

# Student Handbook

Revised: June 20, 2022

The Department of Physician Assistant Studies will provide notice of revisions.

These policies support Program compliance with the ARC-PA Standards of Accreditation, 5th Ed. (A3.02)

## THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Welcome to the Physician Assistant Program, housed in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS), College of Health and Human Services, at Northern Arizona University – Phoenix Bioscience Core.

The program is designed to prepare graduates to become excellent and committed professionals in the delivery of health services throughout Arizona. In collaboration with the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Phoenix, the 24-month program offers an integrated curriculum in a state-of-the-art learning environment.

The program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA), 3325 Paddocks Parkway, Suite 345 Suwanee, Georgia 30024 <http://www.arc-pa.org/> (A3.12a)

The first year consists of courses taught at the downtown Phoenix Bioscience Core, and the second year includes supervised clinical practice experiences located in diverse geographical areas of Arizona as well as regularly scheduled meetings at the Phoenix campus (Appendix A). The program grants a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree and certificate of completion. Students are responsible for the following learning outcomes - [https://policy.nau.edu/policy/Documents/PHASTMPAS\\_2016-17.pdf](https://policy.nau.edu/policy/Documents/PHASTMPAS_2016-17.pdf)

All PA students are subject to the policies and regulations of the University and Graduate College. Students are referred to the following sources:

- <http://nau.edu/university-policies/>
- <https://nau.edu/graduate-college/handbooks-manuals-and-policies/>
- <http://nau.edu/Student-Life/Student-Handbook/>
- <http://nau.edu/Registrar/Important-Dates/>

It is the student's responsibility to carefully read and understand the Student Handbook. Students are required to acknowledge they have access to and an understanding of the document prior to beginning classes. Students should address any questions or concerns regarding the document to the Chair before signing the electronic acknowledgement form in DocuSign.

The Student Handbook is subject to revision. Any updates will be sent via NAU email.

## **PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS**

The **mission** of the program is to prepare individuals from diverse backgrounds and life experiences to successfully contribute to the profession and community. The program will facilitate the acquisition of the clinical and professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to provide high-quality, compassionate primary care for the people of Arizona, especially in rural and other medically underserved communities (A2.05a).

In addition, the program will strive to achieve the following **goals** (A2.05a):

1. Provide a broad, interdisciplinary medical education including evidence-based practice to facilitate students' success in dynamic healthcare environments.
2. Prepare graduates to practice in diverse settings throughout Arizona, with emphasis on primary care and medically underserved communities.
3. Utilize technology and innovative teaching strategies to equip students effectively and efficiently with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become competent healthcare providers, life-long learners and leaders in their communities.
4. Develop a tradition of excellence in preparing students to successfully complete the national certification examination and serve the people of Arizona.
5. Develop staff members with a commitment to excellence in service to students, faculty and the community. develop faculty with a commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship and service.

## **COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT**

The College of Health and Human Services prepares students to become competent health professionals while inspiring leaders in practice, scholarship, and service. We strive to improve the health and well-being of the diverse communities we serve.

## **COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE STATEMENT (A1.11a)**

The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) at Northern Arizona University is committed to a community where people of all backgrounds and identities are welcomed, included, celebrated, and treated with respect. In CHHS, we value diversity, which encompasses the range of human differences. We celebrate unique identities and perspectives in our community and continually strive to increase belonging.

The purpose of this statement is to set the foundation for our CHHS community regarding our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) initiatives. We hope this serves as a springboard for many future DEIJ projects across the college. CHHS stands committed to removing historic, systemic, and other institutional barriers that prevent participation from any person or group. As such, CHHS is taking action toward a more inclusive place of belonging, honoring all voices, while promoting a culture that reflects this ideology.

In CHHS, we believe DEIJ efforts fuel excellence and innovation. We are fully committed to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and empowering a community that increasingly embraces these core values. Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment that fosters bold ideas and supports meaningful change.

In our DEIJ efforts, we aspire to:

1. Providing faculty, staff, and students with an educational environment that supports cultural humility, inclusion, justice, and respect; and transference of these core values into the campus and greater community.
2. Developing and implementing strategies focused on generating purposeful support of underrepresented students; this includes both the expansion of recruitment efforts and advancement through graduation and beyond.
3. Increasing support and implementing strategies to attract, retain, and advance underrepresented faculty, staff, and administrators.
4. Facilitating student cultural responsibility in their clinical/practicum experiences within the communities they serve, to improve equity in health-related systems now and into the future.
5. Implementing purposeful metrics and assessment methods to inform these initiatives, in concert with university-wide assessment methods.

### **TECHNICAL STANDARDS (A3.13e)**

This curriculum requires demonstrated proficiency in a variety of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. A student must possess the capability, with or without reasonable accommodations, to complete the entire curriculum. A student with a disability requiring accommodation in order to meet the listed technical standards must contact Disability Resources (<http://nau.edu/Disability-Resources/>) prior to matriculation in the program or as soon as possible.

The program requires each student to possess the minimal skills listed below in order to participate in coursework, demonstrate proficiency of essential skills, and progress through the program. It is essential that each student meets the technical standards listed, which are necessary for safe and effective progression through the program.

1. Students are expected to comply with all NAU student codes of conduct.
2. Students must be able to observe and participate in all demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including computer assisted instruction.
3. Students must be able to participate in high fidelity, simulated, virtual, electronic, and online environments and learning experiences in both synchronous and asynchronous delivery methods and systems.
4. Students must be able to learn to analyze, synthesize, problem solve, and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments.
5. Students must be able to demonstrate the ability to perform inspection, palpation, auscultation and percussion.
6. Students must be mature, compassionate and insightful in their interactions with patients from all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds, belief systems, and with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities.
7. Students must be able to relate to patients and establish an empathetic, professional and effective relationship with patients.
8. Students are expected to be able to communicate the results of the examination to the patient and to their colleagues with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency.
9. Students are expected to possess the ability to work collaboratively with all members of the health care team.
10. Students are expected to be able to learn and perform laboratory tests and diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.
11. Students are expected to be able to display appropriate judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients. In addition, students must be able to learn and demonstrate the ability to recognize limitations in their knowledge, skills and abilities and to seek appropriate assistance with their identified limitations.
12. Students must be able to learn to respond with precise, quick, and appropriate action in emergency situations.
13. Students are expected to be able to accept criticism and adopt appropriate modifications in their behavior.
14. Students are expected to possess the ability to work collaboratively with all members of the health care team. Physician assistant students must be able to develop mature, sensitive, professional, and effective relationships with patients, colleagues, faculty, and staff despite commonly increased levels of mental stress in PA education.

15. Students must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and adapt to an environment, which may change rapidly without warning, and/or in unpredictable ways. Long and irregular hours of both study and performance beyond the required and assigned times are often necessary to acquire mastery of knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors.
16. Students must have a high level of compassion for others, motivation to serve, integrity, and a consciousness of social values. Students are expected to work with individuals exhibiting a broad spectrum of personality traits.
17. Students are expected to work in classroom and supervised clinical environments with possible exposure to communicable diseases, toxic substances, ionizing radiation, medicinal preparations, and other such conditions common to the medical and surgical fields.
18. Students are expected to travel to and live in remote, rural, and/or distant locations to complete clinical experiences. Transportation and housing arrangements are the responsibility of the PA student.
19. Students are expected to possess perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the physician assistant curriculum and enter into the practice of medicine as a certified and licensed physician assistant.

# UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (A3.15a)

The University is an academic community and expects its students to have a commitment to academic integrity through serious observance of standards for academic honesty and respect. A university can function properly only when its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Therefore, academic standards are established to ensure that these principles are upheld. These policies can be found in the Academic Catalog at: <https://policy.nau.edu/policy/policy.aspx?num=100601>.

## ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Northern Arizona University's primary concern is for the health and welfare of its community members. Accordingly, the University prohibits the illicit use of alcohol and other drugs on University property or in connection with University-sanctioned activities or events wherever located. The University recognizes substance dependency as a serious health and safety issue and offers comprehensive education, prevention, and referral services. The University will support students and employees who seek its assistance in confronting a substance dependency problem. At the same time, the University will hold all members of its community responsible for their behavior. <https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Alcohol-and-Other-Drugs.pdf>

## BACKGROUND CHECKS AND FINGERPRINTING

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) requires "information on criminal background according to law, regulation, and organizational policy" on all employees, students, and volunteers according to the 2005 proposed standards in section HR 1.205.

Students in the program will be subjected to criminal background checks and fingerprinting to meet clinical placement requirements. Additional background checks may also be required by specific sites. Students will be responsible for the cost of all background checks and fingerprinting.

## **COMMUNICATION**

NAU email account - All students are assigned a NAU email account at the time of admission to the program. It is imperative that students check their NAU email account daily (including weekends). The NAU email address is considered the official University email and the only account that the program uses to communicate with students.

