

Harding University
Physician Assistant Program

General Student Handbook
2025-2026



HARDING UNIVERSITY

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The policies on the following pages apply to all students regardless of location. All principal faculty and the program director are also obligated to adhere to the outlined policies regardless of location. The policies may be superseded by Clinical Affiliation Agreements at specific clinical sites as outlined by the clinical affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding. Examples of this are provided in applicable sections of the handbook.

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Program Overview

Mission

The mission of the Physician Assistant Program at Harding University is to develop caring Physician Assistants who practice competent patient-centered primary care in diverse environments.

Purpose

In harmony with the overall mission of Harding University, the Physician Assistant program seeks to provide a comprehensive educational program designed to impart to students the knowledge and skills needed to become competent professionals. The program strives to motivate its future graduates to develop attitudes which stimulate continuing pursuit of professional excellence, Christ-centered service to others and lifelong learning.

Goals

The Physician Assistant Program is an integral part of Harding University and embraces the goals outlined in the University's statement of mission and goals.

The goals of the Physician Assistant Program are to:

1. Equip PA students to deliver competent and ethical care from a Christian perspective.
2. Encourage skills in lifelong learning and professional development including participation in professional organizations.
3. Promote supportive professional relationships among faculty, staff, and students.
4. Prepare students to engage collaboratively with clinical teams and display curiosity in interactions.
5. Prepare graduates for servant leadership by engaging them in meaningful community service and developing their ability to provide culturally respectful care.

Core Values

1. Practice competently, ethically and with a Christ-centered attitude.
2. Serve where needed, particularly in rural areas, inner-cities and on mission fields where there are health professional shortages.
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences in their patients and colleagues.
4. Understand the principles of scientific inquiry and research design, and apply these principles to read critically and interpret the literature and enhance the delivery of health care.
5. Integrate the basic principles of education and cultural awareness into programs that benefit the patient, the patient's family and the community through the promotion of wellness and personal responsibility for maintaining health.
6. Enrich the lives of their patients and communities through service and a Christ-centered approach to the practice of their profession.
7. Advocate a team approach to high-quality, cost-effective health care delivery as a primary care physician assistant in a dynamic health care delivery system.
8. Promote and uphold the physician assistant profession and its ideals.
9. Contribute to the profession through leadership, teaching and active scholarship.

Competencies

Competencies for Entering Harding University Physician Assistant Students
(adapted from the AAMC Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students)

The following characteristics, combined with foundational knowledge, position matriculating students to be adequately prepared for the rigor of PA training. We desire to build a cohort that embodies the following competencies at the start of their PA education.

Science Knowledge

1. Biological Sciences: Has foundational knowledge in the natural sciences related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, cells, organs and body systems.
2. Psychological Sciences: Has foundational knowledge of human behavior, self, others and social systems related to the psychological, socio-cultural and biological factors that influence health and well-being.

Critical Thinking and Reasoning

1. Critical Thinking: Uses knowledge and reasoning to solve problems including analyzing various approaches to the problem and alternative solutions. Should be able to apply critical thinking skills in multiple situations such as scientific inquiry, interpersonal relationships, and patient care.
2. Quantitative Reasoning: Has basic mathematic skills and understanding of quantitative reasoning.
3. Scientific Inquiry: Has knowledge of the scientific process and the ability to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is able to understand and use the language of the sciences.

Interpersonal Skills

1. Service orientation: Demonstrates empathy and a desire to help others and a sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress.
2. Social skills: Demonstrates awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues.
3. Cultural competence: Demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment and address personal biases.
4. Cultural humility: Respectfully engages diverse and competing perspectives with mindful listening and interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
5. Teamwork: Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; demonstrates humility in interactions with the team; is team-oriented.
6. Communication skills: Professionally, appropriately, honestly and effectively conveys information to others using spoken and written communication, adapting content and delivery for the situation; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed; demonstrates respect for others in words and in actions.

Intrapersonal Skills

1. Capacity for improvement: Shows self-awareness and ability to self-critique to set goals for continuous improvement; solicits and accepts constructive feedback and responds appropriately; engages in reflective practice for ongoing improvement; recognizes when help is required and when to ask for guidance, recognizes and admits mistakes and accepts the consequences; remains flexible and open to change.
2. Lifelong learner: Demonstrates a motivation to learn; recognizes and acts on personal responsibility to seek understanding; willing to learn new concepts and skills; continually works to refine knowledge.

3. Ethical responsibility: cultivates personal and academic integrity; follows rules and procedures; behaves honestly and ethically in all situations and interactions; resists unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; demonstrates the capacity for ethical and moral reasoning; demonstrates an awareness of strengths and limitations; respects self and protects and advocates for personal needs when appropriate.
4. Reliability and dependability: Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely, efficient and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.
5. Resilience and adaptability: Demonstrates emotional maturity and tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.

Clinical Experience

1. Demonstrates a basic understanding of health care systems, clinical environments and patient care, including the role of the Physician Assistant; demonstrates respect for the roles of other professionals in health care.

Competencies for Harding University Physician Assistant Students Entering the Clinical Phase (B1.01b)

Students progressing from the didactic phase to the clinical phase should be able to:

1. Understand the basics of the clinical sciences to include anatomy and physiology, epidemiology, genetics, and pathophysiology. (B1.01c, B2.02a-c & e)
2. Form clinical questions, retrieve evidence and organize information in a manner to facilitate clinical problem-solving. (B2.05)
3. Demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based guidelines and apply them appropriately.
4. Gather appropriate and sufficient clinical history and physical exam components to address patient and provider concerns. (B2.07)
5. Interpret history and physical exam findings, relating information to pathophysiology, clinical presentation, further evaluation, diagnosis and patient management. (B2.05)
6. Prioritize a differential diagnosis, re-evaluating and altering based on synthesis of new information. (B2.05, B2.07)
7. Recommend and interpret common screening and diagnostic tests. (B2.05, B2.07)
8. Develop an appropriate treatment plan including entering and discussing orders, interventions, referrals, consults and prescriptions; be able to adapt these recommendations and the discussion based on patient-specific factors and the clinical setting. (B2.02d, B2.05, B2.06, B2.07, B2.08)
9. Recognize a patient requiring urgent or emergent care and initiate evaluation, management and treatment, re-evaluating and adapting care as necessary. (B2.05, B2.08)
10. Document a clinical encounter in the patient record and provide an oral presentation. (B2.09, B2.14)
11. Respectfully collaborate as a member of an interprofessional team to include patients and their families. (B2.04, B2.10, B2.16, B2.17e)
12. Effectively communicate in a manner that promotes high-quality patient care and prevention of medical errors; promote a culture of safety and improvement. (B2.04, B2.10, B2.16)
13. Perform general procedures of a physician assistant, obtain informed consent and recognize indications, contraindications and potential complications. (B2.09)
14. Promote preventive care and provide health maintenance recommendations based on patient-specific factors. (B2.08, B2.11)
15. Demonstrate maturing of interpersonal skills to include professionalism, humility, empathy, service and ethical responsibility to others, respect for others, appropriate social skills, cultural competence and humility, teamwork and communication skills. (B2.18)
16. Demonstrates maturing of intrapersonal skills to include continuous self-improvement, ownership, lifelong learning, ethical responsibility to self, reliability, dependability, resilience, adaptability and flexibility. (B2.18)

Competencies for Graduating Harding University Physician Assistant Students (B1.01b)

Students graduating from the HU PA Program will possess or will be able to demonstrate:

1. Core clinical knowledge for patient-centered medical practice with the ability to evaluate and integrate new knowledge to provide evidence-based care. (B2.02, B2.03, B2.05)
2. An ability to collect pertinent information in the history and exam along with relevant laboratory and imaging studies. (B2.07)
3. An ability to perform clinical and technical skills related to patient care. (B2.09)
4. Clinical reasoning in developing an appropriate immediate and long-term evaluation and management plan for patients with acute and chronic health concerns. (B2.05, B2.07, B2.08b)
5. An ability to make evidence-based preventive care and health maintenance recommendations. (B2.12)
6. Professional and quality contribution to a multi-disciplinary patient care team. (B2.04, B2.10)
7. A basic understanding of laws and regulations governing the healthcare system and the use of resources such as EHRs and PMPs. (B2.14)
8. Effective and compassionate interpersonal and communication skills with all members of the health care team, including patients and their families. (B2.04, B2.10, B2.17e)
9. Respect for patients in a willingness to understand their worldview and cultural differences. (B2.06)
10. The importance of an ongoing process of self-reflection to identify and address biases that impede patient care. (B2.18)
11. Understanding of the professional requirements associated with the maintenance of PA practice and certification. (B2.17a,c,d)
12. The ability to apply evidence-based practices and point-of-care resources.

Technical Standards of Admission

The technical standards for admission to the Harding University Physician Assistant Program establish the expectations for proficiency in essential abilities necessary for students admitted to this program. The Harding University Physician Assistant Program curriculum requires demonstrated aptitude in diverse skills and abilities related to observation, intellect, physical manipulation, communication and interpersonal skills. Therefore, all students admitted in the program must possess the following abilities and characteristics, with or without reasonable accommodation. These technical standards must be maintained through the duration of the program. Observed behavior that is inconsistent with these technical standards may require further evaluation and action by the program.

1. General:
 - a. Candidates must possess the qualities of compassion, integrity, interest and motivation that are all personal qualities essential to the role.
 - b. Candidates must have an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare.
 - c. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to read, interpret, and follow written and verbal directions effectively and accurately to ensure the successful completion of academic and clinical tasks.
 - d. Candidates must possess basic computer skills to effectively participate in academic activities, clinical training, and patient care documentation.
 - e. Candidates must be able to effectively use email for communication, including sending, receiving, and managing messages.
 - f. Candidates must have the mental capacity to assimilate and learn large volumes of complex,

- technically detailed information, to perform clinical problem solving, and to synthesize and apply concepts and information from different disciplines to formulate diagnostic and therapeutic judgments.
2. Observation:
 - a. Candidates must be able to observe and participate in all demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including computer-assisted instruction.
 - b. Candidates must have sufficient visual and auditory acuity, as well as tactile and olfactory sensation necessary to perform a reliable and accurate physical examination. Candidates must be physically able to perform inspection, palpation, auscultation and percussion.
 - c. Candidates must possess sufficient postural control, neuromuscular control, depth perception, and eye-to-hand coordination to utilize standard medical instruments. They must possess sufficient control of the upper extremities to meet the physical requirements for training and performing complete physical examinations.
 - d. Candidates are expected to have the high degree of coordination of motor skills necessary to respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately.
 3. Communication:
 - a. Candidates must be able to relate reasonably to patients and establish a sensitive, professional and effective relationship. They should be able to communicate the results of the examination to the patient with accuracy, clarity and efficiency.
 - b. Candidates must have the ability to remain calm and reasoned in a high stress environment and be able to respond quickly and appropriately in emergencies
 - c. Candidates must be able to relate to and develop good professional rapport with other members of the health care team. Recognizing limitations, demonstrating concern for patients and exercising good judgment are also required attributes.
 4. Interpersonal Skills:
 - a. A candidate must possess the emotional and mental health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients.
 - b. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads, and have the ability to maintain composure and emotional stability during periods of high stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.

