skills workshops, IPE events, labs, group case studies, etc. If missed, these cannot be made-up.
- If an exam is missed, it cannot be re-scheduled. The student's final exam grade will be substituted in for the missed exam grade. If a final exam is missed, the student will earn a zero on that exam.
- This policy does not apply to illnesses or other medical related reasons for being absent. The faculty will continue to be flexible and accommodating in response to these student absences, especially related to communicable diseases where avoiding contact with others is advisable.

- Examples of occurrences when absences may be **excused**:
  - Personal illness or injury - some examples include but are not limited to fever at or above 100.3F, diarrhea, vomiting, migraine HA, and productive cough.
  - Family emergencies
  - Medical appointment that must be scheduled during a typical class time
  - Death of a close loved one
  - Observance of a religious holiday
- Examples of occurrences when absences may be **unexcused**:
  - Social functions
  - Employment
  - Family obligations
  - Personal travel

### **Procedures**

- In all cases of absence (tardies, missing partial days, leaving class early, and/or missing full days), students are expected to notify the program **prior to being absent** (or as soon as possible in the case of an emergency) via the form that is posted on the cohort's Google site.
  - The student will receive a receipt of form submission, and all course instructor(s) will be notified.
  - In cases of emergency, notify the program by calling **540-568-2395 (leave a voicemail, if necessary)**.

Note: this policy only applies to courses with a 'PA' course prefix (e.g., PA 510). It does not apply to BIO 513 (Anatomy), or BIO 516 (Physiology & Pathophysiology).

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, "*The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct*"

## Class Conduct

- For all students to benefit, everyone must behave in a mature, professional manner.
- All cell phones and pagers must be turned to vibrate or silent during class time. If a student feels it necessary to answer a phone or open a text during class time, that student must exit the classroom to do so. The instructor of the class will determine if a student's pattern of responding to a phone or text is becoming problematic.
- Laptop/tablet use during class is for **class-related activities only**. If a student is caught not using his/her laptop for class-related activities, then the student will no longer be able to use his/her laptop during class time.
- In addition, JMU has a "Disruption of Class" policy that can be found here:  
[http://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/\\_documents/policies/aapolicy-12.pdf](http://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/_documents/policies/aapolicy-12.pdf)
  - This policy defines "disruptive behavior" as the following: inappropriate student behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with the ability of instructors to teach and students to learn. It may constitute a violation of law, a violation of the student conduct code or a violation of an instructor's established rules of conduct for a particular class. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - Verbal or physical threats or harassment
    - Physical violence
    - Refusal to comply with reasonable faculty member instructions
    - Interrupting other speakers, speaking out without being recognized or engaging in personal insults
    - Unruly or disorderly behavior that distracts other students or obstructs the learning environment
  - Civil expression, disagreement, or debate as permitted within the class by a faculty member is not disruptive behavior. Each student has a right to the freedom of thought and expression, including a right to reasoned dissent, in his or her classes. A student's right to exercise academic freedom carries with it concomitant responsibilities. These responsibilities are owed to other students, faculty members and the institution. Failure to live up to these responsibilities carries with it the possibility of sanctions, up to and including removal from a class, removal from a program and/or removal from the university.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, "*The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct.*"

## Class Liaison & Exam Frequency

Each cohort will elect a class liaison. The class liaison acts as the “spokesperson” from the class to the PA faculty for all planning, scheduling, and other academic matters. Specifically...

- The liaison will manage the **Google Calendar**
  - Do not ever change something for a cohort other than your own
  - only curricular and program related events should be posted (no birthdays, social/recreational events, etc.)
- The liaison will solicit volunteers from the class for monthly **Info Sessions** and **Applicant Interviews** each fall/spring.
- The liaison will speak on behalf of the class regarding the re-scheduling of an exam using the following guidelines:
  - **Two exams** in a single week is considered typical and manageable....i.e., the students may not ask for them to be changed.
  - If there are **four exams** in a single week, ideally one of them should try to be moved to lessen the load on students.
  - If there are **three exams** in a single week, the students may ask for a switch but there are no guarantees in this case.
  - Truthfully, there are never any guarantees – it is ultimately up to the individual faculty member to move an exam - this is simply meant as a guiding policy.
  - Simply moving an exam for no apparent reason is not an option – please do not ask!

## Class Recordings

### Instructors

- Class sessions may only be recorded by the instructor.
- Students are prohibited from unauthorized recording, and are prohibited from downloading recordings.
- Only the instructor can initiate a virtual component of the course (i.e., Zoom, WebEx, etc.).

### Students

- Any recordings will only be available to the students enrolled in the class during that particular class term.
- Students who have concerns about being recorded should contact the instructor privately and prior to the first recorded session to share those concerns or to request an alternate assessment option(s).
- Only students enrolled in the class may be given instructor permission to record (this includes the use of Zoom, WebEx, etc.). Instructors' permission to record a class may include limitations on which portions of class may be recorded and which may not be recorded. Instructors' may revoke permission for a student to record at any time.

### ODS & Accommodations

- Students requesting the use of assistive technology, including recording, as a reasonable accommodation should direct their request to the [Office of Disability Services](#).

### Copyright

- Permission to record is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording.

