

**THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**



**SCHOOL OF
COMMUNITY
MEDICINE®**

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

**ACADEMIC
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
HANDBOOK**

Class of 2026

**4502 East 41st Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135-2512**

**University of Oklahoma-Tulsa
College of Medicine
School of Community Medicine**

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Accreditation

At its **March 2024** meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the **University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine PA Program** sponsored by **University of Oklahoma** on **Accreditation-Probation** status until its next review in **March 2026**.

Probation accreditation is a temporary accreditation status initially of not less than two years. However, that period may be extended by the ARC-PA for up to an additional two years if the ARC-PA finds that the program is making substantial progress toward meeting all applicable standards but requires additional time to come into full compliance. Probation accreditation status is granted, at the sole discretion of the ARC-PA, when a program holding an accreditation status of Accreditation - Provisional or Accreditation - Continued does not, in the judgment of the ARC-PA, meet the *Standards* or when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, a program that fails to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <https://www.arc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Accreditation-History-U-of-OK-Tulsa-105.pdf>.

The University of Oklahoma is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission/A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA), 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602; 312/263-0456.

2. Vision Statement

The OU School of Community Medicine, Tulsa, Physician Assistant Program will be nationally respected and recognized as an innovative leader in Physician Assistant education. Our faculty will continue to be leaders in our profession, as well as in the role of educators, clinicians, and committee participants. This will be accomplished by the continued acquisition of knowledge

and utilization of effective teaching methods. Our faculty will educate a diverse student body who will provide compassionate and comprehensive medical care with a community focus.

The program will continue to seek out applicants and foster in our students attributes that will enhance their role as effective health care professionals. Essential core attributes include integrity, compassion, respect, moral principles, community service, and an aspiration for lifelong learning.

Our students, graduates, and faculty will serve in key leadership positions on a local, state, and national level, to steer the future of the physician assistant profession, while striving to continue personal and professional development.

Physicians and health care delivery teams will seek our graduates. Through these partnerships, comprehensive patient care will be accessible for all Oklahomans, including vulnerable populations.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Physician Assistant Program at the University of Oklahoma, School of Community Medicine, Tulsa, is to train physician assistants to provide quality health care to the citizens of Oklahoma with an emphasis on serving diverse and underserved communities.

3. Program Goals

The goals of the program are:

1. To provide a quality education that enables students to become competent, compassionate health care providers. We seek to educate our students in the basic medical sciences as well as the clinical and behavioral sciences in order to prepare them for the practice of medicine both today and in the future. While training physician assistants (PAs) to go into areas of primary care medicine will be our fundamental focus, we are also cognizant that PAs are increasingly serving patients in both the surgical and specialty areas of medicine.
2. To expose students to the practice of primary care medicine in a variety of underserved locations during their didactic and clinical training. The OU-Tulsa PA Program desires that a significant portion of their graduates will choose to work in these communities following graduation.
3. To encourage the students, graduates, and faculty to participate in service and leadership roles within the University, the profession, and the broader community. With the strong support of the college and university administration, the OU-Tulsa PA Program is committed to fostering the growth and development of each individual student and faculty member to their greatest potential.

4. Physician Assistant Role

PAs are nationally certified and state-licensed medical professionals who practice medicine on healthcare teams with physicians and other providers. Within the physician/PA relationship, PAs exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive, and health maintenance services. The clinical role of the PA includes primary and specialty care in medicine and surgical practice settings. PA practice is centered on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activity. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and can write medical orders.

The role of PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills, and the capacity to react to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. An attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patients' welfare are essential attributes.

The specific tasks performed by an individual PA cannot be delineated precisely because of variations in practice requirements mandated by geographic, political, economic, and social factors. At a minimum, however, PAs are educated in those areas of basic medical science, clinical disciplines, and specific problem solving.

PA practice is characterized by clinical knowledge and skills in areas traditionally defined by family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, psychiatry/behavioral medicine and emergency medicine.

PAs practice in ambulatory, emergency and long-term clinical settings. PAs provide health care services to diverse patient populations of all ages with a range of acute and chronic medical and surgical conditions. They need knowledge and skills which allow them to function effectively in an ever-changing health care environment.

Services performed by PAs include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Evaluation: eliciting a detailed and accurate history, performing an appropriate physical examination, ordering appropriate diagnostic studies, delineating problems, developing management plans, and recording and presenting data.
2. Diagnostics: ordering, performing and/or interpreting diagnostic studies to identify and follow pathophysiologic processes.
3. Monitoring: implementing patient management plans, recording progress notes and participating in the process of the continuity of care.
4. Therapeutics: performing therapeutic procedures and managing or assisting in the management of medical and surgical conditions, which may include assisting in the conduct of operations and taking initiative in performing evaluations and therapeutic procedures for life-threatening circumstances.
5. Patient Counseling: counseling patients regarding issues of health care management to include compliance with prescribed therapeutic regimens, normal growth and development, family planning and emotional problems of daily living.