Exxat - a web-based administration system for the clinical year, is the main conduit for information and communication regarding site assignments, site and preceptor information, uploading and downloading documents, completing assignments and evaluations, and logging patient encounters.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION AND PRACTICE**

NAU follows the Arizona Board of Regents policy which forbids discrimination based on religious beliefs or practices or any absences resulting from them. In addition, a student cannot be discriminated against for seeking a religious accommodation pursuant to this policy. A refusal to accommodate is justified only when undue hardship would result from each available alternative of reasonable accommodation.

## **SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (A3.15f)**

Northern Arizona University is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and retaliation. This policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected status including race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information. This policy also prohibits retaliation for raising concerns under this policy or participating in an investigation. <https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Nondiscrimination-and-Anti-Harassment-INTERIM.pdf>

The Equity and Access Office is available to all members of the university community to discuss concerns related to a safe learning and working environment, to explore complaint options, and for assistance locating other university offices or resources that may be of assistance for a particular problem or issue. <https://in.nau.edu/eao/>



The university has an appointed Title IX campus official with independent authority to address and correct discrimination, harassment, and behaviors that constitute sexual misconduct. Her responsibilities include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. Elyce C. Morris, Title IX Coordinator, [TitleIX@nau.edu](mailto:TitleIX@nau.edu) and <https://in.nau.edu/title-ix/>

During clinical rotations, students should also report any concerns to the Clinical Coordinator by phone or email. Students are encouraged to immediately leave the site and contact emergency services if they feel unsafe.

University Policy prohibits consensual or romantic relationships between individuals where there is real or perceived authority, influence, or responsibility.

<https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Consensual-Romantic-or-Sexual-Relationships.pdf>

This includes, but is not limited to such instances as:

- Supervisor/subordinate employee
- Academic dean/chair and faculty within their college/school
- Faculty/student in that class or program
- Teaching Assistant and student in class
- Coach or Athletic Trainer and student-athlete
- Resident Assistant and resident of their area of responsibility
- Such situations must be reported to the Equity and Access Office who can advise the parties and may be able to assist with a Conflict Management Plan.

## **TOBACCO FREE CAMPUS**

Northern Arizona University recognizes tobacco use as a public health hazard and prohibits smoking and all other tobacco use on its campuses and in its facilities and vehicles. The goal is to provide a healthy, clean, educationally productive learning, working, and living environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

<https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Tobacco-Free-Campus.pdf>

## **WEB-BASED PLATFORMS**

Blackboard Learn (in use through fall 2023) - NAU's learning management system is used to manage course documents, assignments, lectures, and other materials.

All course materials will be migrated to Canvas, fall 2023.

## **LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES (A1.09)**

The NAU Cline Library (located in Flagstaff) has a large collection of resources available, both in the library and online. These include technology and research support, journals, books, references, and much more. A free document delivery service enables distant students to request materials from Cline and its partner library, Coconino Community College, and many materials can be emailed to students upon request. PA academic library resources can be accessed at: <http://libraryguides.nau.edu/pbclibrary>.

The PA students also have full access to UA Online Medical Library including online textbooks. A limited selection of hard copy references and instructional aides are available in the Phoenix Biomedical Campus library. Also available in the medical library are individual and small group study areas, a computer training room, and offices for support staff that provide research assistance as needed.

The NAU librarian is catherine lockmiller at (602) 827-2376, email: [catherine.lockmiller@nau.edu](mailto:catherine.lockmiller@nau.edu).

PA students can schedule an individualized consultation with the NAU librarian as needed.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (<https://nau.edu/office-of-scholarships-and-financial-aid/>) provides students with assistance when applying for all need-based funds. To be eligible for financial assistance, students must complete the Free Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) at: <https://fafsa.ed.gov>. Vita Allison, Financial Aid Advisor in the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is the best contact for all financial aid information and issues. She can be reached at [Vita.Allison@nau.edu](mailto:Vita.Allison@nau.edu)

## **STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

The Graduate Student Government (GSG) strives to improve the graduate student experience including how graduate students can contribute to the university. Currently, students are involved in transportation and sustainability issues, graduate student housing options, funding travel grants, campus-wide committees and health care coverage. [NAU Graduate Student Government](#)

## **FACILITIES**

Safety and Security - Northern Arizona University - Phoenix Bioscience Core is a closed campus. Students, Faculty and Staff are required to wear their PBC card visibly at all times while on campus. PBC cards are required to gain entry into the building and are programmed to allow entry only during specific hours. As a locked campus, students are not to allow anyone to enter who is not properly credentialed. There is a security officer on site 24/7.

## PROGRAM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE, COUNSELING, HEALTH, AND DISABILITY SERVICES (A3.10)

Academic Assistance - Northern Arizona University provides access to an Academic Success Coordinator. He provides counseling and guidance on such topics as time management and test-taking. For more information, please reach out to: Zachary Baker, Academic Success Coordinator, [zachary.baker@nau.edu](mailto:zachary.baker@nau.edu) or 602-827-2669

Tutors - Tutors are available, free of charge, for some subjects in the didactic year. Students should inquire with the Instructor of Record (IOR) regarding available tutoring.

NAU Academic Success offers free tutoring to students, academic success workshops, and study skill workshops:

<https://nau.edu/academic-success-centers/>

<https://nau.edu/academic-success-centers/academic-success-workshops/>

<https://nau.edu/academic-success-centers/study-resources/>

University Writing Commons (UWC) assists students with developing and refining their writing skills: <https://in.nau.edu/university-writing-commons/>

Emergency Student Services - The Office of the Dean of Students serves as a central location to provide support and referrals for students facing educational barriers related to a variety of issues. For more information, please visit <https://in.nau.edu/dean-of-students/emergency-services/>

Counseling Services - NO COST 24-Hr Emergency Support if offered through the following:

NAU Counseling: 928-523-2261

EMPACT: 480-784-1500

Crisis Response Network: 602-222-9444

Terros Health: 602-685-6000

Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQA): 866-488-7386

Veterans Support Line: 800-273-8255

Kristin Anderson, MSW provides free case management appointments for all students, either in person or via Zoom. Students can connect with Kristin through email, phone, or may schedule an appointment by logging onto [www.campushealth.nau.edu](http://www.campushealth.nau.edu). Click on APPOINTMENTS > SCHEDULE APPOINTMENT > CASE MANAGEMENT and choose a time. Kristin Anderson, MSW, 928-523-2654, [Kristin.Anderson@nau.edu](mailto:Kristin.Anderson@nau.edu)

Lisa Taylor, LMSW is the [Diversity Coordinator for NAU](#). She has extensive experience working with students from disproportionately marginalized groups, including counseling and case management. She is. Students can make an appointment by calling 928-523-2654.

Students may also use the website [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com) to find a therapist in their geographic area that accepts their insurance. The website also has psychiatrists, groups, and residential treatment center options.

Health Services -

NAU students may be seen at ASU Health Services, located on the Downtown Phoenix Campus - 500 N. 3rd Street, Health South, Suite 155, 480-965-3349 or 602-496-0721.

Program Principal Faculty, the Director, and the Medical Directors must not participate as health care providers for students in the program. (A3.09)

Disability Resources Center - The PA Program supports the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments Act as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A student with a disability requiring accommodation must contact Disability Resources (<http://nau.edu/Disability-Resources/>) prior to matriculation in the program or as soon as possible. Those students who need to request accommodations must register with the Disability Resources Office through the link above. A student is not eligible to receive accommodations until the registration process is complete. For those students who need accommodations, the program will attempt to identify a clinical education site that can meet the student's individual needs; this may require extra time and start dates of clinical experiences may be delayed. If appropriate accommodations cannot be achieved in an assigned clinical facility, the student may need to accept a different placement.

The program will provide reasonable accommodation in accordance with the recommendation(s) from Disability Resources as long as it does not: 1) Fundamentally alter an essential element of the program; 2) Lower an essential standard of the program; 3) Create a significant risk to the health and safety of others.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS (A3.07) (Appendix B)**

Physical Examination - Evidence of a documented pre-participation physical examination is required upon matriculation to the PA program. The purpose of the exam is to meet the requirements of various clinical sites and facilities. PA students cannot attend any off campus clinical activities without evidence of an exam on file.

Immunizations - Prior to matriculation, all applicants to the PA program must submit certification of immunizations or proof of immunity. Failure to maintain current immunizations can prevent a student from progressing in the program and may also prevent students from participating in clinical rotations at locations that require such immunizations, even if for religious reasons. Student immunizations records are kept on file by the program; records are confidential. No other health records are required or kept by the program (A3.19)

Health Insurance - Health insurance is required while attending NAU. Students may not enroll in courses unless they can demonstrate proof of insurance. If a student does not already have coverage, insurance may be obtained through the NAU Health Plan at [Student Health Insurance Plan \(SHIP\) | Campus Health Services](#) or on the marketplace [HealthCare.gov](#)

## **STUDENT HEALTH STATUS**

The PA program requires participation in classroom, laboratory, and clinical activities. If a student has any health issues, religious or cultural directives that restrict their abilities in these settings, they must notify the course instructor as soon as possible.