See [Academic Affairs Policy #15 Class Session Recordings and Distribution](#) for further information.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, *"The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct"*



## Clinical Rotation (SCPE) Assignments

- Supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs) begin in January and last until graduation in December. For each SCPE a student is assigned to a clinical preceptor(s) within local and regional communities. Rotations are intensive, hands-on learning experiences.
- The PA Program faculty determines the sites and the sequence of clinical rotations for each student. The Director of Clinical Education gathers input on site availability and on students' educational and personal interests to assist and inform the decision-making process. Ultimately though, ***students are assigned to clinical rotation sites – students do not directly choose clinical rotation sites.*** The Program is under no obligation to meet any individual or personal needs of students or student requests. The Program's priority is to provide all students with optimal learning opportunities. This may include sending students to distant sites in states other than Virginia. Previously utilized clinical sites (that we may use again) have been in Michigan, Florida, Kentucky, California, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and more.
- Students are not required to find their own supervised clinical practice experiences.
- However, ***students are responsible to find their own housing*** during the clinical phase. The Program provides a list of housing options at sites. Students are free to make housing arrangements using the provided options or to find alternative housing on their own. All students will have to travel to multiple sites during the year and will incur the costs of travel and of additional housing.
- There are times when a student may suggest a potential preceptor. To do so, first contact the Director of Clinical Education. Having obtained their permission, the student may then contact the potential preceptor ***for the purpose of ascertaining initial preceptor interest. Do not pursue rotation arrangements or present yourself as representing the PA Program.*** Once a clinician indicates interest in exploring the possibility of becoming a preceptor, inform the Director of Clinical Education. The PA program will provide the prospective preceptor with additional information. Our goal is to establish ongoing relationships with clinical instructors who have a ***long-term interest*** in precepting PA students. Affiliations for one-time, one-student only SCPEs are discouraged but may be facilitated as program need requires. ***The suggestion of a potential preceptor or an indication of preceptor interest does not ensure that a rotation with that provider will occur.***
- Students may not contact other PA program clinical coordinators/faculty to inquire about possible clinical rotations. All contact with other PA programs is done by JMU PA faculty.
- Change of assignment will not be considered once SCPE assignments have been confirmed with preceptors. However, unforeseen circumstances may arise with the preceptor, the student, or with the program. Students should immediately inform the Director of Clinical Education of any ***serious problem*** with an assignment. Students should also be understanding of an unforeseen circumstance that may require the program to make an unexpected change in the student's schedule.

- Two of the four-week rotation periods in the second year are electives. Students must follow the procedure for requesting and gaining approval of elective choice. However, the program may assume control of the choice of elective for educational purposes.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.10** which states, *“The sponsoring institution must support the program in securing clinical sites and preceptors sufficient in number to allow all students to meet the program’s learning outcomes for supervised clinical practice experiences”*.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A2.14** which states, *“In addition to the principal faculty, there must be sufficient didactic instructional faculty to provide students with the necessary attention and instruction to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for entry into the profession”*.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.03** which states, *“The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply a policy for prospective and enrolled students that they must not be required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors”*.

## Confidentiality, Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- Confidentiality is required during the entire PA Program - during all clinical activities involving patients. Patient confidentiality is of utmost importance especially when going to off-site establishments (i.e., clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, clinical rotation sites, etc.)
- During initial Program orientation, all students are required to successfully complete an educational module on HIPAA which explains the principles of the federal regulations regarding confidentiality.
- Students may be required to sign an additional confidentiality statement form at certain facilities.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, *“The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations”*.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, *“The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct”*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.18** which states, *“The curriculum must include instruction in the principles and practice of medical ethics”*.

## Criminal Background & Sexual Offender Checks

- The JMU PA Program is a graduate-level, clinical program. Based on Code of Virginia § 23.1-407.1, the James Madison University Physician Assistant (PA) Program will not deny admission to any applicant solely based on criminal history. However, for any applicant who has been admitted, but not yet enrolled, the PA Program may inquire about the applicant's criminal history. The PA Program may then withdraw an offer of admission to anyone whom James Madison University determines "to have a criminal history that poses a threat to the institution's community."
- Therefore, for each individual who has been offered admission to the JMU PA Program it is required that a criminal background and sexual offender check be completed. These must be completed prior to enrollment. Additional checks will be required later in the Program, just prior to the start of the clinical phase. The student must comply with these additional checks to remain a student in good standing within the Program and before clinical placement can take place. The cost of these background checks will be the sole responsibility of the student.
- It is imperative to understand that if a background or sexual offender check reveals a criminal history, it is possible that the student may not be able to be placed at certain clinical sites. The program will do its best to place the student at alternative sites; however, it is possible that program completion would be in jeopardy if not all supervised clinical practice experiences can be completed.
- Upon PA Program completion, in the vast majority of cases, a graduate must obtain national certification and state licensure before being eligible to practice medicine. Having a criminal record may impact a student's ability to obtain a state license from a medical board in the future.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, *"The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations"*.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02g** which states, *"The sponsoring institution is responsible for documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs"*.