Program Contacts

Main office phone number:	501-279-5642
Main office fax:	501-279-4811
Clinical office fax:	501-279-4822
Program Director	Mrs. Mary Madill, PA-C 501-279-4815, mmadill@harding.edu
Academic Director	Mrs. Amanda Diles, PA-C 501-279-4814, acdiles@harding.edu
Program Coordinator	Mrs. Ginger Thomas 501-279-4819, gthomas3@harding.edu

Medical Director	Dr. Gregory Mock 501-279-4813, gmock@harding.edu
Program Assistant	Ms. AbiGrace Hefner 501-279-5642, ahefner1@harding.edu
Admissions Director	
Admissions Coordinator	Mrs. Hanna Anderson 501-279-5642, pa-admissions@harding.edu
Clinical Director	Ms. Nicole Mount, PA-C 501-279-4840, lmount@harding.edu
Clinical Assistant	Ms. Barbara Collins 501-279-4817, bcollins1@harding.edu

Disability Services & Accommodations

It is the policy of the Harding University Physician Assistant Program to provide reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities, according to federal and state law. All matriculates are asked to verify their ability to meet the technical standards, with or without accommodation, prior to matriculation into the program. Any student with a documented disability condition (e.g., physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Program Director and the Disabilities Services and Educational Access (DSEA) Office prior to beginning the program. If the diagnosis of the disability occurs after matriculation into the program, the student must self-identify with the DSEA Director as soon as possible in order to get academic accommodations in place for the remainder of the program. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively. Visit Pipeline to complete the DSEA Intake Form. The Disabilities Services and Educational Access office is in the Student Center, room 239. The office can be reached at disabilityservices@harding.edu or (501) 279-4019.

Diversity Services

The Diversity Services division of the Office of Student Life is a service provided by Harding University to assist minority students in their transition to college and to support and enhance their Harding experience to graduation and beyond. The office can be reached at diversityservices@harding.edu or 501-279-4856.

Counseling Services

Counseling resources and services are available at no cost to the student on campus through Harding's Counseling Center. Students can contact the office at 501-279-4347 or counseling@harding.edu. The center is located in McInteer 313.

Additionally, HU provides students with free access to TimelyCare, a virtual health and well-being platform. The service provides 24/7 access to virtual care for mental and emotional support in addition to virtual scheduled counseling visits. Students have 12 free scheduled counseling visits per year, August – July. Additional visits can be purchased. The TimelyCare app also features self-care content such as yoga,

meditation, and other health and well-being topics. To access, go to this [link](#) or download the TimelyCare app.

Changes to Program Policy

The faculty and staff of the Harding University Physician Assistant Program reserve the right to revise or amend the policies in the General Student Handbook and the Clinical Phase Manual at any time. All students in the Didactic and Clinical Phases of the program will be notified via email when changes are made and an electronic copy of the revised or amended handbook will be made available in each “Class of” Canvas course. At the beginning of the didactic phase, students will sign an acceptance policy agreeing to abide by this Handbook. At the beginning of each subsequent academic year all students will sign an acceptance policy for that year’s General Student Handbook and Clinical Phase Manual.

Administrative Policies

Name, Address, and Emergency Telephone Number

Any change in name, address, telephone number, and emergency phone number must be reported to the program and/or clinical office promptly in writing. It is the student's responsibility to keep their university records current. Address changes for the University can be done in Pipeline by following the directions below.

1. Log into pipeline
2. Scroll to the section titled "Personal"
3. Click on "Update My Info"
4. Fill out the appropriate form and click "Submit."
5. Notify the program coordinator when this is complete
6. The program will verify this in the University system

To update billing information with the Business Office, contact 501-279-4336.

Name Changes

If your name changes during your time in the program, the following steps must be taken before the program will officially change our records to reflect your new name. To change your name, you will need a copy of your driver's license or Social Security card with your new name. To change your marital status, you will need to upload a copy of your marriage license.

1. Log into pipeline.
2. Scroll to the section titled "Student"
3. Click on "Registrar Forms."
4. Click on "Personal Information Change."
5. Fill out the form and click "Submit."
6. Notify the program coordinator when this is complete
7. The program will verify this in the University system

Keep in mind that the program will use the name that is officially listed in University records for all correspondence with preceptors, NCCPA, and future employers. Contact Dru Goldman at dgoldman@harding.edu or 501-279-4057, if you have any difficulties.

Transportation and Housing

Students must provide their transportation for classroom activities, program-required events, and clinical sites. It is therefore required that all Physician Assistant students have a valid driver's license, a means of transportation, and current auto liability insurance. PA students are responsible for all costs associated with travel and off-campus clinical experiences.

Clinical experiences during the second year of the program are offered at hospitals and other clinical facilities throughout the region; typically, within a reasonable commute from a chosen home base. However, scheduling needs sometimes necessitate students being assigned to rotations outside of this area. When possible, the program will assist with locating suitable housing when a student must relocate for a distant

site; however, the student is ultimately responsible for making adequate housing arrangements.

Parking Policy

All student vehicles parked on campus are required to have a parking permit issued through the Department of Public Safety. To obtain a parking sticker, go to the online [Permit Store](#). Students may park in any lot between the white stripes. Parking between the red stripes is for University employees only. If there are questions, call parking at 279-5000. More details can be found on the [HU Parking and Registration website](#).

Campus Security

Report any incident to the Department of Public Safety at Harding University, 279-5000, and the PA Program. In the event of an emergency, call 5000 (on-campus/Harding phone) or 279-5000 and follow the instructions provided by Campus Security. For reference, the PA Program is located in the Farrar Building. Campus Security will notify the proper resources. Additionally, there is an [online tip form](#).

When clinical sites are selected, information is collected about possible safety or security issues. Students will not be scheduled in sites with significant safety and security concerns. Students who perceive their personal safety or security to be at risk will be allowed to leave a clinical site with proper notice to the program and the clinical preceptor. The Department of Public Safety can also assist by contacting them using the above methods or emailing dps@harding.edu. If adequate remediation of the problem cannot be quickly obtained, an alternate clinical assignment will be made for that student.

In the event that a student feels unsafe either on campus or off campus (e.g., at a clinic site) they should contact Public Safety and the appropriate program representative.

Inclement Weather Policy

If the President of the University closes or delays the start time of the University due to inclement weather, an announcement will be emailed by the University. You will also receive notification through the University's emergency messaging system. Upon registration, you were automatically enrolled in this, you do not need to opt-in. Additionally, you may call 501-279-5000 with specific questions.

After the University announces a closure or delay, HUPA will communicate in a timely manner the necessary changes and expectations for meeting course requirements. Some activities may be rescheduled, while others may transition to a synchronous or asynchronous online format. Students are expected to participate as directed, even if that falls during a previously unscheduled block of time. Some activities may be moved to evenings or weekends when necessary.

In the event of inclement weather while classes are in session, program staff and/or faculty will provide relevant information at the time.

Closure of the University does not affect clinical responsibilities if the clinical site is open. Review the Clinical Phase Manual for more details.

Child Care Policy

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for childcare, outside of the classroom or clinical site, during the Didactic and Clinical Phases.

HUPA Program recognizes that there will be occasions when it may be necessary for children to accompany their parent on campus. After all other options are explored, if no other options are available, requests for permission to allow a child to accompany his/her parent on campus in an emergency should be directed to the Academic Director or Program Director as soon as possible or at least one hour prior to class or clinical session. All requests will be considered according to the following factors:

1. Level of interference with other staff, students, or visitors
2. Sickness or level of contagion of the child
3. Content of lecture, discussion, or activity (subject matter may be inappropriate)
4. Probability of interruption or disruption to other staff and/or students
5. Notification to the instructor/lecturer

Health Requirements and Health Insurance

Every student is required to complete the health requirements detailed below. These are to be met in accordance with admissions procedures. Timely communication is expected if delays occur. Some requirements will be renewed annually. All immunizations, TST, and antibody titer policies follow current CDC guidelines for healthcare workers. Some Clinical Phase supervised clinical practice experience sites may have additional requirements that will be communicated to the student at the time of scheduling; additional costs will be the responsibility of the student. Review the Clinical Phase Manual for more details.

1. An annual physical examination with medical provider completion of the Annual Health Clearance Form which documents the student's ability to meet the applicable technical standards and fully participate in all Program activities
 - a. Didactic students must have this completed and documented at the time of matriculation
 - b. Clinical students must have this completed by the date designated by the Clinical Office prior to Clinical Orientation and again before Fall 3
2. Two MMR immunizations or documented immunity via a positive titer for mumps, measles, & rubella
3. Two dose Varicella series or documented immunity via a positive titer
4. Three dose Hepatitis B series and a reactive/positive surface antibody titer or two complete Hepatitis B series (5-6 injections total)
5. One-time Tdap booster within the 10 years prior to anticipated graduation
6. Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended during the flu season of the Didactic Phase and is required in the Clinical Phase
7. Primary COVID vaccination series is required by clinical sites before students may participate in activities at that site and evidence must be shown in the student's health records.
 - a. Clinical sites may be visited in both the didactic and clinical phases therefore evidence that the primary series has been started is must be provided before matriculation.
8. TB testing
 - a. A 2-step Tuberculin Skin test (TST), a negative IGRA, or a negative T-SPOT is required before Didactic Orientation, Clinical Orientation, and the start of Fall 3
 - b. Students with a known positive TB screening in the past will be required to fill out the Annual Screening Questionnaire and provide documentation of a clear chest x-ray. Alternatively, a current negative TST screening with documentation of a clear chest x-ray will suffice instead.
9. Students are required to maintain and provide documentation of comprehensive health insurance coverage throughout time in the program.

Failure to complete the above requirements at stated deadlines could result in removal from classroom

activities or clinical assignments until the requirement is met and will result in referral to the Academic Director and possible disciplinary action.

Medical or surgical conditions that arise while a student is enrolled in the program must be reported to the Academic Director during the Didactic Phase and Clinical Director during the Clinical Phase. In no case will program requirements pre-empt the directions of a student's personal physician. Certain medical problems, as determined by the student's health care provider, might preclude a student's placement in a clinical facility. Questions concerning this should be referred to the Program Director. Full-time program faculty must not participate as the primary health care providers for students in the program per ARC-PA standards.

It is important to recognize that students are not employees and therefore are not covered by worker's compensation insurance. Students are required to provide and maintain their own health insurance to cover any medical expenses incurred as a result of injury or illness that occur during any PA program required activities or at any clinical site whether occurring on or off campus. The Program is not liable for any injury or illness related expenses. Cost of injury or illness is the sole responsibility of the student, except when an injury results from acts of omissions of a clinical facility, its agents, or employees.

Malpractice Insurance

Physician Assistant students participate in the student liability insurance program carried by Harding University. This expense is covered by the PA Program.

Equipment and Technology Requirements

Acquiring the appropriate equipment (i.e., medical equipment, laptop, smartphone) for the didactic and clinical phases of the PA Program is necessary for the successful completion of the PA program. Each student is responsible for securing the equipment and electronic device(s) and associated software/operating systems according to the specifications provided to the students by the program. Failure to do will result in referral to the Academic Director and possible disciplinary action.

In the event of a required electronic device malfunction, the student should contact the Academic Director as soon as possible for further recommendations. Failure to secure an acceptable replacement device consistent with program technology specifications within seven business days during either phase of the program will result in referral to the Academic or Clinical Director and possible disciplinary action.

Latex Allergy

Harding's Physician Assistant program is unable to guarantee a latex-free environment to learners in either the clinical practice areas on campus or the clinical rotations sites off campus. Students with a known latex allergy/sensitivity are encouraged to consult their healthcare provider prior to entering the program. Students must list any known allergies on the intake questionnaire. During program activities, students with a latex allergy should make it standard practice to review the latex content of all supplies.

Infection Control and Universal Precaution Policy

All students are required to complete training on universal precautions and patient confidentiality during didactic training. Potential environmental hazards that may be encountered in a lab or clinical setting will be addressed through classroom instruction or in the course syllabus. In the

clinical phase, students are required to review and be accountable for the infection control and universal precautions policy and procedures of each clinical site prior to patient contact.