6. Referral: facilitating the referral of patients to other health care providers or agencies as appropriate.

5. Competencies of the Physician Assistant Graduate

The following Educational Competencies are in alignment with the Educational Program Objectives of the College of Medicine, School of Community Medicine. Curriculum development and delivery are guided by these competencies.

Educational Competencies of the PA Program The University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine

The following competencies guide the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the School of Community Medicine PA Program. Students are expected to demonstrate competency in each of these areas prior to graduation.

1. Medical Knowledge	2. Patient Care	3. Communication	4. Professionalism	5. Practice-Based Learning	6. Systems-Based Practice
<p>Students will demonstrate knowledge of the...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Basic scientific principles fundamental to the practice of medicine b. Normal structure and function of organ systems c. Pathogenesis and manifestations of clinical disorders d. Utility, mechanisms of action, and adverse effects of commonly used drugs e. Physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral aspects of human development 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Elicit a medical history and perform a physical examination b. Interpret common diagnostic and screening tests c. Create, prioritize, and justify a differential diagnosis d. Evaluate and manage common clinical conditions e. Perform general procedures of a physician assistant f. Apply principles of health promotion and disease prevention to patient care g. Describe and address common societal problems adversely affecting health in Oklahoma h. Provide general care to diverse patient populations 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use effective listening, observational, and communication techniques with patients and families b. Deliver clear and accurate oral presentations using standard formats tailored to the needs of the listener c. Provide accurate and context-specific documentation of clinical encounters in written and electronic formats 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrate altruism, honesty, compassion, and responsiveness to patient needs b. Demonstrate integrity, respect, reliability, and accountability in professional endeavors c. Demonstrate commitment to ethical principles by respecting patient autonomy and seeking the patient's best interest d. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity, recognize personal and systemic healthcare biases, identify demographic influences on health care quality and outcomes, and suggest strategies to reduce health disparities 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use biostatistics and the scientific method, describe principles of clinical and translational research, appraise scientific studies, and engage in evidence-based clinical practice b. Identify and address personal strengths and weaknesses, respond appropriately to feedback, and seek help and advice when needed c. Engage in self-directed learning as a foundation of life-long learning 	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrate the unique and complementary abilities of other healthcare professionals and collaborate as a member of an interprofessional team b. Explain the principles of health systems science and contribute to a culture that promotes patient safety <p style="text-align: center;">Community Medicine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Describe and apply the fundamental principles of community medicine



School of Community Medicine Objectives Under PA Competency 6C

Students will be able to describe and apply the fundamental principles of community medicine

SCM A: Describe the characteristics of community	SCM B: Identify the principal determinants of population health	SCM C: Asses the health status, needs, and resources of a community	SCM D: Use community engagement to promote population health	SCM E: Use principles of evidence-based practice to promote population health	SCM F: Apply principles of quality improvement to promote population health	SCM G: Apply principles of population health to daily practice
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define community 2. Discuss the role of community in health 3. Define a meaningful population for health improvement purposes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe population-level determinants of health 2. Discuss how these factors influence health status and health care delivery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate available statistics to identify health problems or areas of concerns 2. Identify existing community-based assets and resources to improve population health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refer individual patients to resources that can assist in meeting their health needs 2. Participate in community engagement to understand community needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the literature applicable to problems identified among patients and populations 2. Apply the scientific literature to patient care taking into account patient values, resources, and preferences 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilize patient data and a quality improvement model to improve the health of a patient population 2. Describe the role of evaluation in program improvement and advocacy 3. Describe how quality improvement principles can be applied to improving team functioning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how social determinants of health impact an individual's health 2. Describe how inter-professional collaborations can help meet individual patient's needs and affect population health 3. Apply knowledge of social determinants of health in treatment planning and delivery

6. Attendance and Participation

The Physician Assistant Program is responsible for the professional development of each of its adult learner students. The program considers its students to be self-directed learners seeking to cultivate professionalism. A professional has the discipline and intellectual curiosity to seek out every opportunity to learn and advance. It is also the faculty's responsibility to determine each student's preparedness to enter clinical practice.

Program accreditation standards require careful monitoring of student performance and progress in achieving learning outcomes. Programs must assure ARC-PA that students are receiving the education that has been outlined and approved.

It is expected that students are available for program lectures and activities 8am-5pm Monday through Friday. Due to the availability of guest lecturers, course schedules are subject to change to accommodate their schedule.