## Deceleration

- Deceleration is the term used to describe the scenario when a student stops taking courses, steps away from the Program for a period of time, and then rejoins the Program with the next cohort (the cohort 'behind' them). This is something that cohort-based programs with sequenced curricula may utilize since courses are typically only offered once per calendar year.
- The student will receive a grade of 'Incomplete' in situations where any coursework is not finished. Incomplete grades will subsequently be replaced with the final earned course grade once the student completes all course requirements the following year. At the discretion of the Student Progress Committee, in consultation with the Program Director and Academic Unit Head, students may be asked to complete outstanding course requirements and/or repeat the course entirely.
- While decelerated, the student will be required to enroll in GRAD 597 as a placeholder course so they are not unenrolled from the University. There is a standard \$50 fee for this course. GRAD 597 is only required for the Fall or Spring semester (not the Summer session). The student must not withdraw from the Program/University otherwise they would be required to re-apply to the Program via the standard admissions process.
- Only the Student Progress Committee, in consultation with the Program Director and Academic Unit Head, may recommend deceleration as a potential option for a student. It is generally reserved for extenuating circumstances only. ***Students may not request deceleration.*** Students may however, at any time pursue a 'planned leave of absence' for medical and/or personal reasons. This is done via The Graduate School in consultation with the Dean of Students: [https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/students/leaving\\_jmu\\_currentstu.shtml](https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/students/leaving_jmu_currentstu.shtml)

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standards **A3.15a, A3.15b, A3.15d, and A3.15e** which state, *"The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission any required academic standards, requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program, policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal"*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B4.02e** which states, *"The program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a timely manner and according to its defined and published policies and procedures, to identify and address any deficiency in meeting program competencies in professional behaviors."*

## Dress Code & Identification

Development of ethical conduct and professional behavior is an essential part of becoming a Physician Assistant. This responsibility begins not upon graduation from the Program, but rather at the inception of one's PA education. An essential component of this is your appearance. Appearance gives a first impression to classmates, faculty, and potential future employers, colleagues, and patients. It also sets the tone for your interaction with them. Therefore, as students in a professional graduate program, you are expected to dress in a professional manner. The following guidelines must be followed.

### Didactic Phase (traditional courses, first 4-semesters)

Students should be aware that during lectures, skills workshops, and laboratory experiences, they will be engaged in activities that require bending, squatting, reaching overhead, leaning forward, and more. As such, clothing must always cover the front and back of the torso and buttocks. Clothing that is too tight or exceedingly form-fitting may be considered unprofessional. Undergarments must be completely covered by outer clothes. Appropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to, shirts with a closed back and shorts with an inseam > 3" (approximately). Students should also ensure that their grooming and hygiene promotes a professional appearance. Strong fragrances are discouraged, and deodorant should be used.

The follow exceptions exist regarding dress code:

- Lectures with Guest Clinicians: Business casual dress is required.
- Anatomy Wet Lab (BIO 513): Lab attire guidelines provided by Dr. Wunderlich.
- Physical Diagnosis Labs: Varies depending on the content; T-shirts & shorts may be appropriate at times. Instructors will clearly communicate dress expectations for specific labs.
- Skills Workshops: Varies depending on the content. T-shirts & shorts may be appropriate at times. Instructors will clearly communicate dress expectations for specific workshops.
- Class Presentations (PA 652): Business casual dress is required.
- Student-Engaged Medical Clinic: Business casual dress is required, plus your short white coat.

### Clinical Phase (rotations, final 3-semesters)

The dress code will be dictated by the clinical site and/or the preceptor to which you are assigned. In general, it is business casual plus your short white coat for most outpatient settings, and surgical scrubs are acceptable for surgery/ED settings.

Violations of this policy may result in any of the following:

1. A meeting with your faculty advisor.
  2. A meeting with the Student Progress Committee (with subsequent remediation plan).
  3. Being sent home to change, which will then result in an absence on your record (see Attendance Policy).
- You are reminded that your attire is a sign of respect and courtesy to the clinicians from the community who are presenting various guest lectures. For many of them, their interaction with students during presentations *provides the primary impression they have of the JMU PA Program* and of students who may work with them in clinical settings.

- Whenever students are in a patient-setting (clinics, hospitals, physicians' offices, etc.) they are required to dress professionally and to wear a short white coat with the PA Program patch and ***nametag/ID clearly visible***. The patch should be sewn on the breast pocket. When in clinic situations, it behooves the student to remember he/she is a professional associating with various other professionals, and the appearance one presents to a patient and others is important in terms of how the student will be accepted and treated by others. Name badges and Program patches are available from the Program.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.06** which states, *“The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply a policy that PA students must be clearly identified in the clinical setting to distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners”*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, *“The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct.”*

## Drug Screening

- In order to comply with the requirements of clinical sites, students must submit to a urine drug screen testing prior to beginning clinical rotations in the second year. The Program will inform students of the necessary procedures and fees for this testing.
- The student must comply to remain a student in good standing within the Program. The cost of such checks will be the responsibility of the students. Should a student necessitate subsequent testing to remain in the Program, the costs of all such testing remains the sole responsibility of the student.
- In addition to the mandatory drug test described above, the PA program may choose to randomly drug test a PA student at any time, for any reason.
- Be aware that although several states have legalized marijuana use (whether medical or recreational), it is still considered illegal on a federal level. Additionally, most (if not all) clinical sites still require a negative drug test to be a student at the site. If a student tests positive for marijuana, the PA Program will not be responsible for the potential repercussions, which may include not being able to begin or finish a clinical rotation, or not being able to complete the PA Program.
- Some rotations may ask you to submit to a required drug screen that is in addition to the one you are required to complete for the program. These drug screens could be urine tests, oral tests, or blood tests. It is important to know that orally consumed CBD oil can trigger a positive test for marijuana on an oral drug test. Prior to using CBD oil, please consider getting a note from your primary care provider AND speaking with the PA Program Director and Director of Clinical Education to discuss how this could impact your education.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, “The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02g** which states, “The sponsoring institution is responsible for documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs”.