For the purpose of this policy, “blood-borne pathogens” refers to disease-causing microorganisms present in blood or other potentially infectious body fluids, and “high-risk exposure” is defined as an accidental puncture injury or mucous membrane or non-intact skin exposure to human blood/body fluid. Body fluid includes semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental or oral procedures, any type of body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids.

Students are responsible for reporting any “high-risk” exposure to bodily fluids. All “high-risk” exposure should be considered infectious regardless of the source. During the didactic phase, the steps outlined below should immediately be taken for “high-risk” exposure and clean needlesticks. If an accidental exposure occurs during the clinical year, it should be reported immediately to the preceptor. Appropriate site procedures should be followed, and an Accidental Exposure Form should be completed and turned into the clinical office. Review the Clinical Phase Manual for more details.

1. Remove contaminated clothing
2. Clean wound with soap and water or wash contaminated body parts
3. Flush mucous membranes for 15-20 minutes with water or normal saline solution.
4. Notify supervising faculty and the Academic Director immediately
5. If considered “high risk”, treatment should begin within 2 hours of exposure, if possible, but may be started within 72 hours. The Academic Director will assist with identifying appropriate treatment facilities. The student is responsible for submitting all costs incurred to his/her health insurance carrier.
6. Complete the Accidental Exposure Form with the PA Program office. The exposure will be logged and a copy of this form will be kept in the student’s secure file. Students may request a copy at any time.

Smoking Policy

The Harding University campus is a tobacco-free environment. This includes all buildings, parking lots and grounds. The use of tobacco in any form is not permitted at any time. The use of electronic cigarettes or vaporizers (with or without tobacco) is not allowed.

Background Check and Drug Testing

Students will be accepted on a conditional basis, contingent upon completion of the criminal background check with the return of acceptable results. All conditionally accepted students must consent, submit, and successfully complete a criminal background check through the program-selected criminal background check vendor as a condition of matriculation into the Harding University Physician Assistant program. Failure to do so will constitute a failure to meet the pre-matriculation requirements of the program and will result in the withdrawal of a conditionally accepted offer.

Matriculation and continued enrollment in the Physician Assistant program is contingent upon a completed criminal background check with *acceptable results*. Failure to consent to a criminal background check; refusal to provide necessary information to conduct a background check; failure to provide additional information wherein an investigation is warranted; and failure to comply with the investigatory procedures when a cause

for further action is warranted due to (1) the discovery of previously undisclosed information; (2) the discovery of more egregious information than was previously disclosed; or, (3) the discovery of conflicting information between or among the CASPA Application and/or the Supplemental Application and/or the Criminal Background Check Report and/or any and all documents considered part of an applicant's CASPA application, will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, withdraw of a conditional offer of acceptance, refusal of admission, or dismissal from the Physician Assistant program.

Information obtained from the Criminal Background Check, done as a condition of acceptance, will be shared only with clinical rotations which require such information. This will be handled through the clinical office.

Updated criminal background checks will be required just prior to or at the beginning of the clinical phase. These will be done at the student's expense using a pre-selected vendor. Any negative changes noted from the 1st to the 2nd background report may prevent the student from participating in that rotation and could be grounds for further disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the program.

In addition to the background check, a drug screen is required before the start of Clinical Orientation. Procedures for obtaining will be communicated by Clinical Office after the start of the Summer 1 semester. If a clinical site requires a repeat background check and/or drug screen for SCPEs in the Fall 3 semester, this will be communicated to students by the Clinical Office when the SCPE is scheduled.

On occasion, students may also be expected to submit to random drug testing required by clinical practice sites and/or the program. These additional costs will be the student's responsibility. Criminal background checks and drug screens are common pre-employment procedures.

Farrar CHS Building Access

Your ID card provides you with after hour's access to the building and designated rooms. This privilege comes with being a part of this professional program. It is expected that once inside the building students will be respectful of equipment, furnishings and other students. Animals are prohibited from being in academic and administrative buildings (*see HU Student Handbook – Student Life*); service animals documented with the Student Disabilities office may be exempt.

The Farrar Center for Health Sciences exterior doors are open for general business Monday-Friday from 7am-6pm in the fall and spring semesters and Monday-Friday from 7:30am-5pm in the summer semester. Access to the Farrar building outside of these hours, including the weekend, requires your Harding ID. No students should be in the building between 1am-6am at any time. The building is locked during administrative holidays. Farrar CHS 201, 217, and 218 follow the exterior door schedule. Access to Farrar CHS 103 and 104 is restricted except for special circumstances, which would be outlined and supervised by PA faculty. All policies regarding building usage and behavior should be adhered to at all times. These policies are subject to change, and changes will be communicated to students electronically.

The Department of Public Safety periodically checks the security of these doors. However, the security of our building ultimately rests on each student taking the responsibility to adhere to the policies governing the use of the building.

At no time should a student prop open doors, use a propped door for an entrance, or assist someone with unauthorized access into this building. Please report a propped or nonfunctioning door to security at 279-5000. Individuals found responsible for propping security doors and/or compromising building security will be subject to disciplinary action, according to the [Undergraduate Residence Life Handbook](#).

Harding University Resources

Our students have access to many campus resources and facilities. A sampling of these is listed below. More details about these and others can be found on Pipeline or on the HU website. Use the search feature to find a campus map and to find additional information about each service.

- Brackett Library
 - Number: 501-279-4775
 - Email: library@harding.edu
 - Offers free, unlimited black & white printing
- Computer labs
 - Windows labs contain the program SPSS, which is free for students and may be needed during PAS 6750 Masters Project. Many offer free limited printing.
 - [Locations and Times](#)
- Clifton L Ganus Athletic Center (GAC), for times:
 1. Log into Pipeline
 2. Scroll to the section titled “Personal”
 3. Click on “Recreation”
 4. To add the GAC Calendar to your calendars, click on “+GoogleCalendar” in the bottom right corner of schedule
- Center for Professional Excellence
 - Number: 501-279-5550
 - Email: cpe@harding.edu
- Counseling Center
 - Location: 3rd floor of the McInteer Center
 - Number: 501-279-4347
- Health Service Center
 - Location: 115 Dr Jimmy Carr Dr.
 - Number: 501-279-4346
- TimelyCare
 - Virtual health and well-being platform, available 24/7
 - Go to timelycare.com/harding or download the TimelyCare app
 - 12 counseling visits/year; unlimited 24/7 TalkNow emotional support; self-care content

Printing and Copying

Students are responsible for printing and copying any course-related materials they desire to have in paper form. Printing of assignments should be done prior to coming to class, not during class time, and is not an excused reason to be tardy to class.

The Bracket Library offers free and unlimited black-and-white printing. Additionally, WEPA printing is available in the Farrar building. WEPA printing allotments are based on cohort. When a student runs out of this allotment, the student will then be responsible for paying for any additional WEPA printing.

For the class of 2025, students are allotted \$60 per semester until the last semester (7th), when the allotment decreases to \$30. For the class of 2026 and beyond, students are allotted a one-time amount of \$390 at the beginning of the didactic phase.

When printing, students should be aware that color and duplex printing is more expensive than black-and-white and non-duplex printing.

Outside Employment

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program are strongly discouraged from accepting employment during the program. The intensity and continuity of the program are such that employment will detract from program responsibilities. Students must also realize that during the clinical year they may be on call for evening, night, or emergency duty and that some rotations involve changing shifts frequently. Program requirements will have precedence over personal activities. A conflicting work schedule will not be considered just cause for missing classes, assignments, or required activities, or a change in rotation assignment or schedule.

Additionally, at times students with expertise in an area may be asked to assist instructional faculty and lecturers. Students are not permitted to replace instructional faculty, or staff, in the coordination and overseeing of an educational activity. At times students are assigned topics to present on individually or as a group as part of a course assignment. At no time may a student be employed by the program.

E-Mail

The majority of communications from the program to students, including distribution of information or announcements, will be sent to students' assigned University e-mail accounts. All correspondence with the program and its faculty and staff should occur through the student's University e-mail account. All students are expected to check their University e-mail account on a regular basis. Failure to check is not an acceptable excuse for missing important information from the program. The campus link to Harding e-mail is: <https://connect.harding.edu>.

Student Rights

1. Basic Rights
 - a. The student has the right to competent, knowledgeable instructors who conduct themselves in a professional manner in their interactions with students. A student who is experiencing difficulty with an instructor in which the difficulty does not meet other policies in this handbook, should contact the Academic Director, Clinical Director, or Program Director. The consulted director will consider the student's concern and make further recommendation to seek resolution between the student and the instructor. This may include discussion with the student to gather more information about the concern, discussion with the instructor about the student's concern, and/or facilitated discussion with the student and instructor. The consulted director may recommend other action given the nature of the student's concern about the instructor.
 - b. Classrooms should be able to provide the proper educational environment for student learning. These classrooms or other appropriate facilities should also have available current materials and modern equipment that meets the technical training needs of the physician assistant student, as outlined in the ARC-PA Standards.
 - c. Instructors must maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to and compatible with the learning environment. Students who disrupt that environment will be asked to leave the classroom or clinical area.
2. Right to Privacy
 - a. Students are provided privacy of records and these records are protected from access and release by the Federal Privacy Act of 1974.
 - b. Students are granted access to their own files after completion of a formal request form. Students may inspect and review files in the Physician Assistant Program office during regular office hours. At no time will students be allowed to remove information from their permanent

file. Students will only be allowed to photocopy or otherwise duplicate information found in their file with permission from the Program Director. Students who wish to challenge content of records may do so in one of two ways.

- i. The student may write a letter to be placed in the student record indicating the student's objections to an entry in his/her record.
- ii. Students may request a review regarding an entry with the appropriate faculty.
- c. Release of student records by the program (i.e. potential employers) is granted only upon receipt of a signed Consent for Release of Information form from the student.
- d. Program faculty and Harding University employees and others who have direct involvement with the educational process of students are provided access and may review student records without written consent of the student at the discretion of the Program Director.

Harassment

All students of the Harding University Physician Assistant program have the right to a learning environment free from harassment. Harassment of anyone on the bases of race, religion, color, national origin, age sex, or physical or mental disability is prohibited by law and by the policies of this Program. Harassment because of sexual orientation, personal appearance, marital status, or other personal characteristics is disrespectful and prohibited by this Program.

Harassment can include such behavior as slurs, demeaning jokes or comments, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, cartoons, pictures, pranks, hazing, stereotypical comments, derogatory descriptions, or other verbal or physical conduct. Such behavior is considered harassment when it has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; unreasonably interferes with an individual's academic performance; or affects an individual's learning opportunities.

Any student who believes that he or she has been the subject of unwelcome harassment from another student, faculty, or staff, or from an outside party in the University, or who has observed harassment in the University is encouraged to identify the offensive behavior and request that it stop. If you cannot speak directly to the harasser, or if you have and the behavior continues, report the matter directly to the Program Director or to the Office of the Dean of the College of Allied Health.

Sexual Harassment

Harding University reaffirms the principle that students, faculty, and staff have the right to be free from sex discrimination in the form of sexual harassment by any member of the academic community. Sexual harassment is defined as an attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship, or to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply, or to create a sexually intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is generally understood to include a wide range of behaviors, from the actual coercing of sexual relations to the unwelcome or inappropriate emphasizing of sexual identity. This definition will be interpreted and applied consistent with Christian standards of behavior and conduct. A student who believes that he or she has been sexually harassed may obtain redress through informal and formal procedures of the University. Complaints about sexual harassment will receive prompt and equitable responses. The right to confidentiality of all members of the academic community will be respected in both informal and formal procedures insofar as is possible. Retaliation against individuals for bringing bona fide complaints of sexual harassment is expressly prohibited. Knowingly or willfully making a false claim is subject to discipline up to but not limited to suspension from school. Formal procedures will not be initiated without a signed and verified written complaint. An individual found to have engaged in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action for violations of the policy, consistent with existing procedures.