In the event of a medical condition, the student may need to seek accommodations from the Office of Disability Resources. A student must notify the Director of any disability, impairment or condition that has the potential to jeopardize the safety of students, faculty, or patients or which prohibits full participation in classroom, laboratory, or clinical activities (injury, prolonged illness, pregnancy, etc.) as soon as possible. Failure to notify the Director may jeopardize the student's standing within the program and ability to progress toward degree completion. Potential next steps may include:

1. Request documentation from the student's licensed healthcare professional detailing the limitation(s).
2. Provide a written statement from the student's licensed healthcare professional when limitations have been cleared.

3. Inform the student's clinical affiliations of any change in health status and any possible limitations.
4. Determine if any restrictions or modifications of the coursework or clinical experiences are necessary in order to ensure a quality educational experience and the safety of all concerned. If accommodations cannot be made, the student may be required to alter or postpone progression through the program or withdraw from the program.

Students' participation in the PA program involves activities that inherently present safety risks. The program is committed to the safety of the students; students must adhere to program policies regarding safety in the classroom, laboratories, and clinic. (A3.08)

Examples:

1. Students are expected to follow the appropriate Hazardous Material and Infection Control Policies dictated by their campus and as presented at orientation (Appendix C).
2. Students are required to follow [Universal Precautions](#). All body fluids and blood should be treated with the assumption that they are infectious for blood-borne pathogens. Frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizer is required. During public health concerns all students will be required to follow CDC guidelines (e.g. wearing masks).
3. If a student or third party becomes ill or injured during class, they must inform the course instructor immediately so that the Report of Injury procedure can be initiated. More details: [Report of Injury \(ROI\) | Human Resources](#)
4. Policies regarding storage and use of hazardous materials are dictated by the university in compliance with federal guidelines and can be found at [Hazardous Waste Management | Environmental Health and Safety](#)

## **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

The PA program is a rigorous 103-credit 24-month continuous program (Appendix A) (A3.12e). The first 12 months includes on campus didactic coursework. The second 12 months requires the students to complete clinical rotations (courses) in Arizona, including rural and medically underserved communities. All of the credits must be completed in the NAU PA Program. Transfer credits are not accepted. (A3.13c)

Orientation - First-year PA students are required to attend Orientation prior to the start of the didactic year. This gives students the opportunity to meet their peers, the faculty, and staff with whom they will be working and studying for the next two years. Faculty will review policies and procedures, program goals and expectations, resources for student success, and requirements for graduation.

Attendance - Consistent class attendance is expected of all students and is essential for the student to demonstrate mastery of course material. The program's policy is consistent with that of the Graduate College and addressed in the professionalism section (<https://policy.nau.edu/policy/policy.aspx?num=100335>).

Faculty may elect to stress the importance of class/lab attendance through course specific policies and determination of the student's final grade; specific course expectations will be articulated in the course syllabus.

Students with 7 absences in one semester, consecutive or otherwise, may experience a delay in academic progression. If faculty note a pattern of excused or unexcused absences, consecutive or otherwise, the student may be asked to meet with the Academic Progress Committee to address their progression in the program.

Faculty Advisors - Each student is assigned a faculty advisor upon starting the program. Faculty Advisors oversee student progress in the program, to include academic and professional milestones. Faculty Advisors facilitate prompt access to resources that may impact academic progress, including student health services, academic assistance, emergency student services, disability resources, and others (see pp 11-12). Faculty contact information may be found in this handbook. Meetings may be scheduled each semester, or more frequently based on need. (A2.17; A3.10)

### Classroom Assessment

1. Course Syllabi - A course syllabus that describes the course objectives, student expectations, grading criteria, and policies will be provided on or before the first day of each class. Familiarity with the syllabus is the student's responsibility; the student should verify any vague or confusing terms of the syllabus with the instructor within the first 2 weeks of class. If altered, the new syllabus becomes the criteria that will be used for determining student performance in the class. A student who feels that significant deviations from the course syllabus exist should talk with the Instructor and/or Chair.



2. Written Examinations - Exams may be proctored in person, online, or given on the honor system. Students are responsible for assuring that they understand the expectations of the exam and follow the exam administration rules completely. In the event that a student is unable to take a course exam at the designated time, an alternate time may be arranged between the student and the faculty member for the class in question. This arrangement may only be made if the instructor of record determines that there is an acceptable reason for rescheduling the exam. Specific dates and times of final exams are determined by the Chair. Any exceptions to the schedule must be stated in the course syllabus.

Results of the student examinations will be provided within a reasonable time following the exam. Review of an assessment is the prerogative of the IOR. Review of previous tests will not be allowed during finals week. Challenging examination questions is the prerogative of the IOR.

The University is an academic community and expects its students to have a commitment to academic integrity through serious observance of standards for academic honesty and respect.

<https://policy.nau.edu/policy/policy.aspx?num=100601>.

3. Course Grades - Grades given in the PA program are "A", "B", "C", and "F" as defined by individual course syllabi. A student must complete all the required courses and clinical rotations of the program with a passing grade to be eligible for graduation. A grade of "C" is the minimum passing grade for all courses with a PHA prefix. It is the individual faculty member's prerogative to determine the evaluation instrument(s), grading scales, and passing standards for the course. The instructor will inform the students of the grading criteria via the course syllabus.

Once a grade has been submitted at the end of each semester to the Registrar, it may not be changed without following the university policy regarding grade appeals. The grade of "Incomplete" is an option when part of the work for the course remains to be finished at the time the grade is due. A grade of Incomplete can only be given if the faculty member agrees that there were circumstances beyond the student's control that resulted in a failure to complete the required work. Refer to The University policy on Grades of In-Progress or Incomplete.

<https://www5.nau.edu/policies/client/Details/565?wholsLooking=All&pertainsTo=All>

The plan for completing the course including the completion date must be in the form of a written agreement between the student and the faculty member and will be placed in the student's file. This form will specify course work to be completed by the student and due dates, in order for the incomplete grade to be replaced with a grade for the completed course. Due dates may not extend further than 12 months from the end of the term in which the student was enrolled in the course or the Incomplete grade will be converted to a "Fail". When all completion requirements have been met, the faculty member will complete and submit a "Grade Change Request Form".

4. Comprehensive Examinations – Students will take the Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) near the end of the didactic year to assist in preparation for the clinical year. Students take another version of the PACKRAT in the clinical year to assess knowledge and preparation for the national certifying examination. At the end of the clinical year, students must pass the End of Curriculum (EOC) examination and a standardized patient encounter (OSCE) ('summative exams') in order to graduate from the program. Some PHA courses require comprehensive and/or cumulative examinations, at the discretion of the IOR. (B4.03)

#### **DEGREE PROGRESSION (A3.15b)**

The PA program in the Department of PA Studies is responsible for preparing students to practice safely as members of the interprofessional medical team. The program has a responsibility to the student, the public, and the profession. The program maintains academic standards, competencies, and professional ethics that the student is expected to adhere to throughout the program. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

#### Satisfactory Academic Progress

Graduate PA students must meet the following academic standards in order to be eligible to continue in or to return to the University and PA Program (NAU Graduate Policy #100319).

1. Maintain **Good Academic Standing**, as demonstrated by:
  - $\geq 3.0$  grade point average (GPA) for all courses taken including those required in the program of study,
  - no more than 11 units of "C" course grades, and
  - no course grades of "D" or "F."
2. Make **Satisfactory Academic Progress** in the program, as demonstrated by:

- Passing scores on summative examinations
  - Satisfactory progress on examinations, capstone project, and other program milestones
  - The ability to successfully complete the program within the allowed timeframe
3. Adhere to the **professional and ethical standards** of the NAU Graduate Handbook, the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of the PA Profession, and the Arizona State Statutes and Rules for PAs (pp. 20).

The **Academic Progress Committee (APC)** oversees the academic and professional progression of students in the program. The committee is composed of all full-time faculty members in the program. The Director is not a member of the committee. The APC meets regularly to evaluate student progress, per accreditation requirements. When possible, advisors, faculty and other stakeholders discuss opportunities for academic counseling and remediation if students are not making satisfactory academic progress. Every effort is made to intervene early and often. Students are required to attend APC meetings, when concerns are identified.

If students are not making sufficient academic progress, the APC may recommend academic dismissal to the Graduate College, based on criteria listed here and in the Graduate Handbook (#100319) [Academic Continuation, Probation, Dismissal, and Readmission - Graduate](#)

Students may be automatically placed on academic probation by the Graduate College or the academic unit at the end of each regular academic term for any of the following reasons: earning a "D" or an "F" grade; earning a cumulative GPA below 3.0; or approaching the maximum number of "C" course grades. Students on academic probation are required to meet regularly with their Faculty Advisor.