## Electronic Devices, Email, & Software

### General Computer Policy

- Students **MUST** have a laptop computer that can run **ExamSoft** assessment software. Pertinent specifications are communicated annually to an incoming cohort.
- Testing and many course assignments are frequently accomplished via computer systems. In addition, during the clinical phase students must log the patients they see into a web-based system. Therefore, students are ***expected to possess basic computer skills*** – word processing, emailing, utilizing the internet, etc.

### JMU E-mail (Dukes account)

- Many communications between students and the program are carried out through email. Therefore, all students are required to use their ***assigned JMU e-mail account*** for the duration of the Program. All PA Program related correspondence will be sent to this account.
- Students must check their email account at least once per day. Failure to respond to email communication from faculty/staff in a timely manner may result in a professionalism violation. See
- By agreeing to follow this policy manual, you also consent to allow PA Program faculty to email the entire cohort as a group.

### Other Resources

- UpToDate is an evidence-based clinical decision support resource used worldwide by physicians, PAs, and other clinicians. It is useful in informing clinical decision making and keeping current with standards of care. All core PA faculty maintain subscriptions. The PA Program *does NOT require students to have a subscription to UpToDate but does highly recommend it.*
- Countless other apps and websites exist for use in medicine and PA education. Some are free and some are fee-based. Students must exercise caution in evaluating such software for accuracy and relevancy.

## End of Rotation (EOR) Exams

### Procedure

- A student must earn a 70% or above to pass an EOR exam.
- If a student earns <70%, he/she must meet with the course instructor for feedback, and then re-take a similar EOR exam. ***This must be completed by the conclusion of the EOR week.***
- If the student earns  $\geq 70\%$  on the re-take exam, he/she will be allowed to progress in the Program. However, the final, recorded EOR exam grade will remain a 70%.
- If the student earns <70% on the re-take exam, the grade for the course will be a "C". In addition, he/she MUST REPEAT THE CLINICAL ROTATION.
  - In this case, the Director of Clinical Education will assign the student to an appropriate clinical rotation. This may necessitate having to register for additional credit hours and/or semester(s). It may also delay the student's ability to graduate. All expenses including tuition, travel, housing, and other costs associated with any additional clinical rotation(s) will be the sole responsibility of the student.
- If a student earns <70% on a third EOR exam, that student will be required to formally meet with the Progress Committee. At this point, the policy on page 38 applies whereby remediation could be recommended. Every subsequent EOR exam score <70% will activate this meeting as well.

### Reviewing the Exams

- When a student passes an EOR exam, for confidentiality reasons, he/she will not be allowed to review the exam itself. This is also because the sequence of clinical rotations is different for each student. Meeting with the course instructor for feedback is encouraged, however.
- Once ALL SEVEN EOR exams have been completed by the ENTIRE COHORT, then they will be made available for review. This will be done on an individual basis with the instructional faculty member and by request only.
- Any discussion about EOR exam content among students is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. This is an issue for academic integrity. Suspected violations will be referred to the Progress Committee and/or the JMU Honor Council.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standards **A3.13a, A3.13b, A3.13c, and A3.13e** which state, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission any required academic standards, requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program, policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration, policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal".*

## Exam Content

Medicine is both an art and a science; and is a constantly evolving field. Instructors do their best to stay up to date, however, inadvertent errors can occur with exam content.

Students have the right to inquire about an exam question with their instructor, however, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The instructor will only entertain questions about the exam after they have had a chance to review the exam results first. Please do not ask about exam questions immediately after the exam is completed.
2. Investigate and seek further information about the question content on your own. Use valid course related resources, e.g., UpToDate, course textbooks, instructor PPT, etc.
3. If a concern still exists after completing your own research, email your question to the course instructor(s) within 24-hours of the release of exam answers. In your email, you must only cite valid course materials such as the course textbook, UpToDate, or the instructor PPT (include page numbers when possible). It is unacceptable to cite arbitrary websites that you find in a web search.
4. The instructor will determine the validity of your concern and whether it will impact your exam grade.

Note: this policy only applies to courses taught with a PA course prefix (e.g., PA 510). It does not apply to BIO 513 (Anatomy), BIO 516 (Pathophysiology I), or BIO 517 (Pathophysiology II).

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15d** which states, “The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal”*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, “The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct.”*

## Grading Policy

Grading Scale for Non-Clinical Courses		Grading Scale for Clinical Courses (SCPEs)	
A	100% - 94%	A	100% - 92%
A-	<94% - 90%	A-	<92% - 86%
B+	<90% - 87%	B+	<86% - 81%
B	<87% - 83%	B	<81% - 76%
B-	<83% - 80%	C	<76% - 70%
C	<80% - 70%	F	<70% - 0%
F	<70% - 0%		

**Rounding:** No grade will be “rounded up” to the next highest score. The grade earned is the grade that will be recorded. It would be unfair and unprofessional for a student to ask a faculty member to deviate from this policy.

**Note:** this policy only applies to courses with a ‘PA’ course prefix (e.g., PA 510). It does not apply to BIO 513 (Anatomy), or BIO 516 (Physiology & Pathophysiology).

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15a** which states, “*The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission any required academic standards,*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15b** which states, “*The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program*”

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15c** which states, “*The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration*”

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15d** which states, “*The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon Admission policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal*”

## Immunizations & Physical Exam

As people are entering roles as health care providers, it is important that students do not have conditions that might endanger the health and well-being of other students, patients, and health care providers that they will encounter. It is equally important that reasonable precautions be taken to protect the health of the physician assistant students.