Kevin Davis, assistant director of Public Safety, and Amie Carter, assistant director of Human Resources, serve as Title IX Coordinators of the University. Sexual harassment claims against a student, faculty, or staff may be filed in the Office of Student Life in Student Center 218, in the Office of Public Safety in Kendall Hall, or in the Office of Human Resources in Ezell 130. Visit the [HU Title IX page](#) for more information.

Indebtedness

All financial indebtedness incurred at Harding University must be paid in full before the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is awarded. Students with outstanding debts to Harding University may be prevented from registration in subsequent semesters. This does not include student educational loans secured through the financial aid office.

University Rules, Regulations, and Policies

In addition to the rules and regulations contained here within, students are expected to adhere to the rules and policies of Harding University and also to the rules, regulations, and policies of other institutions or facilities where they may be assigned. Any conflicting policies should be discussed with the course coordinator, Academic Director, and/or Program Director. All information herein is subject to change with timely notification to students in writing.

The Harding Graduate & Professional Student Handbook states, "Graduate students are expected to maintain the highest standards of morality, integrity, orderliness and personal honor. Harding University reserves the right to refuse admittance or dismiss any student whose lifestyle is not consistent with the Christian principles that this university represents." The complete handbook is found on the [Harding Graduate & Professional Studies website](#).

Other Situations

Any other situation or condition not spoken to in these rules, regulations, and procedures should be brought to the attention of the Program Director. Each will be considered independently according to the merits of the case. As far as possible, each will be dealt with in a manner comparable to similar conditions described in this document.

This handbook may be amended from time to time. Any change will be initiated by the Program Director but will be subject to approval by the Dean of the College of Allied Health and the Provost's office.

Academic Policies

Academic policies apply to both the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Additional clinical policies, can be found in the Clinical Phase Manual.

Professionalism

Professional behavior and the embodiment of professionalism have long been regarded as integral to the success of a medical provider. Medical providers and other professionals are held to a higher standard by the program, by the University, by the profession, by regulating bodies, and by the public. Professional behavior is an academic requirement, is readily identified, and must be maintained at all times. Harding University expects her PA students and faculty to constantly grow and develop in this area. As an academic program designed to train medical professionals and future clinicians, the program considers professionalism to be a vital academic issue. Appropriate professional behavior and development are academic expectations of the program for all students.

Behavior that is unbecoming for a professional will not be tolerated from any student and will be dealt with through established academic protocols of the program and of the University. Demonstrated lack of professionalism is an academic issue, and significant breaches in professional behavior will be handled the same as other academic misconduct (*see Program Academic Standing and Dismissal*). Students violating professional standards of behavior will be subject to academic counseling and may be dismissed from the program. Certain violations of professional behavior will never be tolerated.

In order to define, recognize and acknowledge professional growth and behavior, a list of professional behaviors is provided as an example, called the Attributes of Professionalism (*see Appendix B*). An explanation of these examples will be given during didactic student orientation, modeled and reinforced throughout the remainder of the program. While this specific plan is not perfect or exhaustive, it gives enough information for goal setting and measurement. Further, it involves a self-reflective component, which is important in attaining our goal of increasing professional behavior in all persons affiliated with the program.

In the didactic year, these attributes will be formally examined by students and faculty at least twice a year during Advisor/Advisee meetings, while Clinical Phase students are evaluated by their preceptors during each rotation.

Students must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and be constantly vigilant of the need to inspire confidence on the part of fellow students, faculty/staff and patients and supporting medical staff observing their performance. In many ways the student's opportunities to learn, and later, to obtain employment will depend on his/her success in achieving this goal. Each student needs to be aware that his/her behavior will reflect on the program as a whole, one's classmates, and how subsequent classmates are accepted or treated at a rotation site.

Professional behavior includes and is not limited to: demonstrating respect for others, civility, integrity, promptness, appropriate dress, adequate preparation for class, taking responsibility for one's actions, life-long learning, adhering to codes of conduct, honesty, and involvement in professional activities.

Observed student behavior that is considered unprofessional by the Physician Assistant Program faculty, staff or preceptors must be referred to the Academic Director during the Didactic Phase and the Clinical Director during the Clinical Phase. Behavior considered unprofessional includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Use of electronic devices for activities that are not classroom related during program activities.
2. Any form of dishonesty including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on quizzes or examinations, lying, submitting false reports of any type, or falsifying medical records.
3. Any form of cheating on quizzes or exams including, but not limited to, possession of unauthorized notes during an exam, copying, photographing or otherwise attempting to reproduce quiz/examination questions, sharing information related to the content of an exam with any other student, use of information related to the content of an exam obtained in any manner not authorized by the instructor or course coordinator.
4. Failure to report any knowledge of actual or attempted cheating by other students in the program.
5. Absenteeism or tardiness without communication and/or approval when required or chronic absenteeism or tardiness.
6. Habitual failure to turn in assignments or Program required documents by specified due dates.
7. Use of profane, vulgar, abusive, obscene, or threatening language of any sort while participating in Program or University activities.
8. Any type of incivility or hostile behavior in either phase of the program.
9. Any behavior that is disruptive to the operations of the program or interferes with faculty-student relationships (e.g. public airing of complaints or grievances to other individuals or students instead of following appropriate protocols for dealing with such issues).
10. Any behavior that demonstrates poor or inconsistent insight and judgement necessary for competent performance of technical standards.
11. Illegally obtaining, possessing, selling, or using prescription or illicit substances.
12. Using or being under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol while participating in any Program activity or while present in any facility where Program activities occur.
13. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality of patient records or patient encounters.
14. Uncooperative, hostile, negative, or disrespectful attitudes manifested toward faculty, staff, instructors, standardized patients, fellow students, clinical site personnel, patients, others in connection with the program.
15. Arrest on a felony charge or other offense involving moral turpitude while a Physician Assistant student.
16. Inappropriate use of computer resources, including university network access.
17. Inappropriate use of social media. (*See Social Media Policy*)
18. Failure to adhere to these policies or to the rules and policies of Harding University, as outlined in the Harding University Graduate Catalog, or the spirit in which they are offered.

Social Media Policy

The Harding University Physician Assistant Program supports the American Medical Association opinion statement 2.3.2, [“Professionalism in the Use of Social Media”](#). In light of this statement, the following policies apply to students enrolled in the Harding University PA Program.

1. University and Program policies, including the student code of conduct as well as state and federal laws, apply online. Students are responsible for what they say via social media posts, and for any actions demonstrated via photos or videos posted during their time in the program.
2. Students are not to share any identifiable patient or clinical material on social media. Patient privacy is to be protected, and students must adhere to HIPAA laws.
3. If posting about the Harding University PA Program, its faculty, staff, clinical sites and associated personnel, or students, students are to avoid intentionally inaccurate, false, or inflammatory comments.
4. If posting about a program activity or lab, students are to limit posts to those that are approved by the course coordinator.

Appearance

The following guidelines are designed to develop a professional image throughout the students' tenure at the HU Physician Assistant Program. Violations of the dress code will result in discussion with appropriate faculty and possible disciplinary action or grade deduction depending on the nature of the violation, outlined course policies and the setting. Repeated violations of the dress code will result in referral to the Academic Director and will result in disciplinary action in accordance with professionalism policies.

During didactic training, the majority of the student's time will be spent in lecture. There will also be certain classes that require lab and simulated clinical experiences. The following guidelines are for the didactic phase:

1. **Regularly scheduled classes and on-campus activities during the didactic phase:**
 - a. Acceptable Attire
 - i. Casual attire, including jeans, t-shirts, and scrubs, is acceptable provided it is clean, wrinkle-free, without holes, and does not contain inappropriate wording, designs, graphics, and/or pictures. Clothing must fit properly. Tops must have at least 2-inch shoulder straps and must not reveal cleavage or midriff due to clothing that is either too tight, too low cut, or too sheer to adequately cover the body.
 - ii. Shoes must be worn at all times.
 - iii. For, some courses (e.g., Physical Diagnosis, Clinical Skills Development, and Clinical Seminar) or activities (e.g., simulations in any course) fingernails should be short, not extending beyond the fingertip, and clean.
 - b. Unacceptable Attire
 - i. Shorts and athletic wear, including sweatpants, lycra-like tights, and tank tops, are unacceptable. Leggings may be worn under dresses or with shirts that hit mid-thigh, but are not acceptable when worn as pants. No undergarments should be visible. Visible cleavage and/or midriffs are unacceptable.
 - ii. Caps or hats in class or prayer breakfast are not allowed.
 - iii. Extreme hairstyles, such as ponytails for men, extreme dyes, and mohawks, are not acceptable. If unsure if something is unacceptable, contact the Academic Director prior to wearing.
2. **Guest lecturers** (these situations will be announced ahead of time):
 - a. Acceptable attire
 - i. Business/smart casual. For men, this includes khakis or trousers with a shirt that has a collar. For women, this includes khakis, trousers, or a knee-length dress/skirt with a blouse or shirt with a collar.
 - ii. Open-toed shoes are acceptable in the classroom setting.
 - iii. Some exceptions may be allowed during lab times, as determined by the faculty.
 - b. Unacceptable attire
 - i. Items addressed above in 1.b, as well as sweatshirts, jeans, t-shirts, and scrubs.
 - c. If the guest lecturer is presenting a hands-on workshop or activity, this dress code may be revised. This will be announced prior to the class by the course coordinator.
3. **Attire for clinical experiences during the didactic phase** (including off-site activities, simulations, and standardized patient encounters):
 - a. Acceptable attire ("Clinical Attire")
 - i. Business/smart casual as previously defined in 2.a as well as scrubs. Scrubs should have a matching top and bottom, and be clean and free of holes. Women should have no visible cleavage or midriff.
 - ii. Students will be notified by the course coordinator if there is a specific clinical attire requirement dependent on the activity.
 - b. Unacceptable attire: Open-toed shoes are not acceptable and are a violation of OSHA

- healthcare workplace guidelines. Mixing a scrub top with jeans or non-scrub pants or mixing scrub pants with a t-shirt or sweatshirt is not acceptable. Sweatshirts are not permitted.
- c. Additional required components of clinical attire:
 - i. White coat & HUPA badge
 - ii. Hair should be neat and controlled, including facial hair. Hair should be secured in a way that allows for best visibility and avoids interference with the exam or procedure being performed.
 - iii. Fingernails should be short, not extending beyond the fingertip, and clean.
 - iv. Any necessary equipment - charged and in working order.
4. **Lab/practice sessions –**
- a. Expected attire in lab is a matching scrub set. For labs, practice sessions, and practicals, sweatshirts and jackets are not allowed; underscrub style tops (long sleeve, slightly fitted, without large cuffs) may be worn under the scrub top instead.
 - b. In order to participate in some physical examination labs or clinical skills sessions, the dress code may be altered. This will be communicated by the course coordinator.
 - i. Women may be allowed to wear a pair of loose-fitting shorts that come to mid-thigh, a t-shirt, and a bra-type (sports bra) top (no halter-tops).
 - ii. Men may be allowed to wear gym shorts and a t-shirt.
 - c. Fingernails should be short, not extending beyond the fingertip, and clean.
5. **OSCES, simulations, and on-site trainings during the clinical phase** - unless otherwise stated by the course or activity coordinator the following policy applies:
- a. Acceptable attire (“Clinical Attire”)
 - i. Business/smart casual as previously defined in 2.a as well as scrubs. Scrubs should have a matching top and bottom, and be clean and free of holes. Women should have no visible cleavage or midriff.
 - ii. Underscrub style tops (long sleeve, slightly fitted, without large cuffs) may be worn under the scrub top.
 - iii. Students will be notified by the course coordinator if there is a change to the required clinical attire based on clinical site.
 - b. Unacceptable attire
 - i. Mixing a scrub top with jeans or non-scrub pants or mixing scrub pants with a t-shirt or sweatshirt is not acceptable.
 - ii. Sweatshirts and jackets.
 - iii. Open-toed shoes are not acceptable and are a violation of OSHA healthcare workplace guidelines.
 - c. Additional required components of clinical attire:
 - i. White coat & HUPA badge
 - ii. Hair should be neat and controlled, including facial hair. Hair should be secured in a way that allows for best visibility and avoids interference with the exam or procedure being performed.
 - iii. Fingernails should be short, not extending beyond the fingertip, and clean.
 - iv. Any necessary equipment - charged and in working order.
6. **Other**
- a. The instructor/course coordinator for the class reserves the right to change the dress code for his/her course in consultation with the Academic and/or Program Director.
 - b. Some class days may require more than one type of attire. The student will be expected to come prepared to meet the specific dress codes for all events and activities of the day.
 - c. The Program Director, in consultation with the faculty, staff and students, may designate special days for Professional or relaxed attire.