Remediation - Remediation plans are developed on an individual basis, and tailored to student areas of improvement. The NAU Academic Improvement Plan is used by the Faculty Advisor to develop a strategy for intervention and remediation. Students are required to meet regularly with their faculty advisor to discuss progress, challenges, and successes. [Academic Improvement Plan Form](#) (A3.15c)

Dismissal - The NAU Graduate College, after due consideration and process, reserves the right to require the dismissal of any student at any time before graduation if circumstances of a legal, moral, behavioral, ethical, and/or academic nature justify such an action. (A3.15d)

Recommendations for PA program dismissal with clearly stated reasons may be made by the APC of the PA program for consideration by the Director of the PA program. Following review of the case and supporting documentation, and the provision of due process, the Director provides their recommendation to the NAU Graduate College. Students recommended by the PA program for dismissal will be notified in writing (via email and US Postal Service). The policy and procedure entitled Academic Continuation, Probation, Dismissal, and Readmission – Graduate (#100319) found at [Academic Policies](#) will be strictly followed. Students are afforded due consideration and process at all stages of the evaluation.

Academic appeals – Students are provided the opportunity to appeal decisions of the Graduate College, including academic probation and dismissal. See Academic Appeal Policy and University Graduate Committee Hearing Panel, Graduate (#100103) found at [Academic Policies](#)

Per NAU Graduate College Policies, the student must show reason why an appeal should be heard. (A3.15)

These appeals should only be considered in instances where:

- The faculty, department, school, or other academic unit deviated substantially from accepted and specified standards as established by the University, Graduate College, or academic unit;
- There was a capricious or arbitrary application of standards towards a student;
- Proper due process was denied to the student

Maximum Time to Complete the MPAS Degree - The maximum time to completion for any student in the Program is one year beyond the originally scheduled graduation date. (A3.15b)

Withdrawal from the Program - Students who feel they may be candidates for withdrawal should appeal to the Academic Progress Committee for approval to submit a Term Withdrawal and Reimbursement Petition for consideration by the Graduate College. (A3.15d)

The petition and additional information can be found on the Office of the Registrar's page - [Term Withdrawal & Reimbursement Petition | Office of the Registrar](#)

Deceleration - Deceleration is not offered in the PA program. If a student is required to repeat a course, the student must wait until the course is offered in the next academic

year. Tuition, fees, etc. are the responsibility of the student in the event a course and/or courses need to be repeated. (A3.15c)

The student may have financial aid implications that should be addressed with the Office Scholarships and Financial Aid (<https://nau.edu/office-of-scholarships-and-financial-aid/>).

Continuous Enrollment - The Graduate College requires that students be continuously enrolled and must approve exceptions to this policy. (A3.13d)

See the Graduate College policies for details [Continuous Enrollment, Graduate](#).

Advanced Placement & Proficiency Examinations - The department does not offer advanced placement or proficiency examinations for any coursework. All students must complete the entire professional curriculum in residence at Northern Arizona University Department of Physician Assistant Studies. (A3.16)

### **GRIEVANCE POLICIES (A3.15g)**

Informal complaints - When a student encounters a problem on campus or feels they have been treated unfairly, the student should first try to resolve the issue informally with the faculty/staff member or department directly involved. If the student is not satisfied with the response after working informally to resolve the complaint, the student may file a student complaint using the online Complaint Form. [Complaint Process | Division of Student Affairs](#)

Formal complaints will be managed through official university procedures, found here: [Complaint Process | Division of Student Affairs](#)

Please see the section, *Safe Learning Environment* for information on Title IX and the Equity and Access Office.

### **GRADE APPEALS (A3.15g)**

A final course grade may be appealed according to the NAU Grade Appeal Policy (#100105) found at [Academic Policies](#)

The university timeline for appeals may adversely impact the student's academic progress. The program may not allow progression to the next semester pending the outcome of the appeal.

## **STUDENT PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

Quality graduate education requires professional and ethical conduct of all participants. Graduate school faculty and graduate students have mutual responsibilities in ensuring the highest academic standards of superior graduate programs. Professionalism is an academic component of the PA program and a criterion for Satisfactory Academic Progress. Students are encouraged to use the professionalism self-assessment rubric (Appendix E) to reflect upon and refine their professional development.

PA students are expected to adhere to policies in the Graduate Handbook, found here: [NAU Graduate Policies & Other Info | Graduate College](#)

Students are also expected to adhere to the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of the PA Profession - <https://www.aapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/16-EthicalConduct.pdf> and the Arizona State Statutes and Rules for PAs - <https://www.asapa.org/page/Statutes>

PA student employment - Due to the intensity and high standards of the program, students are strongly discouraged from seeking or maintaining employment while enrolled in the program. (A3.15e)

Due to accreditation requirements, PA students are not permitted to work for the program and not permitted to substitute for or function as instructional faculty or staff. (A3.04, A3.05)

Dress Code - Students should maintain a professional appearance and dress appropriately when representing NAU and the PA profession. This includes the campus, clinical sites, meetings, and special events. In both the didactic and clinical phases of the program, students are expected to wear business attire or scrubs, as permitted. Clinical supervisors, preceptors, or faculty may ask to meet with a student regarding dress code and/or to leave the classroom and/or clinical site.

The following dress code guidelines are expected for all encounters with patients, standardized or real. (A3.06, A3.08)

- Always bring your white coat. Your coat must be clean, pressed, and worn at all times.
- Wear your name tag in an easily viewable location and identify yourself as a student (A3.06).
- Avoid cologne, perfumes or strong scents.
- Tattoos are recommended to be covered.
- Jewelry should be minimal.
- Avoid clothing with rips, tears, or frayed edges.
- Clothing should allow for an appropriate range of movement.
- Button-down shirts (with or without ties), polo shirts, professional tops, or blouses should be worn and should avoid low-cut necklines or exposed midriffs.
- Tank tops, T-shirts, and thin straps on tops are not recommended.
- Pants, slacks, khakis, skirts, or dresses are appropriate; jeans and shorts should not be worn. Legs should be covered to the knee.
- Dress shoes with a low or flat heel are recommended; Avoid open-toed shoes, flip-flops, or porous shoes.

Confidentiality - Sharing personal health information (PHI) is strictly prohibited under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and subject to disciplinary action. Students may not post photographs or videos from clinical or laboratory settings, of patients or families, or any proprietary information from the program or clinical settings. Students are not permitted to share information that violates student (classmate) privacy or safety.

Social Media - The term "social media" is broad, and students should be mindful of their communication on any internet public forum, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Reddit, blogs, comment sections of news sources, and other online social media sites.

Security, confidentiality, and safety are the primary concerns. Sharing personal health information (PHI) is strictly prohibited under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and subject to disciplinary action. Students may not post photographs or videos from clinical or laboratory settings, of patients or families, or any proprietary information from the program or clinical settings. Students are not permitted to share information on social media platforms that violates student (classmate) privacy or safety. Students are expected to respect the privacy and safety of students

(classmates), faculty and staff, and preceptor and clinical staff through the prudent use of social media.

Students are not permitted to use the NAU logo unless previously approved. Faculty do not interface with students in the PA program (e.g., faculty do not “friend” students on Facebook or other social media forums and sites, including LinkedIn). Students who violate this policy are required to meet with APC and may face disciplinary action, including recommendation for dismissal.

Copyright material - Materials available in class are for educational use only. One copy is permitted per student for educational purposes. Redistribution of copyrighted material is not permitted.

Recording lectures and didactic materials - Students must request permission to record (audio or video) presentations.

## **THE CLINICAL YEAR**

The purpose of the clinical year of training in PA education is to enable students to integrate and apply their didactic knowledge in the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of patients in a supervised clinical setting. Students complete required rotations with providers practicing in multiple disciplines in order to provide a wide variety of patient encounters and to demonstrate how the approach to a patient may vary between specialties. These experiences are designed to build competence in fundamental clinical skills through practice and feedback, and to enhance confidence in preparation for graduation and eventually, clinical practice. (A3.12; B1.01)

## **CLINICAL PLACEMENTS**

Clinical placements are at the discretion of the Clinical Coordinators. There is no minimum or maximum number of clinical placements for any student at distant locations from the PA program.

Students with extended families, school age children, and complex family units are encouraged to develop a family care plan in advance of the clinical phase of education. Many students complete supervised clinical experiences in distant, rural or remote locations which may prove challenging without prior planning. Please begin



preparations early to reduce the stress on yourself, your family and your social support networks. Some students may need to discuss an extended leave of absence with both the Clinical Coordinator and the Director in cases where preferred placements are not possible. This may delay the planned graduation date.

**Housing** - Students are responsible for the cost of housing. Some clinical sites may have housing available. Students may check with the Clinical Coordinators or Clinical Program Coordinator for more information.

**Transportation** - While on clinical rotations, students must be prepared to travel throughout Arizona. Any significant loss of time may delay graduation or require an additional weekly schedule to make up the missed time.

**Credentialing** - Students are required to actively participate in the hospital and clinical credentialing process. Students are responsible for completing all of the required credentialing paperwork (e.g., hospital/facility orientation(s), identification information and other requirements) in advance of the rotation. Failure to participate in the credentialing process may lead to a delay in rotation start date, cancellation of the rotation, and/or review of student unprofessional behavior. Should the rotation be delayed, each day the student failed to complete the requirements will result in an unexcused absence.