PA students must have a physical examination completed by a licensed medical provider within 6-months prior to beginning the PA Program. Official documentation of such being accomplished (but not the actual results) is due to the PA Program office to keep on file.

It is JMU policy that the UHC must have a completed Health Record and Immunization Certification form on file before students register for classes. The forms are available from the UHC. The forms must be sent to the UHC and will be stored there and remain confidential.

The PA Program faculty and staff do not have access to your medical records. However, each student is required to sign a release of information that permits the UHC to provide written assurance to the PA Program that the student's health record includes proof of required immunizations/exposures and appropriate TB testing results. The PA Program forwards such assurances to clinical practice sites, agencies, and preceptors, when necessary.

Below, numbers 1-4 are required of all JMU students and numbers 5-7 are additional requirements for PA students. All records are to be sent to the UHC.

1. **Tetanus and Diphtheria Vaccine (Td):** last booster within 10 years  
**OR** a single dose of Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (**TDaP**).
2. **Hepatitis B Vaccine:** must receive 3 doses or provide titer report indicating positive immunity.
3. **Two (2) MMR Vaccines (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)** administered after your first birthday AND after 1967.  
**OR** Two (2) Measles vaccines plus one (1) Rubella plus one (1) Mumps vaccine. All must have been administered after your first birthday AND after 1967.  
**OR** Titer report indicating MMR immunity is acceptable in place of vaccine documentation.
4. **Meningococcal Vaccines:** must receive vaccine or sign waiver on Health Record.
5. **Tuberculosis Screening:** prior to admission, each student must document current TB screening in one of the following manners:
  - A two-step TB test  
OR
  - A previous 2-step TB test AND a recent single test  
OR

- If previous or new test result was positive, documentation of prior treatment AND a negative chest x-ray, and annual negative symptom screen.
  - Students must document current TB screening status while in the PA Program and are required to update their immunization TB screening record annually.
6. **Influenza:** 1 dose of TIV or LAIV annually.
  7. **Varicella:** proof by titer.
  8. **COVID-19:** two doses of the Moderna/Pfizer vaccine OR a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

#### Elective Rotation – Peru

For those students interested in going to Trujillo, Peru for an elective clinical rotation, the following may also be required based upon CDC guidance:

- Hepatitis A vaccine
- Typhoid vaccine
- Malaria medication prophylaxis

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, “*The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02g** which states, “*The sponsoring institution is responsible for documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.07a** which states, “*The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply a policy on immunization and health screening of students. Such policy must be based on then current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for health professionals and state specific mandates*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.19** which states, “*Student health records are confidential and must not be accessible to or reviewed by program, principal or instructional faculty or staff except for immunization and screening results, which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student.*”

## Liability Insurance

- When engaged in clinical activities assigned by the Program as part of their education, students are covered by liability insurance provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Students may be required to purchase additional insurance, if, for instance, a clinical site were to require additional coverage. Details about amounts of coverage, cost (if any), and providers will be supplied to students by the program in advance of the need for such coverage.
- Medical liability insurance applies only to learning opportunities to which a student has been assigned by the PA Program as part of the MPAS curriculum. Coverage is not in effect and does not cover student activities associated with employment, nor with volunteer or observational activities not required or assigned by the PA Program.
- The PA Program has formal legal agreements with many physician practices, health agencies and hospitals that require notification of the site by the PA Program well in advance of any student activity at the site. To avoid confusion at these sites, students who may be working or otherwise engaged in any non-student activity at a clinical site must inform the PA Program and abide by any steps taken by the program to avoid confusion at the site(s).

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, “The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations”.*

## Memberships

- Appendix C lists many PA affiliated organizations that students may be interested in joining. The PA Program does not require membership in any of them.
- The PA Program does *highly encourage* supporting the local Virginia state organization (Virginia Academy of Physician Assistants - VAPA). Membership costs only \$20 per student for the entire length of their PA Program. VAPA supports the PA Program in many ways and generously provides the embroidered long “white coats” for all students upon graduation from the Program.



## Note-Sharing Websites/Services

- Websites where class notes can be bought and sold have raised serious questions about intellectual property rights. For intellectual property purposes, the notes that you personally take during class belong to you. You are free to do with these as you wish.
- However, any lecture that is copied verbatim, any recording of a lecture, or any handout or PowerPoint created by the instructor is the property of the instructor. These types of materials may not be handed out, copied, or posted anywhere without the prior written approval from the instructor.
- Not adhering to this policy will be considered a violation of the JMU Honor Code (see page 34) and could also potentially be considered a violation of copyright law.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, “The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations”.*

## Photo/Video Usage

- By participating in the courses, workshops, activities, and events of the JMU PA Program and the Physician Assistant Student Society (PASS), you consent to the use of photography and videography. The JMU PA Program has the right to use images in all forms for any printed or audiovisual materials, advertising, trade or commercial purpose, publications on websites and/or social media.
- Your name or other contact information will neither be published along with the photo/video nor released to anyone who may inquire as such, without your expressed written consent first.
- This policy is consistent with, and superseded by, the University policy found here: <https://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/policies/1509.shtml>

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, “*The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations*”.

## Professionalism and Behavior

The PA Program is part of an educational institution in which there is an atmosphere of learning, as well as a sense of community. Therefore, professional behavior is always expected both in the classroom and in clinical settings. Respect for instructors and fellow students is to be always shown. Development of ethical conduct and professional behavior is an essential part of becoming a physician assistant. The PA Program emphasizes that the student utilizes self-monitoring and self-reflection as strategies to further develop growth in professionalism and ethics.