For specific Clinical Phase attire refer to the Clinical Phase Manual.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected in both the Didactic and the Clinical Phases of the program. Attendance includes active participation/listening and punctuality.

In the Didactic Phase

Absences

To be considered for an excused absence, email the Academic Director with your request well in advance of the event. The Academic Director, in conjunction with the course coordinator(s), will determine if the absence request is approved and notify the student. In the event of illness or emergency, contact the Academic Director via Remind or email as soon as safely possible with information regarding the situation.

In the event that an illness or medical care requires repeated absences or an alteration to the routine schedule, the student should provide documentation regarding absence(s) from their health care provider. If the student is unable to complete the curriculum as prescribed, a leave of absence may be recommended by the program. The Academic Director, in conjunction with the course coordinator(s), will determine a plan to make up all required program activities. See test administration policies regarding make-up examinations.

If the student does not follow the procedure as outlined for requesting an excused absence, the student will be required to complete all required coursework to continue progression through the program but will receive any grade penalties for late work as outlined in the course syllabus and will be referred to the academic director for disciplinary action for professionalism. The academic director, in conjunction with the course coordinator(s) will determine a plan to make up missed required program activities. Completion of activities is still required to demonstrate proficiency in the material covered.

In all situations, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate and maintain communication with the academic director and/or course coordinator(s) as directed.

Course coordinators have the prerogative to establish additional attendance requirements through the course syllabus.

Tardiness

Faculty lecturers and/or course coordinators report tardiness and unexpected absences to the Academic Director. Students with repeated tardiness and/or unexpected absences, in either phase of the program, will be referred to the appropriate director for review, and the student may be subject to disciplinary action for professionalism.

In the Clinical Phase

Refer to the Clinical Phase Manual.

Identification Policy

Physician assistant students must be readily identifiable at all times. In all clinical areas or places where other health professionals or patients are likely to be met, a Program approved nametag, or "HUPA badge," identifying the wearer as a Physician Assistant Student must be properly worn and visible. When meeting another health professional or a patient, a Physician Assistant student must introduce him/herself as a Physician Assistant student and do so with sufficient clarity to ensure that the other person understands.

Some clinical sites may require additional identification.

At times, students resume previous employment in health care fields during program breaks. For legal reasons, students are not permitted to identify themselves or function as Physician Assistant students while employed in non-Program related capacities. The HUPA white coat and badge should not be worn. Additionally, if a student chooses to shadow or volunteer during program breaks the same policy applies. PA students are not covered by program malpractice insurance during non-Program related activities.

Lectures and Seminars

Every effort is made to schedule required educational activities during regular class hours. In the event this cannot be done, some activities may be scheduled outside of regular class hours. Students are expected to be flexible in all scheduling matters.

Academic Testing Policies

Attestation Statement

Prior to starting an examination or quiz all students will be asked to attest to the following:

By taking and submitting this <exam/quiz> for a grade, or by using this exam for review, I affirm all of the following:

- *This is my own work*
- *If outside resources are allowed, I will use them within the set parameters only*
- *I will not share my work or any portion of the content of this exam, with others*
- *I will not attempt to reproduce, in part or in whole, any portion of this examination*
- *I will not discuss this examination with anyone other than Program Faculty*
- *I will follow the professional standards and guidelines in the PA Student handbook and the Harding Code of Academic Conduct, realizing the consequences for failure to do so.*

Test Administration Policy

The testing policy and procedures preserve the integrity and fairness of all examinations. The Program will follow ADA accommodation policy. This is established in accordance with the NCCPA/PANCE and the National Board of Medical Examiners format for standardized medical testing.

In the didactic phase, program examinations are routinely administered electronically via ExamSoft/Examplify but may be administered on paper occasionally. Any other format would be specified in advance by the course coordinator. In the clinical phase, program examinations are routinely administered through a PAEA testing platform. In either phase, the students laptop must be in working condition with required software downloaded, as directed.

In the event of a device malfunction, contact the Academic Director before the exam start time to make other arrangements and secure a functioning device as soon as possible. For device malfunctions during an exam, alert the proctor. For exams that require the exam file to be downloaded, students should make sure to perform that task well before the download end time. No extra time will be allowed for failure to follow these procedures.

Time limits for the exam will be announced prior to the exam and strictly enforced through the electronic testing platform. If a paper exam is required, the test proctor will enforce the specified time restraints. It is

the responsibility of students receiving time accommodations to verify they are correct for each exam downloaded.

Failure to comply with the following will result in disciplinary action:

1. All students are expected be seated and ready to begin the examination at the announced exam time.
2. Students who are late for the exam without prior approval must not disrupt other students who have started the exam.
 - a. Students arriving less than five minutes after the scheduled start time should contact the proctor who may allow them quietly to enter the classroom to take the exam. The proctor will give further directions as needed.
 - b. Students arriving five or more minutes late should report to the Farrar CHS 102 for instruction on when and where to take the exam. These students will also need to discuss the situation with the course coordinator and Academic Director in the Didactic Phase or Clinical Director in the Clinical Phase. Late students will be allowed to take the exam so that material competency can be evaluated. However, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in regard to professionalism.
3. Unless otherwise permitted, all electronic devices must be turned off during testing. These should be placed in book bags prior to the test. Specified devices will only be allowed if the test is electronic based. Use of some electronic devices is allowed during testing if indicated by the course coordinator.
4. Students must remove everything from their desks, chairs, pockets, and laps before the examination start time. All personal items, including but not limited to study materials, silenced cell phones, laptop sleeves/cases, and smartwatches should be secured in the student's backpack or bag. Bags must be stored at the back of the examination room, away from student desks, unless the proctor directs otherwise.
5. Chairs and floors around desks should have nothing on or in them.
6. Only the device on which the exam will be taken and its charger, a writing instrument and/or eraser, and a drink in the unaltered HUPA provided water bottle are allowed on the table during the examination.
7. Food is allowed, with permission, for select examinations (e.g., PACKRAT, practice DPSE, DPSE, CPSE-W).
8. Ear plugs without electronic capability are permissible.
9. Students may leave cough drops or throat lozenges with the proctor for use during the exam if needed. Two Kleenex may be permitted but must be shown to the proctor prior to the exam.
10. The following are not allowed to be worn during examinations: hats, blankets, coats, or sweatshirts or jackets with pockets.
11. Notes or material in students' pockets or anywhere else on their person is not permitted. Students are not permitted to access anything in their bags without permission while testing is in progress. Both will be considered a violation of the professionalism and academic integrity policies.
12. Proctors will not answer content-specific questions pertaining to the exam during the testing session.
13. Students are not to communicate with each other in any way during examinations. This includes verbal, nonverbal, or electronic communication. If a student is suspected of either giving or receiving information, the proctor may collect his or her exam and dismiss the student from the session.
14. Students may be provided with scratch paper by the test proctor, as determined by the course coordinator, immediately prior to the test start time. Students should put their name on the paper and turn it into the proctor at the end of the exam, whether or not it was used.
15. Students are permitted to go to the restroom, unescorted, one at a time, with the permission of the proctor. Extra testing time will not be permitted for the use of restrooms. For electronic testing, the exam suspended prior to leaving the room, and for paper exams the exam and answer sheet should

be turned face down.

16. Upon completion of the exam, students should give the testing materials to the proctor and exit the room as quietly as possible. Do not engage the instructor, proctors, or other students in conversation. The student may not return to the room for any reason until after the testing session is over.
17. For electronic exams, it is expected that students will finish and upload their answers before leaving the examination room. Students should verify with the proctor they have successfully uploaded their exam before leaving the room. Any technical difficulties with uploading must be reported to the proctor immediately.

Additional policies for paper examinations

1. It is the responsibility of each student to properly mark the answers and identification information on each exam answer sheet. Any questionable or unreadable answers will be marked incorrect. Failure to accurately fill in required identification information may prevent students from receiving credit for test scores.
2. Students may not turn over, view, or begin paper exams until they are instructed to do so.
3. Extra time will not be given to transfer answers from the test book to an answer sheet. This must be done in the allotted examination time.

If the student desires reasonable accommodations for testing due to a disability, it is the student's responsibility to self-identify and follow the procedure outlined in the Disabilities & Accommodations section of this handbook.

If remote testing is utilized, students will be provided a copy of the Remote Examinations Policy electronically.

Grading Procedures

Grades and feedback will be provided in the manner outlined by the course coordinator. Grades for each examination will normally be posted within a 1-week period from the day the examination is given. Grades for written assignments (e.g. research papers, article critiques etc.) will be posted within a timely manner as outlined by the course syllabus.

See Attendance section for Didactic Phase policies and the Clinical Phase Manual for policies regarding absences. With the exception of extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Program Director, all make-up exams will be administered within one week from the day the original exam is given. Failure to make up an exam within this time period will result in a zero score to be factored into the cumulative grade. Arrangements to schedule a make-up examination are the responsibility of the student and must be made by following the Attendance policy. Decisions of the course coordinator regarding individual test items and make-up examinations are final. However, the student may appeal to the Program Director if he/she feels there are compelling reasons. Decisions regarding final course grades and academic standing may be appealed as outlined in University Academic Grievance Procedure.

Bonus Credit vs. Extra Credit

Bonus Points, defined as additional point opportunities "built in" to the test, syllabus, assignment, or offered openly to all students, before the deadline, are permissible. Extra Credit, defined as additional point opportunities created for specific individuals, is not permitted.

Exam Review Policy

Each course coordinator may design their own test review policy. Final exams and summative exams will not be made available for review without special permission of the Program Director. If test review is allowed,

students will be made aware of the specific review times when the tests will be available for review. Exams may not be reviewed beyond that time period. Students are encouraged to meet with the course coordinator, by appointment, for test review as needed. If exam review is allowed, students may make notes on their individual copy of the exam or post-exam self-analysis form, but no additional notations of any other kind will be allowed during the review. Following review, the student will return all exam materials and post-test analysis form to the exam review monitor. Prior to review, students should place their personal items (backpacks, purses, phones, etc.) in the assigned area as indicated by the exam review monitor. Students are not allowed to access any books, computers, cell phones, cameras, notebooks or similar items while reviewing exams.