**Liability insurance** - Northern Arizona University provides full medical liability insurance for the PA student while on an authorized, assigned, and affiliated clinical site and/or preceptor. It is up to the student to make sure that coverage is authorized when attending a clinical site/facility that is not normally associated with the assigned clinical rotation. For example, if the preceptor does an extra shift at an emergency department in a different town and asks the student to go along, the student must ensure that the PA program is informed (Clinical Coordinator) that a different site is being requested so that arrangements with the facility can be made and ensure adequate coverage. In most cases this cannot be accommodated by the PA program. If the program has not been informed of a student's presence at a different facility, the student is most likely not covered by medical liability insurance.

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

Students are responsible for a complex range of physical, mental, academic and professional responsibilities during the clinical phase of education.

## **Physical and mental responsibilities (see also Technical Standards)**

- **Physical:** The ability to stand for long periods of time; have adequate eye-hand coordination and gross and fine motor dexterity to perform history, physical exam, and clinical laboratory procedures; tolerate long and / or unpredictable hours; perform required and relevant invasive and noninvasive procedures; perform at the appropriate skill level as determined by the preceptor/faculty.
- **Mental:** The ability to comprehend, synthesize and retain a large volume of material related to medicine, surgery, and related fields; accept constructive criticism from core and adjunct faculty and clinical preceptors and respond appropriately; tolerate difficult and stressful environments, potential repeated exposure to hazardous substances, including blood borne pathogens and/or difficult, demanding patients.

## **Professional responsibilities**

Attendance and punctuality - The student will arrive early to allow sufficient preparation for all clinical year activities, including clinical rotations, CADs, formative and summative examinations, and capstone and seminar courses.

Students are required to attend all scheduled clinics, rounds, and on-call responsibilities associated with clinical rotations, including on-call, evenings, and weekends. Rotation responsibilities will be determined by the preceptor.

Clinical year students are required to spend an average of 45 hours a week at the clinical site, per 4-week rotation. If the schedule does not meet this minimum, the student must contact the Clinical Coordinators during the first week of the rotation. (A3.01; B1.01)

Clinical Assessment Days (CAD): The student will return to campus several times during the year for continuous and summative assessment, research presentations, and didactic coursework. Students must contact the PA program if they are unable to attend CAD due to illness or other unexpected circumstance. The Clinical Coordinators will facilitate a remediation plan for the student.

Incident reporting - Should a student sustain an injury or potentially harmful exposure at a clinical site, the student must report the incident immediately to the clinical preceptor, complete any clinical site requirements and complete the DPAS Student Incident Report Form found at the end of this handbook. The student is required to contact and submit

the incident report form to the Clinical Coordinators at [paprog@nau.edu](mailto:paprog@nau.edu). The student is responsible for initiating care and obtaining recommended follow-up after the injury or exposure (A3.08b). Injuries which occur at clinical sites and the NAU Phoenix Bioscience Core are not covered by workers compensation insurance unless specifically identified as such in individual affiliation agreements. All costs for evaluation and treatment are the responsibility of the student (A3.08c).

Holidays and vacation time - During the clinical year, the schedule may not allow for holidays or vacation time. Time off should be negotiated with the Clinical Coordinators before attempting to request time off from the preceptor. This may not be granted if the missing shifts would decrease the number of hours available to complete the clinical experiences. The Clinical Coordinators make the final decision for a change in the schedule.

Students are permitted six excused absences per clinical year, at the discretion of the Clinical Coordinators. The Clinical Coordinators will evaluate each student request equitably, and in the context of the clinical rotation, schedule, and student academic and professional performance. Students are required to submit their requests 30 days in advance using the Exxat system.

Absence(s) due to illness - Students must contact both the preceptor and the PA program if they are unable to attend the rotation due to illness or other unexpected circumstance. If the student is absent from one clinical rotation for more than three consecutive days due to illness, they must submit documentation of medical release from a licensed healthcare provider through the Exxat system within 24 hours of return to the clinical rotation. Failure to submit the absence within 24 hours results in unexcused absences and may impact academic progress.

Unexcused absence(s) - All absences from clinical rotations, CADs and clinical year coursework must be requested in advance. Students with 7 absences in the clinical year, consecutive or otherwise, may experience a delay in academic progression. Students will be referred to the APC by the Clinical Coordinators to discuss remediation and/or academic progress. The student may be asked to repeat a full or partial rotation in order to a) meet the minimum requirements outlined by the program, and b) achieve the rotation-specific objectives as outlined in this handbook.

Preceptor absence(s) - Students are required to notify the program if their clinical preceptor has a planned or unexpected absence AND they have not been assigned another preceptor. Failure to notify the program may result in unexcused absence(s).

Students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or clinical preceptors. (A3.03). Students are not permitted to be used as a substitute for clinical or administrative staff at clinical sites. (A3.05)

## **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS**

The PA program is responsible for the following aspects of the educational environment and activities during the clinical phase of the program:

- Secure clinical sites and preceptors in sufficient numbers for program-required clinical practice experiences. (B3.01)
- Establish and provide rotation assignment and placement for all students and for all rotations. (B3.01)
- Provide specific rotation learning outcomes to preceptors and students. (A2.17)
- Provide the preceptor with a Student Evaluation Form to be completed at the end of the rotation. (B4.01)
- Ensure that all students have liability insurance.
- Periodically perform clinical site visits to determine that the locations are effective educational environments for the student. (B4.04)
- Develop and maintain affiliation agreements with all clinical sites. (A1.10)
- Work with the preceptor and site to provide a healthy and safe clinical learning environment. The program will respond quickly in the case of concerns raised regarding any student whose actions directly or indirectly jeopardize the health and safety of patients, faculty, clinical site staff or fellow students. The program retains the right to immediately remove the student from a clinical rotation(s) if such behavior is demonstrated and/or reported. (A3.01, A1.02)
- Provide students with training in HIPAA and OSHA and instruction regarding risk of exposure and post-exposure protocols. (A3.08)
- Require students to evaluate the clinical preceptor and site following every clinical rotation. (B4.01)
- Administer End-of-Rotation examinations. (B4.01)
- Assess students at the end of the rotation. PA faculty are responsible for the final grade. (A2.17, B4.01)

The PA program is committed to developing new relationships with preceptors and clinical institutions. Students who identify new/potential clinical preceptors should provide the Clinical Coordinators with the name of the individual and/or facility, business address, and contact phone number(s). Students are not to contact any

potential preceptor unless they first contact the PA program, identify the intended clinical site and receive permission to do so.

Students may not arrange a rotation where an immediate relative is the identified preceptor or in a position to influence the evaluation and training of a student. Students should disclose any relationship with significant members of the medical or administrative staff if they are proposing to develop a site.

### **PRECEPTOR EXPECTATIONS (A2.17, B4.01)**

The program is grateful for the engagement of our community preceptors in the training and education of PA students. We share with them the following expectations:

- Acquaint the students at the onset of the rotation (orientation) with the practice/site policies and procedures.
- Review the expectations and learning outcomes for the rotation.
- Provide ongoing feedback regarding clinical performance, knowledge base and critical thinking skills.
- Supervise, demonstrate, teach, and observe clinical activities in order to aid in the development of clinical skills and to ensure proper patient care.
- Delegate increasing levels of responsibility for clinical assessment and management as skills develop.
- Participate in the evaluation of clinical skills and medical knowledge base through the following mechanisms: 1) Direct supervision, observation, and teaching in the clinical setting; 2) Direct evaluation of presentations (including both oral and written); 3) Assignment of outside readings and research to promote further learning.
- Participate in dialogue with faculty during site visits to evaluate student progress and to assist the learning process.
- Audit and co-signature of charts to evaluate the ability to write appropriate and complete progress notes, histories, physical examinations, assessments and treatment plans.
- Completion and timely return of the evaluation forms provided by the program reflecting on student knowledge and skills as well as their improvement throughout the rotation.
- To promptly notify the PA program of any circumstances that might interfere with the accomplishment of the above goals or diminish the overall training experience.
- The preceptor should maintain an ethical approach to the care of patients.

## **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING (B4.01)**

End of rotation (EOR) examinations - Students complete seven, 120-question EORs over the course of the clinical year. If a student fails five EOR exams (including first-attempts and retakes), the student will be referred to the APC. After consideration of the circumstances surrounding the failures, the APC will devise a remediation plan that the student must complete prior to being placed on a subsequent rotation. Failure to successfully complete the remediation plan will result in failure of the rotation associated with the most recent EOR exam attempt and may result in dismissal from the PA program. A student who successfully completes the remediation plan and resumes attendance on clinical rotations must successfully pass all subsequent EORs on the first attempt. Failure to do so will result in referral to the APC, failure of the rotation, and will serve as grounds for dismissal from the PA program.