- The concept of professional identity implies knowledge of professionalism. Professionalism can be defined as the collective sum of professional attitudes, professional conduct, and professional growth. Throughout the Program, each PA student is expected to move toward developing a greater sense of professionalism. Specifically, the attributes of excellence, accountability, confidentiality, ethical principles, and altruism must be developed. The Program also values academic integrity, individual responsibility, self-respect, and respect for others. JMU PA students assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with these principles.
- Should a student's personal conduct adversely affect other students, the Program, the University, or under certain conditions, the student himself or herself, the Progress Committee will investigate the circumstances surrounding the conduct. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Written reprimand/warning in student's academic record with expectations for improvement
  - Program probation with remediation, including educational activities (written paper, oral presentation, watching a video, journaling, or self-reflection)
  - Grade adjustment
  - Program dismissal
- Examples of conduct for which students are subject to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Abusive (physical, verbal, sexual, emotional) behavior toward JMU faculty, staff, students, or clinical preceptors
  - Dishonesty of any form such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, misuse of ID cards, or furnishing false information to JMU or clinical rotation sites
  - Threats, physical harm, or verbal abuse of any person on institutional property or at institutional-sponsored activities
  - Theft of or damage to property of the institution or a clinical rotation site
  - Unauthorized entry or violation of rules governing JMU facilities
  - Use, possession, sale or distribution of narcotics or abuse of drugs or stimulants or any illegal substances or any evidence of impairment
  - Drunkenness, or use, possession, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages on institution property
  - Gambling on institution property

- Fulfilling inappropriate roles, i.e., acting in a role of a previous profession (EMT, respiratory therapist, nurse, etc.)
- Breach or carelessness of patient confidentiality
- Unauthorized possession or use of explosives or firearms on institution property
- Unprofessional demeanor, dress, attitude, or hygiene
- False representation (calling oneself a PA-C)
- Inappropriate use of JMU or PA Program logos
- Intentionally misleading others or promoting oneself at the expense of a fellow student, faculty member, or patient
- Offensive/profane language or gestures
- Inappropriate remarks with sexual overtones
- Engaging in romantic, sexual, or other non-professional relationships with a patient, even upon the apparent request of that patient

Physician Assistants are called to the highest standards of ethical conduct and professional behavior. We believe that this responsibility begins not upon graduation from the Program, but rather at the inception of one's PA education. Therefore, students are expected to always act professionally and are required to not only adhere to the above policy but also to the JMU Honor Code, the AAPA Code of Ethics, and HIPAA. Confidentiality regarding all patient interactions is required and of utmost importance. The AAPA Code of Conduct can be found here:

<https://www.aapa.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=815>

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.15d** which states, "The program must define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available to students upon Admission policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal"*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, "The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct."*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.18** which states, "The curriculum must include instruction in the principles and practice of medical ethics."*

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B4.03e** which states, "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 meets the program competencies required to enter clinical practice, including professional behaviors."*

## Social Media

Online activities including chat rooms, instant messaging, blogging, and the use of social media is now a norm rather than an exception for most people. Social media can include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat, and much more. As a future medical professional, you are held to a high standard of professionalism and behavior regarding such online activity. Remember that the Professionalism and Behavior Policy still applies to online activities (see Professionalism and Behavior Policy on pages 59-60). Below are some specific examples to consider:

- Always maintain patient confidentiality. Do not post confidential information about your patients, their friends or families, or clinical staff. HIPAA laws still apply online too.
- The lines between personal/private and public/professional are often blurred online. Be thoughtful and use common sense in how you represent yourself and the JMU PA Program.
- Be careful identifying yourself as a JMU PA student. With this comes the potential to instantly connect to every person in your class, the Program, and other “followers”. Think first about your “audience”. This includes avoiding the use of religious/cultural/ethnic slurs, sexual harassment, profanity, personal insults, as well as topics that could be considered obscene.
- Remember that clinical rotation sites, potential future employers, certification agencies, and state regulatory boards may conduct internet searches (including searches of social media) to assess one’s character. Likewise, questionable or compromising photographs posted on-line cause serious damage to one’s personal and/or professional reputation. The content of your current social media activity could impact your future ability to obtain a job.
- Do not use the PA Program name, likeness, or logo or make any endorsements without permission.
- Critical comments about JMU faculty or staff, their classmates, the PA Program, or any services provided at JMU on any social networking site is strictly prohibited.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.19** which states, “*The curriculum must include instruction in intellectual honesty, academic integrity, and professional conduct.*”

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B2.18** which states, “*The curriculum must include instruction in the principles and practice of medical ethics*”.

\*This policy is all in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B4.03e** which states, “*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 meets the program competencies required to enter clinical practice, including professional behaviors.*”

## Standardized Mock Patients

- The instruction of certain examination and procedural skills may require live models. Whenever possible, fellow students are asked to equally share the responsibility of serving as models. This not only benefits the student performing the exam/skill, but also gives the model helpful insight from a mock patient perspective.
- In situations involving sensitive exams or skills, appropriate faculty supervision is provided to assure that modesty and respect is maintained while facilitating learning. For select exams, such as male and female GU and GYN exams, trained live models will be provided. The student should keep in mind at all times that he/she represents the JMU PA Program and the PA profession.