Program Course Grading Scale

The grading scale for Program courses is outlined below. The "+" grades apply to all courses except supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE). Course letter grades are determined by the following percentage scores, as recorded by course coordinators:

A	= 89.5-100%
B+	= 87.5-89.49%
B	= 79.5-87.49%
C+	= 77.5-79.49%
C	= 69.5-77.49%
F	= less than 69.5%

GPA Scale:

A	= 4.0
B+	= 3.5
B	= 3.0
C+	= 2.5
C	= 2.0
F	= 0.0

This scale does not apply to course components such as exams, practicals, and other assignments.

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity

Plagiarism¹ defined:

1. An act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author.
2. A piece of writing or work reflecting such unauthorized use or imitation.

Harding University outlines an [Academic Integrity Policy](#) for University students. This policy identifies any form of plagiarism whether done deliberately or by mistake as an academic integrity violation. Other examples of academic integrity violations include:

1. Unauthorized collaboration on assignments
2. Copying from or viewing another student's work during an examination or while completing an assignment.
3. Using any materials or resources that are not authorized by the instructor for use during an examination or in completing any assignment.

4. Collaborating during an examination with any other person by giving or receiving information without specific permission of the instructor.
5. Discussing examinations with anyone other than Program faculty and staff.
6. Facilitating or aiding and abetting any act of academic dishonesty.
7. Collaborating on laboratory work or other assigned work when instructed to work independently.
8. Submitting, without specific permission of the instructor, work that has been previously offered by the same student for credit in another course.
9. Falsification of attendance and/or participation.
10. Fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or lying to a University employee about assignments.
11. Submitting as one's own any theme, report, term paper, essay, computer program, speech, painting, drawing, sculpture, or other written or creative work or project of any nature prepared totally or in large measure by another person or AI program.
12. Submitting altered or falsified data for a research project.
13. Conduct unbecoming of a professional in the classroom or while participating in a practicum, internship, field experience, or any similar academic experience.

In addition, the program expands on the following in the definition of plagiarism as noted above.

1. Misidentifying quotations or sources through lack of appropriate marking or giving incorrect or inaccurate sources for citations.
2. Submitting work that you have previously written for a new assignment without reference to the previous assignment. Turning in work you have previously written as original work for another assignment is plagiarism, or at least is unethical, unless you have discussed this with your professor prior to turning in your work. "Updating" an old assignment or further developing previous work may be perfectly OK if you get permission first, and as long as it is your original work. Your previous work should be properly cited, if used in this manner.

If plagiarism is observed in any form, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. See the Harding University Academic Integrity Policy, and the Program and University Academic Standing sections of the PA General Student Handbook.

¹Plagiarism. Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Random House, Inc.
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism> (accessed: August 14, 2020)

Reciprocal Peer Group Practice

An important part of the learning experience involves learning from each other. Students will practice interviewing skills, role playing exercises, and physical examinations on each other (respecting each individual's privacy). In addition, they will perform basic procedures such as injections, venipuncture, peripheral venous catheterization and electrocardiograms, etc. Students should understand that the program will require peer group practice and be willing to participate, serving as both the "provider" and the "patient" as indicated.

Access to Faculty

Faculty members will be available to students by appointment during most regular business hours and at other times as arranged. Please realize faculty members have many other duties and assignments. Faculty members are willing to talk with students, but respect and consideration is expected. Communication with individual faculty members should occur via the method (e.g. email, app, phone, text) they have instructed.

Program Structure and Progression Requirements

The program comprises two phases: didactic and clinical. Each phase must be completed in sequential order, adhering to the HU catalog and program policies.

Didactic Phase

The didactic phase includes Fall 1, Spring 1, and Summer 1 semesters, preceded by a required didactic orientation before Fall 1. All courses are taken in sequence, and progression requires:

- Successful completion of all academic requirements.
- Passing all semester courses.
- Adherence to professional behavior outlined in this handbook.

Failure to pass a semester course may result in dismissal per the Program Academic Standing and Dismissal policy. During Summer 1, students must complete the Didactic Phase Summative Evaluation (DPSE). Students who fail the DPSE are subject to dismissal or other actions based on their academic standing.

Clinical Phase

The clinical phase includes Fall 2, Spring 2, Summer 2, and Fall 3 semesters, with a clinical orientation before Fall 2. Completion of orientation is mandatory to proceed to clinical coursework. During the clinical phase, non-SCPE courses are taken sequentially, while SCPE courses follow a schedule determined by the Clinical Office. Progression requires:

- Successful completion of all academic requirements.
- Successful completion of all semester courses.
- Adherence to professional behavior as outlined in this handbook and the clinical phase manual.

Failure of any course may lead to dismissal as per the Program Academic Standing and Dismissal policy. During Fall 3, students must complete the Clinical Phase Summative Evaluation (CPSE). Students who fail are subject to actions outlined in the Program Academic Standing and Dismissal policy.

Additional Requirements

Non-scored requirements include the PACKRAT (administered at Clinical Orientation and during Summer 2) and the ACLS simulation (scheduled during the clinical phase).

Graduation Requirements

To graduate, students must:

- Pass all coursework.
- Complete all program requirements.
- Maintain professional behavior.

The program is designed to be completed sequentially within seven semesters. Students in alternate academic standings may follow a different timeline per their Structured Academic Improvement Plan (SAIP).

The standard duration of the curriculum is 28 months. Under exceptional circumstances, a deceleration or leave of absence may be necessary, as detailed in the Leave of Absence and Remediation and Deceleration Policies sections of this handbook. Part-time enrollment or reduced course loads are not permitted. The maximum allowable timeframe for program completion is 58 months. Students who decelerate and re-enter the program beginning with the didactic orientation will have their completion timeline reset to align with

their new start date.

Table 1: The Progression and Program Completion Requirements chart outlines the progression requirements and the usual timeline and completion period.

Program Requirement	Completion Period	Timeline
Admissions Matriculation Requirements (CBC, Health Requirements, BLS)	Pre-matriculation	By end of July of matriculation year (MY)
Didactic Orientation	Start of Fall 1	August of MY
Didactic Phase Coursework	Fall 1, Spring 1, Summer 1	August – July of Year 1
Didactic Phase Summative Evaluation (DPSE)	Summer 1	July of Year 1
Clinical Orientation	Start of Fall 2	August of Year 2
PACKRAT 1	During Clinical Orientation	August of Year 2
Clinical Phase Coursework	Fall 2, Spring 2, Summer 2, Fall 3	August of Year 2 – December of Year 3
ACLS IPE Simulation	Once during Clinical Phase as determined by the Program	Once during August of Year 2 – November of Year 3
Clinical Phase Summative Evaluation (CPSE)	Fall 3	September of Year 3
Graduation	End of Fall 3	December Year 3

Student Success

The Harding University Physician Assistant program is committed to providing an environment for students that is conducive to student academic success. However, student success starts with ownership of one's progress and developing a relationship with faculty and the program that fosters growth and progress (*see Professionalism and Attributes of Professionalism*). A key to student success is the ability to accept and apply feedback.

PA students are provided frequent formative feedback through written exams, assignments, practicals, preceptor evaluations, etc. to assist with student learning. Other examples include the PACKRATs (*see below*), the practice DPSE, and Clinical Phase Formative Examinations. With each assignment, students should self-evaluate for areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement. Students are expected to utilize provided feedback in a way that demonstrates growth of knowledge, skill, and professionalism. All students are encouraged to seek help from faculty advisors (*see below*), course instructors, and course coordinators at any time to assist with this process.

To support student success, all students are assigned a faculty advisor for the duration of the program. Faculty advisors are the first point of contact for students for academic, professional, and personal development. Faculty advisors monitor the week-to-week progress of their assigned students and provide academic counseling, as needed, to ensure students are performing at an acceptable level.

Advisors will meet with their advisee group and individual advisees once a semester, at minimum, during the didactic phase and twice minimum during the clinical phase (Spring 2 and Summer 2). Advising discussion topics may include academic issues, professionalism issues, personal experiences/needs, or other topics, as determined by the faculty or student(s). Advising meetings may be conducted at the request of the faculty or the student.

If a student is experiencing minor academic difficulties, including exam scores below the 15th percentile (in either phase of the program), quiz failures, and the need to remediate practical evaluations, the student will be required to meet with their faculty advisor. Academic counseling meetings will be documented and placed in the student's secure file.

Some students experiencing academic or other difficulties may be advised by the Academic Director (*see Academic Standing*) and may have a structured academic improvement plan developed (*see Structured Academic Improvement Plan*). In these instances, the Academic Director will assume academic advising responsibilities for these students. These students will still meet with their Faculty Advisor routinely for required non-academic meetings.

Prior to matriculation in the program, incoming students are assigned a volunteer upperclassman student mentor or group of mentors. The main role of the student mentor is to assist incoming students with the transition into graduate school, provide encouragement and support throughout the program, and serve as a positive, professional role model. Student mentors are not an appropriate source of information regarding program assignments and requirements. These questions should be directed to the appropriate faculty member.

Self-Evaluation Tool – PACKRAT

Twice during the program, at a time designated by the program, the Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) will be administered to all students. Completion of the PACKRAT is a program requirement. Failure to do so will result in a change in academic standing due to professionalism.

The exam follows the current NCCPA blueprint to identify areas of strengths/weakness in the student's knowledge base. The exam is administered electronically by PAEA; students will need their laptops. The program will provide information regarding how to interpret exam scores after scores are released.

University Counseling Services

Harding University maintains a psychological counseling service that is available to all students. A staff of professionally trained counselors is available to provide a caring and confidential assistance to all students. Students can self-refer, or the PA faculty can assist. The Harding University Physician Assistant program believes one component of student success is good mental health. At times, students will be referred to counseling as a component of their SAIP (*see Structured Academic Improvement Plan*).

Progression and Retention

A student must satisfactorily complete all of the prescribed program curriculum sequence and other program requirements to include professionalism requirements (*see Program Structure and Progression Requirements*) to qualify for progression. The Program Director, in consultation with the program faculty, shall determine what constitutes satisfactory performance in accordance with program and course policies. Since graduates are expected to enter a professional life involving significant responsibilities to other people, maintenance of a sound academic transcript is not sufficient, per se, to remain in good standing in the program. At the end of each semester, the Program Director and faculty progression committee will review the performance record of each student. In addition to assessment scores (exams, papers, practicals, preceptor evaluations, etc.) and other academic work, the student's clinical performance, interpersonal interactions, professional attitudes, and demeanor are also evaluated.

University Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing for the University, each student must demonstrate the following:

1. Compliance with all Program policies on professionalism and demonstrate professional conduct.
2. Show evidence of effective interpersonal relations with peers, faculty, preceptors and their staff, and patients.
3. Earn a minimum of a “C” grade in all PAS non-SCPE courses in both the didactic and clinical phases.
4. Earn a minimum of a “B” grade in all PAS supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) courses.
5. Maintain a current semester and cumulative GPA of 2.80 or better in the didactic phase.
6. Successfully complete the didactic and clinical phase summative evaluations.
7. Complete all reporting requirements for the clinical phase as per the clinical handbook.
8. Meet no other criteria requiring the student to be placed on academic probation.

Students are encouraged to seek tutoring, advice, counseling, or mentoring at any point in the curriculum. The key to success is early identification and addressing of student needs.

Program Academic Standing and Criteria for Dismissal

All students will be afforded academic fair process when academic (including professionalism) deficiencies arise. Any added cost, tuition, fees, or other expenses that may result from academic actions are the student’s responsibility.

Students failing one examination, other than final examinations or the DPSE, in the didactic phase of the program, will be required to meet with the course coordinator without a change of program academic standing. Students failing one examination, other than the CPSE, in the clinical phase of the program, will be required to meet with the Academic Director without a change of program academic standing.