*The PA Program policy is that students are **required** to punctually attend and participate fully in all program-sponsored courses and events. PA Course Directors will intermittently monitor and assess attendance. Attendance is a demonstration of professionalism and is a criterion used for recommendation for promotion to the clinical year and graduation. It is required that students observe the following policy:*

Absences in the Didactic Portion of the PA Program

An absence is any instance when a student is not present at an activity. Students should not assume they are allowed any absences at their discretion or for their personal convenience. All requests for excused absences must be made in writing to the appropriate individuals as specified below. All anticipated absences must be requested in advance. A limited number of reasons will justify excused absences. These include, but are not limited to:

- An illness, personal emergency, or family tragedy
- Representation in a leadership capacity at regional or national professional meetings.
- Access to health services and counseling. Students may be excused to attend necessary health care and counseling sessions. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule appointments outside of class activities to avoid class conflicts.
- During the preclinical phase any request by a student for an anticipated absence from a required session must be addressed directly to the PA Program Director and the applicable Course Director(s).
- All unanticipated absences due to illness, accident, or other unexpected events **must** be reported to the program as soon as possible. Please report via email to our lead administrative support specialist (Crystal-Peterson@ouhsc.edu) **and** to the appropriate course/module director.
- Clinical: All absences during the clinical phase must be submitted in Hippocrates.

Consequences of Absences

In all cases, the student is responsible for the material missed while absent. At the discretion of the Course/Module Director, the student may be required to provide documentation of the reason for the absence and may be required to complete supplementary assignments to make up for missed activities, but the Course/Module Director is not required to provide repeat or make-up opportunities for missed assignments.

An unexcused absence or failure to report an absence as described above is considered unprofessional behavior and may be dealt with under the appropriate OUHSC policy regarding student professional behavior. A review of professionalism for each student, including absences and tardies, will be completed by the Student Progress Committee following each semester in the program.

Student absences that are considered potentially excessive will result in an automatic review by the Tulsa Physician Assistant Student Progress Committee.

Special Circumstances: Examinations and Clinical Skills Performance

Due to the difficulty of rescheduling examinations and clinical skills evaluations, permission to be excused must be obtained in writing in advance from the Program Director and is limited to reasons of health, personal emergency or presentations at national professional meeting. Although requests will be considered on an individual basis, employment interviews, family events, or personal travel are not considered reasons for missing an examination.

Faculty may not impose a point limitation or grade penalty on examinations for which a student has obtained an excused absence. However, faculty may administer an alternative examination.

Any rescheduled examination will be given on a date and time determined by the Course Director. A student with an unapproved absence from any exam will not receive credit.

7. Faculty Advisor Program

The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa PA Program assigns a faculty advisor to students in each entering class. The faculty advisor assists with academic and professional development. The faculty members commit their time and effort to the success of this advisor program, however, it is the student who determines the full amount of interaction.

PA Program faculty advisors act as liaisons between the students and other faculty. Their responsibilities include:

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

8. Professionalism Policies

At the very core of medicine are the principles of altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honor, integrity, and respect for others. The OU School of Community Medicine clings to and defends these principles and expects the same of its students. The Students' Rights and Responsibilities policy forms the framework for the academic integrity and professionalism code for the School of Community Medicine and the PA Program. Detailed policies can be found in the Appendix of this document.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

This policy states that, "As a student at the University of Oklahoma School Of Community Medicine, I understand that it is a great privilege to study medicine. Over the course of my training, I will assume responsibility for the health and well-being of others. This undertaking requires that I uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior. Accordingly, I have adopted the following statement of principles to guide me throughout my academic, clinical, and research work. I will strive to uphold both the spirit and the letter of this code in my years at the School of Community Medicine and throughout my medical career."

This policy addresses the following:

- Honesty
- Confidentiality
- Respect for Others
- Responsibility
- Student Expectations of Faculty, Residents, and Fellows

Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy

Physician Assistant students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. Professionalism is a core Educational Competency of the Physician Assistant Program.

The OUHSC has established the Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy and adopted procedures for addressing standards of ethical and professional behavior for OUHSC students. Physician Assistant students should familiarize themselves with that policy. It may be found in the OUHSC Faculty Handbook 4.20 and Appendix C, as well as the Appendix of this handbook:

<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>

Concerns regarding a student failing to meet the expected standards of ethical and professional conduct will be brought before the Tulsa PA Student Progress Committee for further evaluation. Recommendations of the committee may include probation, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the nature of the behavior.

Guidelines for the Teacher-Learner Relationship (See also PA Student Mistreatment Policy):

This policy describes the standards of conduct between students (including OU SCM PA students) and those individuals with whom students interact during their PA education program.

The policy defines:

- The principles of a positive learning environment
- The responsibilities of teachers
- The responsibilities of learners (including the expected professionalism attributes)
- Behaviors that impair education and erode the ideal teacher-learner relationship
- The definition of student mistreatment

PA Student Mistreatment Policy (See also Guidelines for the Teacher-Learner Relationship Policy)

This policy defines the policy and procedure for reporting student mistreatment. It applies to OU students and visiting students. See pg. 34 in the Appendix.