Clinical Activity Days (CAD) - Students return to campus every four weeks during the clinical year. Attendance to all CAD events is required. Activities on these days are factored into the requirements for PHA 689 and PHA 698. Clinical Activity Days (CAD) may include the following types of activities:

- End-of-Rotation (EOR) exams and retesting
- Objective Structured Clinical Encounters (OSCE) assessments
- Independent project presentations
- Case presentations
- Capstone summative exams
- PACKRAT assessment
- Meetings with Faculty Advisor
- Seminars and workshops
- Symposiums
- Skills training and assessments
- Lecture series

## **CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCES**

Clinical Practice Experiences - Students complete eight clinical practice experiences over the course of the clinical year; three 8-week rotations (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics) and five 4-week rotations (Surgery, Women's Health, Mental Health, Emergency Medicine, and an Elective). (B3.07)

- Assignments - The Clinical Coordinators and Clinical Placement Coordinator schedule students for each rotation. There may be changes in rotation assignments

at any time. Students may work unpredictable hours and will work evening and night hours, weekends and holidays. Students should plan for clinical rotation assignments that will involve travel outside the Phoenix metro area. Clinical rotation selection and management are ultimately determined by the Clinical Coordinators.

- Notification - Each student will be sent an email notification that a clinical rotation has been scheduled. This notification will indicate that the information regarding the assignment is now available in the Exxat online system. Once the notification is sent/received, the student will need to address any housing needs/arrangements associated with the rotation immediately. Assignments will not be altered due to lack of housing, distance from home base, or pet arrangements.
- Communication with the site - Students are required to contact the clinical site two weeks in advance of the start of each new clinical rotation (or as soon as the clinical assignment notification arrives if less than two weeks) to confirm the arrival date and time. The PA program recommends that students clarify expectations of pre-reading and/or any orientation that may need to be done.
- Elective experiences - Students will be asked to create a ranked list of preferred elective rotations, based on discipline. The Clinical Coordinators will determine student assignments based on rotation quality, availability, and educational need.

Clinical Site or Health System(s) Dismissal - If a student is asked to leave (or banned from) a clinical rotation or facility and/or rotation site by the facility, preceptor or staff, the student must immediately notify one of the Clinical Coordinators in person or by telephone. The student will be required to meet with the APC to discuss the circumstances surrounding the dismissal.

Dismissal for reasons related to unprofessional conduct will result in disciplinary action and may result in one or more of the following: meet with the APC, assignment of an F grade for the entire rotation, and/or recommendation for dismissal from the PA program.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (A3.15b, B4.03)**

Students are recommended to the NAU Graduate College for graduation when the following criteria have been met:

- Students maintain Good Academic Standing, as defined by the NAU Graduate College
- Students successfully complete all coursework in the didactic and clinical years with a cumulative GPA  $\geq 3.0$ .
- Students successfully pass the written summative examination, delivered at the end of the clinical year, which is based on program graduate competencies (Appendix D).
- Students successfully pass the standardized summative examination, delivered at the end of the clinical year.
- Students adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the NAU Graduate Handbook, the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of the PA Profession, and the Arizona State Statutes and Rules for PAs.

## **GRADUATION**

The PA program curriculum ends when all didactic and clinical coursework is satisfactorily completed. Students have the opportunity to participate in formal commencement exercises for the Graduate College at the Flagstaff Campus in May before completion or in December after completion. Students wishing to attend the Commencement Ceremony in Flagstaff may order their graduation regalia from the NAU Bookstore. A DPAS Completion Ceremony will be held in Phoenix in late July or early August. Students will receive the Certificate of Completion from the PA program and a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from NAU once all grades have been finalized, submitted, and degrees conferred. For complete information about graduation, see: <https://www.nau.edu/gradcol/student-resources/graduation>.



## **Appendix A (A3.12d)**

### **PA Program Curriculum and Schedule**

#### **Orientation**

#### **Didactic Course Sequence**

##### Fall Semester (16 weeks; 19 credit hours)

PHA 500 Human Anatomy (5 credit hours)

PHA 511 Human Physiology (2 credit hours)

PHA 520 Foundations of Clinical Practice I (3 credit hours)

PHA 530 History Taking and Physical Examination (4 credit hours)

PHA 540 Ethics and Professionalism (2 credit hours)

PHA 570 Diagnostic Medicine (3 credit hours)

##### Spring Semester (16 weeks; 20 credit hours)

PHA 512 Human Pathology (3 credit hours)

PHA 550 Pharmacology & Pharmacotherapeutics I (3 credit hours)

PHA 521 Foundations of Clinical Practice II (8 credit hours)

PHA 560 Clinical Decision Making I (3 credit hours)

PHA 580 Clinical Disciplines I (3 credit hours)

##### Summer Semester (12 weeks; 17 credit hours)

PHA 551 Pharmacology & Pharmacotherapeutics II (3 credit hours)

PHA 522 Foundations of Clinical Practice III (6 credit hours)

PHA 561 Clinical Decision Making II (2 credit hours)

PHA 581 Clinical Disciplines II (3 credit hours)

PHA 590 Clinical Procedures and Interventions (3 credit hours)

End Of Didactic Year Assessment (PACKRAT 1)

Clinical Year Orientation

##### Clinical Courses (Clinical Practice Experiences; 44 credit hours)

Family Medicine (8 weeks) (8 credit hours)

Internal Medicine (8 weeks) (8 credit hours)

Pediatrics (8 weeks) (8 credit hours)

Emergency Medicine (4 weeks) (4 credit hours)

Mental Health (4 weeks) (4 credit hours)

Surgery (4 weeks) (4 credit hours)

Women's Health (4 weeks) (4 credit hours)

Elective (4 weeks) (4 credit hours)

Longitudinal courses (3 credit hours)

Capstone (2 credit hours)

Seminar (1 credit hour)

Clinical Year Assessments

End Of Rotation Examinations

Mid-Year Assessment (PACKRAT 2)

Summative assessments

End of Curriculum Examination

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

## **Appendix B (A3.07)**

### Immunization requirements

#### **MMR (Measles/Rubeola, Mumps, & Rubella)**

Documentation of positive IgG titers for Measles/Rubeola, Mumps and Rubella.

\* If any of the titer results are NEGATIVE or EQUIVOCAL, you must repeat the MMR series (2 injections at least 28 days apart) and submit proof.

#### **Hepatitis B**

Documentation of positive/reactive HbsAB titer.

\* If titer results are NEGATIVE or EQUIVOCAL, you must repeat the HepB series (EITHER a 3-dose series, an initial injection followed by a second injection given 1 to 2 months after the first dose and a third injection 4 to 6 months after the first OR the Heplisav-B (Dynavax) 2 dose series) and submit proof.

#### Varicella (Chicken Pox)

Varicella vaccine series (2 injections at least 4 weeks apart) or documentation of positive Varicella IgG titer, History of Varicella disease is not acceptable as proof of immunity.

\* If titer results are NEGATIVE or EQUIVOCAL, you must repeat the 2-shot Varicella series and submit proof.

#### **Tdap**

A one-time adult dose of Tdap (age 19 or older), followed by a Td or Tdap booster every 10 years. Tdap = Tetanus / Diphtheria / Pertussis, Td = Tetanus / Diphtheria

#### **Influenza (flu) – completed during flu season**

Proof of annual influenza (flu) vaccination administered on or before October 1st of each calendar year. The program will accept a receipt of payment for vaccination with name and date clearly shown. Exemption to immunization may be granted for medical contradictions (including disabilities) or religious beliefs. To qualify for such an exemption, a student must complete a declination form. Students who are approved for “Exempted Status” may be required to wear a surgical mask during influenza season while on rotation.

#### **SARS-COV2 (COVID-19)**

We encourage everyone to consider receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and booster as soon as possible. In the clinical year individual sites may require documentation of COVID-19 vaccination to participate in rotations, at which time COVID-19 vaccination information must be uploaded into Exxat.

**Tuberculosis (TB) Matriculation to the program**

Documentation of a negative two-step TB Skin Test. All files must include date placed, time, by whom and results in mm (not negative) date read, time and by whom, also lot number and expiration date. The two-step TB skin test consists of an initial TB skin test and a boosted TB skin test 1-3 weeks later. This will necessitate FOUR separate clinic visits. Ex: place June 7, read June 9, place June 21, read June 23

Positive skin test or positive blood test: TB screening questionnaire required (no chest X-ray required for matriculation)

**Tuberculosis (TB) Clinical Year**

Documentation of negative two-step TB Skin Test started in August so as to be valid for the length of the clinical year. All files must include date placed, time, by whom and results in mm (not negative) date read, time and by whom, also lot number and expiration date. The two-step TB skin test consists of an initial TB skin test and a boosted TB skin test 1-3 weeks later. This will necessitate FOUR separate clinic visits. Ex: July 7, read July 9, place July 21, read July 23

Positive skin test or positive blood test: Documentation of a new annual negative chest X-ray required for clinical year along with new annual Tuberculosis Screening Questionnaire.