Early Alert

Students are placed on Early Alert status when the following occurs in the didactic or clinical phase:

1. The student scores less than 70% on any two exams, in either phase of the program, excluding final examinations and PAEA EOR exams.
2. The student scores less than 70% on any one PAEA EOR exam.
3. The student receives below 70% on any one Preceptor Evaluation of Student – End Rotation form.

Early alert status is not reported to the registrar and does not appear on the student transcript. The student will be formally counseled by the appropriate faculty and the Academic Director.

- Study habits may be reviewed and a course of action may be developed.
- The student may, at faculty direction, enter into a SAIP.

Academic Warning

Students not already on Academic Warning are placed on Academic Warning (AW) status when one or more of the following occurs in the didactic or clinical phase:

1. The student scores below 70% on any three examinations, in either phase of the program, excluding final examinations and PAEA EOR exams.
2. The student scores below 70% on any one final examination, in either phase of the program.
3. The student scores less than 70% on any two PAEA EOR exams.
4. The student receives below 70% on any two Preceptor Evaluation of Student – End Rotation form.
5. The student receives below 60% on any one Preceptor Evaluation of Student – End Rotation form.
6. The student fails the DPSE or CPSE.

7. The student exhibits unprofessional behavior of a minor nature, as determined by program faculty, during either phase of the program.

Academic warning status is not reported to the registrar and does not appear on the student transcript. The program will provide written notification to the student of their AW status as soon as possible. Notification will include the specific reason for AW status and the specific steps that must be taken to return to good standing. Being placed on AW status will result in counseling of the student by the Academic Director. At the discretion of the Academic Director the student may be instructed to meet with the Program Director and/or appropriate faculty (e.g. course coordinator, faculty advisor, etc.). The student's advisor will also be notified of the change in academic status and may be involved in follow-up. Counseling will begin as soon as practical and will result in the development of a Structured Academic Improvement Plan (SAIP); see below.

Academic Probation

Deficiencies in academic performance that fall far below program requirements for good academic standing shall be adequate grounds for placing a student on Academic Probation for academic deficiencies.

Students not already on Academic Probation are placed on Academic Probation status when one or more of the following occurs:

1. The student scores below 70% on any four examinations, in either phase of the program, excluding final exams and PAEA EOR exams.
2. The student scores below 70% on any two final examinations in either phase of the program.
3. The student scores less than 70% on any three PAEA EOR exam.
4. The student receives below 70% on any three Preceptor Evaluation of Student – End Rotation form.
5. The student receives below 60% on any two Preceptor Evaluation of Student – End Rotation form.
6. The student fails to maintain a current semester and cumulative GPA of 2.80 or better in the Didactic Phase.
7. The student fails a clinical rotation (SCPE) due to an unsatisfactory preceptor evaluation or total rotation grade of “C” or below
8. The student exhibits unprofessional behavior of a major or severe nature, as determined by program faculty.
9. Any student on Academic Warning status who:
 - a. Fails to meet the conditions of a SAIP
 - b. Fails an additional examination
 - c. Fails the DPSE or CPSE

AP status is reported to the registrar and does appear on the transcript for the semester for in which the status was initiated and until the student is returned to academic good standing. The program will provide written notification to the student of their Academic Probation status as soon as possible. Notification will include the specific reason for Academic Probation status and the specific steps that must be followed. Academic Probation for violations of academic integrity or professionalism issues will remain in effect for the duration of the student's enrollment in the program. Academic Probation will commence for Program documentation as soon as determined by the program.

If placed on Academic Probation, the student will be required to enter into a SAIP supervised by the Academic or Clinical Director and in consultation with the appropriate faculty, and meet, at least once, with the Program Director. The SAIP will be drafted as soon as practical.

Other Consequences of Academic Probation During the Didactic or Clinical Phase

Students placed on Academic Probation will have certain restrictions placed on privileges within the Physician Assistant Program:

1. Must resign if serving as a class officer

2. No program-sponsored attendance at American Academy of PA national conferences while on probation
3. Will not be allowed to participate in overseas rotations while on probation
4. Will not be allowed to serve individually as a student mentor for incoming students; may serve as part of a pair or group

Review of Academic Standing when on Early Alert and Academic Warning

Academic status will be reviewed by the faculty progression committee at the end of the didactic and clinical phases. If academic performance has been consistently improved as evidenced by 1) passing scores on section, final, and summative exams, 2) acceptable professional behavior, and 3) Successful completion of the assigned structured academic improvement plan (SAIP), the student's status will be returned to good standing.

Failure to successfully meet the specific performance criteria necessary to regain good academic standing in a timely manner, including completion of any SAIP, may result in further action, up to and including advancement to Academic Probation or dismissal from the program dependent on overall performance and compliance.

Review of Academic Standing when on Probation - for reasons other than professionalism

Students that have met the criteria for Academic Probation at any point during the didactic or clinical phase may be required to enter into and successfully complete PAS 6800 Independent Study prior to returning to good standing (*see Guided Learning*).

Didactic student's status will be reviewed by the faculty progression committee at the end of the didactic phase and upon completion of PAS 6800 Independent Study. In order to return to good standing student performance will show improvement by meeting all conditions of the SAIP, including passing PAS 6800.

Clinical student's status will be reviewed at the end of the clinical phase directly prior to graduation. In order to return to good standing student performance will show improvement by meeting all conditions of the SAIP.

Criteria for Dismissal

The Program Director, in consultation with the faculty progression committee, shall consider dismissal of a student from the program on grounds of academic deficiencies if the student does one or more of the following:

1. Fails any program course, including supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) courses.
2. Any student on Academic Probation status who:
 - a. Fails any exam in any course
 - b. Fails an EOR exam
 - c. Fails to meet the conditions of a SAIP
 - d. Exhibits unprofessional behavior of a major or severe nature, as determined by Program faculty
3. Any substantiated report of unprofessional conduct of a very severe nature, as determined by Program faculty.
4. Demonstrates sustained poor interpersonal relations
5. Violation of Academic Integrity policies of the program and/or University
6. Failure to pass the DPSE or CPSE after a remediation attempt

The program provides support for students when academic deficiencies are initially observed as stated in preceding policies. In the event that one of the above occurs, the faculty progression committee will be convened. The faculty progression committee will review the student's academic performance including

assessment scores, course scores, and professionalism, along with available options for remediation, and make a recommendation for continued progression, progression with conditions (*see Guided Learning*), deceleration, or dismissal.

During the process, the student will receive academic fair process and a full hearing with the program director prior to dismissal. After the hearing with the student and review of the recommendation by the faculty progression committee, the program director will make a determination regarding dismissal. Decisions of the Program Director will be given to the student in writing via physical and/or electronic means.

See the Harding Graduate and Professional [catalog](#) regarding academic fair process and grievance procedures.

Remediation and Deceleration Policies

Remediation Policy

If a deficiency in cognitive skill is observed, as evidenced by failure of exam, paper, etc., the student will be required to meet with the Academic Director and/or course coordinator. Reason for the failure will be discussed and recommendation made for remediation and follow-up evaluation as outlined in the academic standing policies. If a deficiency in a psychomotor skill is observed, as evidenced by failure of a practical evaluation, remediation and successful completion of the skill will be required. For information on remediation of summative evaluations, see “Summative Evaluations” section. Remediation for failure of exams or Program courses will be individualized and outlined in the Structured Academic Improvement Plan (see below).

Deceleration Policy

On a case-by-case basis, a student may be allowed to decelerate. If a student is experiencing academic deficiencies, the faculty progression committee may recommend deceleration (*see section Criteria for Dismissal*). If the student chooses to proceed with recommended deceleration, they will be required to complete a program-specified remediation plan in the interim and the requirements for re-entry with another specified cohort. In this case, the student will enter with a new cohort. Students who re-enter at the beginning of the didactic phase will complete the program curriculum on the same timeline as the new cohort. Students who re-enter at the beginning of the clinical phase will complete program-determined components of the curriculum based on academic deficiencies up to and including repeating the entire clinical phase. Students who re-enter at a time other than the beginning of a phase will complete program-determined components of the curriculum.

The student will have the tuition rate assigned by the University. If the student does not complete the remediation plan as specified, they may not be allowed to re-enter. All related expenses will be the responsibility of the student.

Structured Academic Improvement Plan

Students who are having academic difficulties, including professionalism issues, may be directed to enter a structured academic improvement plan (SAIP). The Academic and/or Clinical Director and the student will meet to determine the action items involved in the plan based on review of cognitive and psychomotor performance, student self-evaluation and instructor evaluations. A student-centered approach is used to determine the requirements of the structured plan including attention to their skills, knowledge and mental health. When indicated, the plan may include required mental health evaluation and/or counseling in addition to other requirements. The plan will be outlined for the student and a copy will be provided via

email. Electronic confirmation of receipt will be requested. Students placed on Academic Probation will be required to meet with the Program Director at least once as part of their SAIP. If any difficulty is encountered completing the requirements of the SAIP, the student is to contact the director facilitating the plan ASAP so that the issue can be discussed and a solution found. The program will assist with implementation of written recommendations received from support professionals. Failure to complete the requirements of the plan may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program as outlined in the plan.

Academic counseling sessions or meetings with students will be documented and kept securely in the student's academic file. Students in distant clinical sites may be counseled via electronic means. Students may be asked to read and sign the documentation. Students may also submit a written response to the form for their academic file. Successful completion of the SAIP will also be documented in the student's file.

Summative Evaluations

Near the end of each phase of the program, each student will be required to pass a summative evaluation in order to demonstrate the proficiency required to progress. The evaluations are not associated with any one course as they are summative across all courses. As program requirements, a student must pass them in order to continue progression through the program. Performance on the Didactic or Clinical Phase summative evaluations will be considered by the faculty when determining sanctions including probation or dismissal for poor academic performance. Any additional costs due to poor student performance on the proficiency exams, including costs to remediate, are the responsibility of the student. A formative, or practice, evaluation with feedback will be given prior to the Didactic Phase Summative Evaluation (DPSE), and multiple formative evaluations with feedback will be given prior to the Clinical Phase Summative Evaluation (CPSE).

Any student failing the DPSE will be subject to a change of academic standing as outlined in the Academic Warning and Probation policies, and provided an opportunity for remediation. Based on recommendation of the Faculty Progression Committee and the Academic Director, the Program Director may require one of the following actions prior to remediation:

1. Conditional progression to the clinical phase with requirement to complete remediation plan including Guided Learning SCPE (to be listed on transcript as PAS 6800 Independent Study) followed by an opportunity to retake the DPSE.
2. Conditional progression to the first regular SCPE, as scheduled by the clinical office, with a concurrent requirement to complete a remediation plan developed by the Academic Director, followed by an opportunity to remediate and pass the DPSE.

If the student passes the remediation attempt of the DPSE, faculty progression committee will meet and make recommendation for progression. If the student fails the remediation attempt of the DPSE, progression through the clinical phase will be halted and further disciplinary action will be determined, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Any student failing the CPSE will be subject to a change of academic standing as outlined in the Academic Warning and Probation policies and provided a remediation attempt in the last six weeks of the program. Students will be allowed conditional progression through the Clinical Phase, as scheduled by the clinical office, with a concurrent requirement to complete a remediation plan developed by the Academic Director, prior to their remediation.

If the student passes the remediation attempt of the CPSE, the faculty progression committee will meet and make recommendations for progression. If the student fails the remediation attempt of the CPSE, the Program Director, based on recommendation by the Faculty Progression Committee and the Academic

Director, may require one of the following actions:

1. Delayed graduation with repetition of any or all of the curriculum components followed by a second remediation attempt.
2. Dismissal from the program.