## Student-Engaged Medical Clinic

In the didactic phase of the Physician Assistant (PA) Program, during the second, third, and fourth semesters, PA students are provided multiple opportunities to attend the Student-Engaged Medical Clinic (SEMC). The clinic is located less than a mile from the Health & Behavioral Studies building at the Blue Ridge Free Clinic. Each PA student has the opportunity to attend the SEMC 1-2 times per spring, summer, and fall semesters, for a total of approximately 6 experiences annually.

PA students see Free Clinic patients under the direct supervision of licensed physician assistant and nurse practitioner preceptors as part of the SEMC. Typical duties include obtaining patient histories, performing physicals exams, forming a differential diagnosis, performing common bedside procedures, and determining appropriate management plans. A unique inter-professional experience, students also have the opportunity to collaborate with physician specialists, pharmacy staff, nursing staff, and allied health professionals including dietitians, and mental health counselors.

By having the opportunity to care for a rural, underserved population, students may be more likely to choose a rural, primary care practice setting upon graduation from the PA Program.

This opportunity for students to gain valuable clinical experience while still in the didactic phase of the PA Program is extraordinary. Students gain not only clinical experience by treating complex patients who have multiple chronic conditions, but also learn much about professionalism, culturally competent care, and working with inter-professional teams. For more information about the Student-Engaged Medical Clinic, please contact the PA Program.

The partnership between the JMU PA Program and the Blue Ridge Free Clinic is made possible by a Primary Care Training Enhancement grant from the Health Resources & Services Administration - a division of the Health & Human Services Department of the federal government.

- Students are required to participate/attend the SEMC on their assigned dates. Attendance and duties will be incorporated into the Clinical Medicine course series (PA 520, PA 621, and PA 626).
- An orientation session for the SEMC including a tour of the Blue Ridge Free Clinic will take place at the conclusion of the first semester (December). A separate handbook for the SEMC will be distributed and reviewed at that time.

## Student Health Care

### Personal Health Insurance

Students are responsible for maintaining their personal health and are required to cover the cost of all outpatient and inpatient care they may need. Students are eligible for services at the University Health Center within the same parameters as any university student. However, PA students should realize that assignment to distant sites for clinical rotations might make use of the University Health Center services inconvenient or impractical. Students are required to take responsibility for their personal health and to pay for personal health care services.

### Faculty Involvement

PA faculty members serve as academic and career advisors to students. Therefore, PA faculty members, including the Medical Director, may not serve as providers of personal health care or mental health services for PA students, except for emergency situations.

*\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.09** which states, “The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply policies that preclude principal faculty, the program director and the medical director from participating as health care providers for students in the program, except in an emergency situation.”*



## Student Work

The following guidelines apply to students holding outside jobs while in the PA program:

- The PA Program is a very intense curriculum that demands a great deal of time. Additionally, it is important that students remain well balanced by allowing sufficient time for social activities, recreation and rest. ***Thus, students are strongly advised to forego employment while in the Program.*** When it is necessary to earn money, students are advised to seek types of positions that will fit best with the schedule of the curriculum. It is wiser to borrow the needed funds and succeed in the program than to overextend oneself with even part-time employment and weaken ones academic performance in the program leading to academic probation, failure or dismissal from the program.
- During the second year of the program several factors make it nearly impossible to maintain even very part-time employment. Students will be assigned to distant clinical sites. The schedule for clinical rotations, end of rotation testing, and breaks do not follow the university schedule of classes and breaks. Student duties scheduled while on clinical rotations are determined by the clinical preceptor and are dependent on the timing of learning opportunities. Student duties may be scheduled during weekdays, evenings, night call, and weekends.
- While on clinical rotations, students may not provide services within the preceptor's practice apart from those rendered for their educational value and as part of the clinical instruction experience. Further, students ***may not receive monetary compensation for work performed within the preceptor's practice.***
- Opportunities for part time work within JMU follow university policies presented in the graduate catalog. PA students doing clerical work for the university ***will not be assigned to the PA Program.***

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.04** which states, "The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply a policy that PA students must not be required to work for the program."

## Summative Evaluation

- In order to assess summative Program knowledge and to comply with the ARC-PA Accreditation Standards, the PA program ***administers a summative evaluation to all students approximately midway through their final semester in the Program***. It consists of both a written and practical component. The practical component is a case-based scenario that utilizes a mock patient. Student behavior/professionalism is also assessed.
- The written component of the summative evaluation is NOT the PACKRAT.
- This summative evaluation also serves to fulfill the policy of The Graduate School for a “comprehensive examination”. Students are notified, in writing, of success or failure of the comprehensive examination. In accord with TGS policy, “In the event a student fails the comprehensive evaluation, the student may request a re-examination. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the re-examination must occur within six months of the date of failure. Only one re-examination will be allowed.” *(Although the Graduate School allows the re-examination to occur within six months, the PA Program mandates the re-examination be completed near the end of the student’s final semester in the Program).*

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **B4.03** which states, “*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 meets the program competencies required to enter clinical practice,*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with The Graduate School catalog which states, “a formal assessment of mastery, designed to appraise the student’s competence is required of each JMU student in order to complete his or her program of graduate study”.

## Universal Precautions

At the start of the PA Program (and prior to seeing patients in a clinical setting), students are required to complete an online educational module through the University Health Center on hazardous materials training, universal precautions, and blood-borne pathogens. Go to [www.jmu.edu/healthctr](http://www.jmu.edu/healthctr) then go to Universal Precautions at the left sidebar. For Department name, use Physician Assistant Program.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02f** which states, “*The sponsoring institution is responsible for ensuring that all PA personnel and student policies are consistent with federal, state, and local statutes, rules and regulations*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A1.02g** which states, “*The sponsoring institution is responsible for documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs*”.