Acceptable alternative to TB skin test for both Matriculation & Clinical Year  
Documentation of negative result IGRA blood test (QuantiFERON, T-Spot).

## **Appendix C (A3.08)**

### Universal Precautions

All PA students are required to attend training regarding universal precautions during Orientation and before the start of clinical rotations.

All PA students are expected to follow these guidelines. Despite careful attention to these guidelines, students may occasionally contact blood or other potentially infectious materials.

#### Protocol for Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure:

The procedures for care and treatment after exposure, to infectious or potentially infectious blood and/or body fluid, including definition of financial responsibility:

- The student will be directed to remove soiled clothing and wash the exposed area with soap and water.
- The student will notify the clinical preceptor and the Clinical Coordinators of the PA Program.
- The student will go directly to the affiliate's occupational health, emergency room or urgent care for assessment and initial prophylactic treatment if needed.
- Immediately after assessment, the student will receive a copy of their record relating to the treatment and follow-up recommendations. Copies of test results drawn at the initial assessment will be given to the student when available.
- Following treatment, the student will download and complete the DPAS Student Incident Report Form in Exxat. This form should be forwarded to the Clinical Coordinators via [paprog@nau.edu](mailto:paprog@nau.edu)

#### Effects of Infectious/Environmental Disease or Disability:

Students who contract infectious/environmental disease or disability will be reviewed individually based on the status of their individual cases. Students who need to go on a medical leave of absence will be granted time away until they are cleared by their treating clinician in accordance with the leave of absence policies of NAU. Students with an infectious disease will be reminded of the need for stringent universal precautions while working with patients.

## **Appendix D**

### Graduate Competencies (A3.12)

The program developed the following competencies consistent with the four professional PA organizations (AAPA/PAEA/NCCPA/ARC-PA). Each course syllabus in the clinical year has a list of the competencies specific to that course.

**Competency 1** - Students will relate basic medical science knowledge in the areas of anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology and pharmacotherapies, and genetic and molecular mechanisms of health and disease to patient care.

**Competency 2** - Students will apply clinical medical science knowledge of all organ systems to patient care.

**Competency 3** - Students will establish effective interpersonal and communication skills to exchange information and collaborate with patients, their families, and other health professionals.

**Competency 4** - Students will demonstrate awareness of a variety of health beliefs, values, and expectations in order to provide medical care to patients from diverse populations, with consideration for disability or special care needs, ethnicity/race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, and social determinants of health.

**Competency 5** - Students will be able to apply knowledge of thorough and appropriate evaluation, diagnosis, and management to clinical practice. The student will:

- a. Evaluate, diagnose, and manage patients across the lifespan from initial presentation through ongoing follow-up
- b. Perform a medical interview and elicit a medical history
- c. Perform complete and focused physical examinations
- d. Generate differential diagnoses
- e. Order and interpret diagnostic studies
- f. Develop treatment plans that are inclusive and patient-centered, including acute and chronic care complaints
- g. Diagnose disease, educate patients, and make appropriate referrals
- h. Demonstrate problem-solving and medical decision-making skills

**Competency 6** - Students will demonstrate the ability to provide clinical medical care across the life span to prenatal, infant, children, adolescent, adult, and elderly populations in the areas of:

- a. Preventative care
- b. Emergent care
- c. Acute care
- d. Chronic care and, demonstrate knowledge of specialized care needed, as in the areas of: Rehabilitative care; Palliative care; End-of-life care

**Competency 7** - Students will demonstrate competency in basic technical skills and procedures that are commonly performed in primary care settings. Skills may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Sterile technique
- b. Venipuncture and injection
- c. Wound closure and wound care
- d. Splinting
- e. Clinical breast exam
- f. Pelvic exam/Cervical CA screen
- g. Male genital exam
- h. Rectal exam
- i. Electrocardiogram interpretation

**Competency 8** - Students will use knowledge of social and behavioral sciences, as well as normal and abnormal development across the lifespan to identify, treat, and educate patients about issues related to the following:

- a. Substance use disorders
- b. Human sexuality
- c. Death, dying, and loss
- d. Response to illness, injury, and stress
- e. Violence identification and prevention
- f. Psychiatric/behavioral conditions

**Competency 9** - Students will deliver basic counseling and patient education that is:

- a. Patient-centered
- b. Socially, culturally, and ethnically sensitive
- c. Focused on helping partnering with patients to encourage ability to cope with illness, injury, and stress centered on improving patient adherence to recommended treatment plans
- d. Inclusive of modifying patient behaviors to more healthful patterns

**Competency 10** - During supervised clinical practice experiences, students will deliver medical care across the life span (to include infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly) to address:

- a. Preventative care
- b. Emergent, acute, and chronic conditions
- c. Women's health conditions, including prenatal and gynecologic care
- d. Surgical care (including pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care)
- e. Behavioral and mental health conditions

**Competency 11** - During supervised clinical practice experiences, students will deliver medical care in the following settings:

- a. Outpatient
- b. Emergency department
- c. Inpatient
- d. Operating room

**Competency 12** - During supervised clinical practice experiences, students will deliver medical care in the following disciplines:

- a. Family medicine
- b. Emergency medicine
- c. Internal medicine
- d. Surgery
- e. Pediatrics
- f. Women's health
- g. Behavioral and mental health

**Competency 13** - Students will demonstrate the ability to search, interpret, and evaluate the medical literature to benefit patient care, including the following:

- a. Maintain a critical, current, and operational knowledge of new medical findings required for the prevention and treatment of disease
- b. Frame research questions
- c. Types of sampling method
- d. Interpretation of basic biostatistical methods
- e. Account for the limits of medical research
- f. Proficient use of medical databases to access medical literature

**Competency 14** - Students will apply principles of patient safety, quality improvement, prevention of medical errors, and risk management to patient care.



**Competency 15** - Students will apply the principles of PA professional practice to patient care, including health care delivery systems and health policy. Students will understand:

- a. Mechanisms of PA licensure, certification, credentialing, and legal regulations
- b. Medical reimbursement, medical coding, and billing
- c. Proper documentation of care
- d. Health care delivery systems and health policy
- e. Principles and practice of medical ethics
- f. Principles of intellectual honesty, academic integrity and professional conduct

**Competency 16** - Students will be able to articulate PA professional issues, including:

- a. The role of the PA profession
- b. The historical developments and current trends
- c. The physician-PA team relationship and the relationship with other health care providers
- d. Policy issues that affect PA practice
- e. PA professional organizations

**Competency 17** - Students will apply basic public health concepts as they relate to the role of the practicing PA including:

- a. Foundational behavioral concepts of the public health
- b. The role of health care providers in the prevention of disease and the maintenance of population health
- c. Disease surveillance, reporting, and intervention
- d. Patient advocacy

**Competency 18** - Students will demonstrate knowledge of the team-based approach to patient-centered care and work collaboratively in interprofessional patient-centered teams.

**Competency 19** - Students will demonstrate knowledge of techniques for improving provider personal wellness, and the prevention of:

- a. Impairment
- b. Burnout

## Appendix E

### Professionalism self-assessment

Professionalism is considered a skill that is developed over time with intention, self-awareness, and the integration of feedback from academic and clinical instructors and peers. The purpose of this rubric is to provide students with the skills that define professionalism, the associated behaviors for each skill that meet or exceed program expectations, as well as behaviors that prevent students from meeting skill expectations.

<b>Classroom and Clinical Site Professional Behaviors Assessment Rubric*</b>			
Professional Behavior	Level 1 (Does not meet expectations)	Level 2 (Meets expectations)	Level 3 (Exceeds Expectations)
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>			
Cooperates and collaborates with classmates	Does not engage in conversation or only responds to prompts by others	Engages in conversation and works jointly with others	Engages all members of a group in conversation; leads others to reach a common goal
Maintains a teachable attitude	Does not demonstrate willingness to learn as evidenced by not asking/responding to prompts	Demonstrates willingness to learn by asking questions and responding to prompts in a receptive manner	Demonstrates willingness to learn by asking/responding to prompts, engaging other classmates in learning, and approaching classroom learning experiences positively; seeks suggestions for improvement
Respects boundaries with faculty, staff and classmates	Displays harassing or interrupting behaviors toward faculty or peers (this may be perceived through voice tone, facial expression, written communication, or body language)	Displays respectful and attentive behaviors toward faculty, staff and peers	Displays respectful and attentive behaviors toward faculty and peers; supports and encourages positive group behaviors
Shows compassion toward faculty, staff, classmates, and patients	Demonstrates insensitivity toward others, as evidenced by verbal and/or nonverbal actions	Is sensitive toward others	Is sensitive toward others and offers assistance in taking additional responsibility