Any additional costs incurred due to failure of either of the above summative exams, including cost to retest, will be the responsibility of the student.

Guided Learning

Guided Learning, documented as PAS 6800 Independent Study on the transcript, is an experience designed by program faculty for students with identified deficits in knowledge or skills that require remediation based on the judgement of the faculty. The course will include clinical experiences with direct patient care, simulation and guided instruction reviewing foundational knowledge and clinical reasoning skills.

Criteria for completing Guided Learning following the didactic phase may include:

1. Semester GPA in any didactic semester less than 3.00
2. Academic Probation at any point in the Didactic Phase
3. Recommendation by program faculty after review of the student's overall Didactic Phase performance
4. Failure of the DPSE

If selected for Guided Learning, students will complete clinical orientation and then proceed into the experience, which serves as an additional supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE). Based on a student-centered assessment of the didactic performance, the student may proceed into the regular SCPE for a virtual based Guided Learning or may stay onsite to complete the full course. Successful completion of the Guided Learning course is required for progression through the program. Failure to successfully complete the experience may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program. These students will be required to use the regular scheduled Clinical Phase break to complete any regular SCPEs needed.

If performance deficits are identified in a Clinical Phase student based on a comprehensive, student-centered assessment of performance, the course may be recommended or required. The student may be required to take a virtual based Guided Learning concurrent with a SCPE or a full onsite course. Course design and timing will be communicated with the student. Failure to successfully complete the experience may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program. The student is responsible for any additional expense incurred during this process.

Withdrawal Policy

Withdrawal from a course generally requires the approval of the Program Director and must be submitted on the appropriate form, which may be obtained from the Registrar's Office. Since withdrawal from a course affects a student's academic progress, the Program Director and the faculty progression committee will review such actions.

For information regarding the withdrawal procedure and refund of tuition, refer to the financial policy section in the Harding's Graduate and Professional [Catalog](#).

A student may voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time.

Any student who withdraws or is dismissed from the program must follow the stated application procedures to be considered for re-admission unless otherwise stated by the program. Applicants for re-

admission are evaluated, once annually, along with new applicants. A student who withdraws or is dismissed is not guaranteed interview, admission, or re-admission to the PA Program. Students who are dismissed for violations of academic integrity policies, including for unprofessional behavior, are not eligible for readmission to the program.

Suspension Policy

If, in the judgment of a member of the faculty of the Physician Assistant Program, a situation has or is about to occur that would jeopardize in some fashion the student, patients, other students, the program or its affiliates, the Program Director or his designee may immediately suspend a student from any Physician Assistant course and initiate investigation within 2 business days following the suspension.

The Program Director may extend that suspension until appropriate investigation and resolution can be reached.

Leave of Absence Policy

In the event that a student in the Physician Assistant Program encounters a situation that requires a prolonged absence from the program, or deviation from program timeline (*see Program Structure and Progression Requirements section*), for reasons other than academic difficulty, that student may either request a leave of absence from the program. A request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the appropriate director (Academic or Clinical) with sufficient information to explain the situation. The director will then consult with the Program Director to determine a plan for completion. In the event that the student is ill or otherwise indisposed, the written requirement may be waived, and the Program Director may initiate the action independently. The student is responsible for all costs associated with a leave of absence.

If the request for leave is deemed reasonable and appropriate for the circumstance, and if the student is in good academic standing at the time, the Program Director in consultation with the program faculty, may grant the leave. Otherwise, the Program Director may, at his/her discretion, deny the leave, recommend that the student withdraw from the program, or may recommend that the student be dismissed from the program, following University policy. Conditions will be determined individually according to the merits of each case.

A student who is granted a leave of absence is expected to complete all missed work upon return to the program. If this leave is extended, the student will need to withdraw and reregister and take the courses from the beginning upon return to the program.

Due to the sequential nature of the didactic phase program coursework, students granted a leave may be required to delay re-entry until the next academic year.

The Program Director, in consultation with the program faculty, may recommend that a student take a leave of absence to complete certain remedial work that is deemed necessary to allow the student to succeed in the program. In this case, the student will withdraw from the program and may be given specified requirements to be completed prior to re-entry into the program. The student will re-enter at the time specified by the program.

If a leave of absence is granted for a period of time equivalent to one or more semesters, the student must notify the Program Director, in writing, of intent to return. Unless prior arrangements are made with the Program Director, this notification must be accomplished prior to the beginning of the semester preceding

the return if the program is expected to guarantee that a space will be available for the student. It is at the program's discretion if this is possible.

If more than one semester elapses between the start of a leave of absence and the student's re-entry into the second year of the program, the Program Director may require the student to demonstrate clinical competencies (e.g., history, physical examination techniques, and surgical skills) and/or pass a didactic phase proficiency exam.

Graduation Requirements

In order to complete the Physician Assistant Program, a student must register for and pass each course set forth in the program's curriculum, pass all summative evaluations, and complete all other program requirements to include professionalism requirements (*see Program Structure and Progression Requirements*). Normal program progression is sequential enrollment in all program classes each semester beginning in Fall I and successfully meeting all course and program requirements each semester thereafter. Students satisfactorily meeting all the requirements for graduation as outlined in the program policies (HUPA General Student Handbook and the HUPA Clinical Phase Manual) will be recommended for graduation and to receive the Master of Science (M.S.) in Physician Assistant Studies. Students are responsible for applying to the University for graduation and paying appropriate fees through the Registrar and Business offices.

In the case of a leave of absence or deceleration, the timeline for completion of program requirements would be clearly outlined in the student's structured academic improvement plan.

Disciplinary and Grievance Policy

If a student has a concern about an interaction with a faculty or concern regarding faculty behavior, they should follow the process outlined in the "Student Rights" section. If a student has questions or concerns regarding assessment scores or course grades, the student should discuss their concerns with the course coordinator.

If in the judgment of the faculty member or the student, the problem cannot be resolved as above, either may bring the matter to the attention of the Program Director who will hear charges or complaints and interview the persons involved. In addition, the University has policies for filing a [grievance](#) that apply in certain situations. The student should review the policies and determine the action to take next. The HU policies provide the contact information if the student has questions regarding the policies.

The Program will follow, to the best of its ability, all of the University disciplinary and grievance procedures as outlined in the Graduate and Professional [Catalog](#). All grievance procedures listed or amended in the graduate catalog will take precedence over any policy written in this handbook.

All policies of the University as outlined in the Graduate and Professional catalog will apply to all students in the program, except in the specific cases where there are additional requirements or modifications listed in this handbook.

Student Evaluation of Instruction

Students have opportunity to complete evaluations of courses, seminars, instructors, clinical rotations and preceptors. Evaluations should reflect a balanced professional assessment of strengths and weaknesses. The student is expected to inform the program of any problems prior to the evaluation if there are issues with the class or rotation.

Clinical Phase Policies

Clinical phase policies apply to didactic and clinical environments in the Clinical Phase. In addition, all academic policies are applicable to the clinical phase (*see Academic Policies*). See the Clinical Phase Manual for more specific policies regarding the clinical phase.

Clinical Phase Prerequisites

In order to be granted permission to enter clinical training students must:

1. Be recommended for progression to the clinical phase of training by the faculty progression committee.
2. Complete the Health Requirements, including an annual physical, and possess Health Insurance as outlined in the 'Health Requirements and Health Insurance' section.
3. Be certified as having satisfactorily completed BLS and ACLS by American Heart Association standards. Both certifications must be valid through the end of the clinical training period. ACLS certification will be completed in Clinical Orientation and BLS will be renewed during Summer 2.
4. Satisfactorily complete Clinical Orientation.

Selection of Clinical Sites

Assignment of a student to a clinical site will be determined by the program. The Clinical Director will provide information regarding clinical site selection and scheduling via written communications and informational sessions prior to the clinical year. This process will begin in the second semester of the didactic phase under the direction of the Clinical Director. The Clinical Director works with the students on clinical site placement as much as possible, but student refusal of a site placement may be considered voluntary withdrawal from the program.

It is the program's responsibility to develop clinical sites for all required rotations. Students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Harding is committed to the policy of providing equal opportunity for all persons and does not unlawfully discriminate in admissions, programs, or any other educational functions and services on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, veteran status, religion or disability to those who meet its admission criteria and are willing to uphold its values as stated in the Code of Conduct.

Harding is required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, as amended, not to unlawfully discriminate on the basis of gender in its admission policies, treatment of students, employment practices or educational programs except as required by religious tenets of the churches of Christ. Harding has a nondiscrimination policy available upon request in the offices of Student Services and Human Resources. Inquiries concerning the application of federal and state laws or regulations may be referred to the Office of Human Resources, Box 12257, 915 E. Market Ave., Searcy, AR 72149-2257; telephone (501) 279-4380. The person to ensure compliance with the nondiscrimination policy and discrimination laws and regulations is the chief financial officer of the University.

Appendix A
Harding University
Physician Assistant Program
General Student Handbook

Statement of Acceptance

I, _____, acknowledge receipt of a digital copy of the handbook, found in my Class Canvas course. Additionally, I understand the requirements and expectations outlined within the handbook and agree to abide by its policies and procedures.

I understand that if I have questions regarding the contents of the handbook, I will contact the Academic Director and/or Program Director.

Student Printed Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Check the appropriate semester:

- Semester 1
- Semester 4
- Semester 7

Appendix B

ATTRIBUTES OF PROFESSIONALISM

Integrity

- Demonstrates honesty in all situation & interactions
- Maintains confidentiality

Tolerance

- Demonstrates ability to accept people & situations
- Acknowledges his/her biases & does not allow them to affect pt. care or contribute to threatening or harassing interactions with others, including peers, faculty, staff, & other professionals.

Appropriate Interpersonal Relationships

- Provides compassion, support & empathy in interactions with peers, patients and their families
- Interacts effectively with difficult individuals
- Demonstrates respect for & complements the roles of other professionals including administrators, faculty, staff, lectures, and fellow learners.
- Follows the chain of command
- Is cooperative, supportive and reassuring to others

Initiative

- Independently identifies tasks to be performed and makes sure that tasks are completed satisfactorily
- Performs duties promptly and efficiently
- Is willing to spend additional time and to take advantage of learning opportunities
- Demonstrates a motivation to learn
- Shows enthusiasm for learning and improvement

Dependability

- Completes tasks and assignments on time
- Consistently punctual and in attendance for all class sessions and laboratory activities
- Prepares for and actively participates in clinical and didactic activities
- Follows through on tasks and is reliable

Attitude

- Maintains a positive outlook towards assigned tasks
- Recognizes and admits mistakes, and gracefully accepts the consequences
- Seeks and accepts feedback in a positive manner and uses it to improve performance
- Provides constructive feedback on course and program evaluations in a timely manner

Ability to Function under Stress

- Demonstrate emotional maturity in managing tensions and conflict that arise with professional, personal and family responsibilities
- Exhibits sound personal and clinical judgment in stressful situations

Personal Responsibility

- Identifies unprofessional conduct in others in the didactic and clinical settings and takes appropriate actions
- Volunteers for additional responsibilities (student government, community service)
- Strives to address and correct personal limitations

Attention to Personal Appearance

- Exhibits good personal hygiene and grooming
- Clothing is neat, clean and well maintained, and conforms to Center, program, and/or local dress code policies

Self-Assessment Skills

- Demonstrates an awareness of strengths and limitations (intellectual, physical, and emotional)
- Recognizes when help is required and when to ask for guidance

Teamwork Skills

- Helps and supports other team members
- Shows respect for all team members

- Pools resources and works efficiently within a group
- Remains flexible and open to change and communicates with others to resolve problems

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