\*This policy is in accordance with ARC-PA Accreditation Standard **A3.08** which states, “*The program must inform students of written policies addressing student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any educational activities that would place them at risk.*”

## Appendix A: PANCE Content Blueprint – MEDICAL CONTENT

The table below illustrates the approximate percentage of exam questions you'll encounter. Other content dimensions cross-sect these categories. For example, up to 20 percent of the questions on any exam may also be related to surgery or infectious disease, and up to two percent may also cover legal or ethical issues.

Although not an exhaustive listing, click on each organ system to view a sample of the diseases, disorders and medical assessments you may encounter during the exam. These lists can provide a foundation for your exam preparation and serve as your blueprint to the exam content.

<b>Medical Content Categories</b>	<b>Percent Allocation</b>
Cardiovascular System	13%
Dermatologic System	5%
Eyes, Ears, Nose and Throat	7%
Endocrine System	7%
Gastrointestinal System/Nutrition	9%
Genitourinary System (Male & Female)	5%
Hematologic System	5%
Infectious Diseases	6%
Musculoskeletal System	8%
Neurologic System	7%
Psychiatry/Behavioral Science	6%
Pulmonary System	10%
Renal System	5%
Reproductive System (Male & Female)	7%
<b>Total: 100%</b>	

## Appendix B: PANCE Content Blueprint – TASK CATEGORIES

The list of tasks below includes knowledge and skill areas that were identified as important to physician assistant practice through an intensive practice analysis. Many of these knowledge areas and cognitive skills are covered on NCCPA's examinations.

<b>Task Categories</b>	<b>Percent Allocation</b>
History Taking & Performing Physical Examination	17%
Using Laboratory & Diagnostic Studies	12%
Formulating Most Likely Diagnosis	18%
Health Maintenance, Patient Education, & Preventative Measures	10%
Clinical Intervention	14%
Pharmaceutical Therapeutics	14%
Applying Basic Science Concepts	10%
Professional Practice	5%
	<b>Total: 100%</b>

## Appendix C: PA Professional Organizations

### AAPA

The American Academy of Physician Assistants, chartered in 1968, is the national professional organization representing physician assistants. The Academy's purpose is to provide services to its members and to promote the interests of the profession to other medical associations, state and federal government, and the public at large. AAPA is dedicated through its members to improving the availability and quality of health care in the U.S. The AAPA offices are located in Alexandria, VA. Website: <http://www.aapa.org>

### VAPA

The Virginia Academy of Physician Assistants is a constituent chapter of AAPA for PAs in Virginia. Student involvement is encouraged. This organization often offers support and assistance to the Virginia PA Programs. The student representative is an elected office. The VAPA offices are located in Charlottesville, Virginia. Website: <http://www.vapa.org>

### SAAAPA

The Student Academy of the AAPA is an organization of chartered student chapters. Each accredited PA program is eligible to charter and maintain a student organization. Students of the JMU program have established a JMU Student Chapter (PASS). There are many student member benefits. The SAAAPA offices are located in Alexandria, VA. Website: <http://www.aapa.org/saapa>

### PASS

The JMU PASS (Physician Assistant Student Society) first originated in 1999. It is the JMU Chapter of SAAAPA, a student organization that is made up of Physician Assistant students. The organization incorporates professionalism, academics and service to the university and community through various activities and service projects. Fundraising activities are performed to assist the organization with various activities, such as attending the AAPA National conference. The class officers are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Student Diversity Committee Representative, Assembly of Representative (AOR), and House of Delegates (HOD). You must be a member of the Student Academy of AAPA in order to be a member of PASS. Website: <http://www.healthsci.jmu.edu/PA/pass.html>

### PAEA

Physician Assistant Education Association is the national organization of PA Programs. It was formed in 1972 for the purpose of enhancing the quality of education offered by PA Programs. The PAEA offices are located in downtown Washington, DC. Website: <http://www.paeonline.org>

### NCCPA

The National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants is the organization that administers the national certification examination for PAs, awards certification, monitors continuing medical education and periodically retests PAs as they progress through their careers. The NCCPA offices are located in Johns Creek, GA. Website: <http://www.nccpa.net>

### ARC-PA

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is an accrediting agency. The ARC-PA protects the interests of the public and physician assistant profession by defining the standards for physician assistant education and evaluating physician assistant educational programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards. The ARC-PA offices are located in Johns Creek, GA. Website: [www.arc-pa.org](http://www.arc-pa.org)

## Appendix D: Competencies (PA Profession & JMU PA Program)

These competencies serve as a map for the individual PA, the physician-PA team, and organizations committed to promoting the development and maintenance of professional competencies among PAs. While some competencies will be acquired during formal PA education, others will be developed and mastered as PAs progress through their careers. The PA profession defines the specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and educational experiences requisite for PAs to acquire and demonstrate these competencies.

### **Medical Knowledge**

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

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

### **Interpersonal & Communication Skills**

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

- Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information
- Appropriately adapt communication style and messages to the context of the individual patient interaction
- Work effectively with physician and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a



- health care team or other professional group
- Apply an understanding of human behavior
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- Accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the care process for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

### **Patient Care**

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

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

### **Professionalism**

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

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

### **Practice-based Learning and Improvement**

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

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

### **Systems-based Practice**

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

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

*\*jointly developed by the NCCPA, ARC-PA, PAEA, and AAPA in 2005, reaffirmed in 2010, and amended in 2013.*