Exhibits integrity and responsibility in all interactions	Does not fulfill or struggles to fulfill assigned duties/roles within group or individual activities; is not forthcoming and timely when expectations for duties cannot be met	Fulfills assigned duties/roles within group and individual activities; is forthcoming and timely when expectations for duties cannot be met	Fulfills assigned duties/roles within group and individual activities in a timely manner; acknowledges full responsibility for duties
Demonstrates commitment to uphold ethical principles	Demonstrates behaviors that are inconsistent or incongruent with AAPA ethical standards; or there are Repeated instances of unethical behavior, even after feedback	Aware of AAPA ethical standards; may need to be reminded of rules	Exemplary ethics; conscientious of ethical practices and holds others accountable also
<b>Verbal Communication</b>			
Gives and receives constructive feedback	Does not offer constructive feedback to others in a positive manner; is unreceptive or argumentative about feedback	Offers constructive feedback to others in a positive manner; is receptive to feedback and seeks feedback	Offers constructive feedback to others in a positive manner; readily requests, receives feedback from instructors and peers
Takes into consideration the dignity, diversity of culture, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation of others	Negatively highlights an individual's diversity in classroom scenario or other situations by using degrading language or behavior	Respects an individual's diversity in classroom scenarios and situations by phrasing comments or feedback in a tactful manner	Respects an individual's diversity in classroom scenarios and situations by phrasing comments or feedback in a tactful manner; promotes how diversity is taken into consideration for providing patient care or in managing other interactions

Uses appropriate voice, professional vocabulary and language	Speaks inaudibly, rudely or sarcastically; language choices may be limited, frequently uses slang or jargon, including many interjections; does not practice use of professional vocabulary or consistently mispronounces professional terms	Speaks with clear focus and effectively utilizes professional vocabulary; uses interjections in limited and appropriate settings	Speaks with clear focus and proper style, using appropriate voice and professional vocabulary and language; uses no interjections
<b>Non-verbal Communication</b>			
Elicits relevant information using focused listening skills	Does not listen to others' perspectives or does not allow others to finish their input	Listens to others' perspectives and allows others to finish their input	Solicits and listens to others' perspectives, allows others to finish their input; is able to summarize relevant key points
Communicates using appropriate nonverbal skills, including eye contact and body language	Uses little or no eye contact; uses no nonverbal listening responses, and displays inappropriate body language during class sessions; inconsistent in attitudes, including disinterest, moodiness or melodramatic behaviors	Maintains eye contact and uses reinforcing nonverbal listening and appropriate body language	Maintains eye contact, uses appropriate body language; uses reinforcing nonverbal listening responses; has an engaged, eager attitude; is an excellent representative of self, department and profession
Exhibits an understanding and respect for the contributions of others	Does not clearly display attention and does not use body language that signifies listening to others when they are presenting or sharing information; expresses disregard for others' contributions or does not seek to gain understanding	Clearly displays eye contact and other nonverbal signs of attention and listens to others when they are presenting or sharing information; engages to express respect for others' contributions	Clearly displays eye contact and other nonverbal signs of attention and listens to others when they are presenting or sharing information; responds to acknowledge and respect contributions of others; encourages the same behaviors in others; encourages participation of others and fosters environment of teamwork

Class Preparation			
Prepares assigned readings and activities prior to class	Demonstrates lack of preparation for class; demonstrates limited use of resources; is unable to answer questions or relate readings/assignments to class discussions; has not completed assigned tasks or has given minimal attention to the task	Demonstrates preparedness by relating readings/assignments to class discussions; may not know answers, but is able to express a thought or opinion; has completed assigned tasks with sufficient detail	Demonstrates preparedness by relating readings/assignments to class discussions; usually knows answers, and is able to demonstrate critical thinking through expression of thought or opinion; has completed assigned tasks thoroughly
Utilizes resources, credits sources and admits errors in presenting information	Does not use credible resources or credit sources of evidence; cannot admit error or incorrect information	Uses credible resources, including some not directly provided by the instructor; credits sources of evidence; admits errors and incorrect information and corrects them	Uses credible resources, and consistently seeks additional resources; credits sources of evidence; does not display errors and does not cite incorrect information
Demonstrates knowledge in discussing material	Does not convey understanding of material	Summarizes material	Summarizes material, and relates it to past or potential professional experiences;
Analyzes, explains and discusses physical therapy knowledge as it applies to effective patient care	Does not apply facts to realistic concepts; does not summarize relevant material to correctly convey understanding	Applies facts to realistic concepts; summarizes relevant material in a correct, explanatory manner	Applies facts to realistic concepts; summarizes material in correct explanatory manner; explains integrated concepts in a succinct manner
Initiative	Does not demonstrate initiative; requires direction to seek out and use resources	Takes own initiative, requiring little direction to refer to or use resources	Takes initiative to demonstrate use of resources and to seek out further guidance as needed

<b>Self-Assessment</b>			
Monitors leading or allowing others to lead a discussion	Does not contribute to collaborations, taking advantage of collaborators; alternatively, dominates discussions without giving others a chance to lead	Makes contributions when interested in a topic or when convenient	Brings skilled contributions to a discussion and takes turns leading or allowing others to lead a discussion
Demonstrates self-reflection	Displaces responsibility; lack of self-awareness of strengths/weakness; or recognizes them but is resistant to change	Can articulate strengths/weaknesses , but may need help to address them	Independently and actively improves weaknesses and incorporates strengths

## **PA Program Faculty and Staff Contact List**

Alison Essary, PA-C, MHPE, DHSc  
Professor and Chair, Department of PA Studies, Director of the PA Program  
[Alison.Essary@nau.edu](mailto:Alison.Essary@nau.edu)

Greg Mayer, MD  
Medical Director - Didactic Year  
[Gregory.K.Mayer@asu.edu](mailto:Gregory.K.Mayer@asu.edu)

Jonathan Cartsonis, MD  
Medical Director - Clinical Year  
[jcartsonis@arizona.edu](mailto:jcartsonis@arizona.edu)

Richard Dehn, MPA, PA-C  
Founding Chair and Director, Professor, College of Health and Human Services,  
Department of Physician Assistant Studies and Professor of Practice, Department of  
Biomedical Informatics, University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix  
[Richard.Dehn@nau.edu](mailto:Richard.Dehn@nau.edu)

Kirsten Bonnin, PA-C, MPAS, DMSc  
Clinical Professor  
[Kirsten.Bonnin@nau.edu](mailto:Kirsten.Bonnin@nau.edu)

Mary Lou Brubaker, PharmD, PA-C, FASHP  
Associate Clinical Professor  
[Mary.Brubaker@nau.edu](mailto:Mary.Brubaker@nau.edu)

Tiffany Cooke, MSHS, PA-C, RD  
Assistant Clinical Professor  
[tiffany.cooke@nau.edu](mailto:tiffany.cooke@nau.edu)

Bettie Coplan, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Director of the Rural Health Professions Program  
[bettie.coplan@nau.edu](mailto:bettie.coplan@nau.edu)

Nicole Ferschke, MMS, MBS, PA-C  
Assistant Clinical Professor and Clinical Coordinator  
Assistant Director, Rural Health Professions Program  
[nicole.ferschke@nau.edu](mailto:nicole.ferschke@nau.edu)

Nicholas Goodman, MPAS, PA-C  
Assistant Clinical Professor  
[nicholas.goodman@nau.edu](mailto:nicholas.goodman@nau.edu)

Jacob E. Gubler, MMS, PA-C  
Assistant Clinical Professor and Director of Clinical Education  
Assistant Director, Rural Health Professions Program  
[jacob.gubler@nau.edu](mailto:jacob.gubler@nau.edu)

Joseph Harrison, MSPAS, PA-C  
Assistant Clinical Professor and Clinical Coordinator  
[Joseph.Harrison@nau.edu](mailto:Joseph.Harrison@nau.edu)

Ian McLeod, MS, MEd, PA-C, ATC  
Associate Clinical Professor and Director of Didactic Education  
[ian.mcleod@nau.edu](mailto:ian.mcleod@nau.edu)

Zac Baker, M.Ed (he, him)  
Academic Success Coordinator  
[zachary.baker@nau.edu](mailto:zachary.baker@nau.edu)  
602-827-2669

Katherine Look  
Program Operations Manager  
[Kay.Look@nau.edu](mailto:Kay.Look@nau.edu)  
or [paprogram@nau.edu](mailto:paprogram@nau.edu)

Molly Minko  
Administrative Services Assistant, Senior  
[Molly.Minko@nau.edu](mailto:Molly.Minko@nau.edu)

Sarah Uminski  
Academic Program Coordinator, Int.  
[Sarah.Uminski@nau.edu](mailto:Sarah.Uminski@nau.edu)

### **Other Contacts**

NAU Graduate College - [Graduate@nau.edu](mailto:Graduate@nau.edu) 928-523-4348  
NAU Librarian – Phoenix Biomedical Core [Catherine.Lockmiller@nau.edu](mailto:Catherine.Lockmiller@nau.edu)  
Information Technology Services - 928-523-3335  
Financial aid - Vita Allison, Financial Aid Advisor, Graduate Programs  
[Vita.Allison@nau.edu](mailto:Vita.Allison@nau.edu) 928-523-9081 nau.edu/osfa  
Campus Security & Car Escort - 602-827-2368  
Police, Fire, and Medical Emergency: Dial 911