The definition of mistreatment may be found in the Guidelines for the Teacher-Learner Relationship Policy. See pg. 29 in the Appendix.

NOTE: Issues related to Sexual Harassment/Assault (Appendix H), Consensual Sexual Relations (Appendix I), or related to Racial or Ethnic Harassment (Appendix J) are specifically addressed in the Health Sciences Center Faculty Handbook (<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>) and are to be reported to the University Office of

Equal Opportunity, Room 113 of the Service Center Building, 405-271-2110. They are not explicitly incorporated into this policy.

Professional Conduct Expectations

It is expected that students will conduct their behavior in the manner of a health care professional. Program policy requires faculty to evaluate students in their professional deportment and to use that evaluation when recommending students for advancement. Professional behavior includes an assessment of appearance, speech, attitude, and conduct.

The Program also has an important obligation to maintain a positive rapport with clerkship sites, preceptors, visiting physicians and other health care professionals who make an essential contribution to the curriculum of the Program. These relationships are vital to the ongoing success and development of the Program and the support of the clinical rotation experiences. The Program will not allow individuals to jeopardize these relationships by displaying unprofessional and discourteous behaviors. Prompt attendance and respectful communication at all related Program activities are a minimum demonstration of this commitment. Attendance and preparation for all seminars, small group discussions, clerkships, and any other activities designated by the Program faculty are expected.

Professional conduct includes but is not limited to punctuality, regular attendance, staying in class until assigned breaks, not leaving class for the day until dismissed, keeping cell phones turned off, limiting the use of technology to class-related activity, using a respectful tone with lecturers and classmates, expressing a pleasant and positive attitude, and posing in-class questions that relate to the current lecture topic and remain pertinent to the level of information required for the performance of a physician assistant.

Cell phones: Students should turn off cell phones when they enter the classroom and refrain from sending and receiving calls and text messages while in the classroom. If a student has a legitimate reason to remain reachable by cell phone (**example:** a parent who needs to be contacted about a child), the student must ask for the instructor's permission (in advance) to have the cell phone on during class. It is reasonable that the instructor would agree to such a request.

Students must realize that they are viewed by the public as representatives of the medical profession. Therefore, when contact with the public is anticipated students should dress appropriately. In didactic settings in which patients are to be present, a clinical jacket and nametag must be worn. Denim jeans, shorts, T-shirts, hats and exercise clothing are unacceptable during any patient interaction, including interactions with simulated patients.

Because training in ethical and professional behavior is integral to the education of OUHSC students, violations of these policies will be considered as academic issues. Failure to meet ethical and professional behavior standards will result in action up to, and possibly including dismissal, and may jeopardize advancement and graduation.

9. Academic Misconduct Code

The hallmark for all physician assistant students is professional and academic integrity. The administration and faculty adhere to these standards, and we believe it is our obligation and responsibility to impart these values to you as emerging professionals. In this regard, the College enforces the University policies for Academic Misconduct, and we remind you that you are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the requirements of the OUHSC Academic Misconduct Code, found at:

<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>

Academic misconduct includes any act that improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement, including but not limited to:

1. Cheating: The use of unauthorized material, methods, or information in any academic exercise, including improper collaboration.
2. Plagiarism: The representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own.
3. Fabrication: The falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
4. Fraud: The falsification, forgery, or misrepresentation of academic or clinical work, including the resubmission of work performed for one class for credit in another class without informed permission.
5. Destruction, misappropriation, or unauthorized possession of University property or the property of another.
6. Bribery or intimidation.
7. Assisting others in acts prescribed by this Code.
8. Attempting to engage in such acts.

Notification:

Following initial review by the PA Student Progress Committee, suspected instances of academic misconduct are to be communicated to the Dean in writing and should include a brief description of the evidence. Notification shall be made within ten University business days after discovery of the incident.

Upon notification, the Dean shall initiate academic misconduct procedures as required by University policy.

- The accused shall be informed in writing.
- The Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs is informed in writing.
- The accused must contact the Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs within five University business days after being notified of the alleged misconduct and schedule a meeting to discuss the matter.
- If the accused denies the charges, the student must submit a written request to the Vice-Provost within five days requesting a formal academic misconduct hearing. A Board, consisting of faculty and peer members, will conduct a hearing and submit its findings to the Dean and Vice-Provost.

10. Examination Decorum

Students are expected to always maintain decorum and demeanor that are consistent with accepted academic and professional standards during examinations. Upon entry into the examination site, the student must turn off all phones and other electronic devices and place them in the front of the room with books, study aids, food, drink, coats and personal possessions. No talking is allowed once an examination starts.

Hats/caps and sunglasses cannot be worn during any examination. Any student wearing a hat or sunglasses will be asked to remove it. Failure to comply with this or any other reasonable request from a proctor will result in the immediate dismissal of the student from the examination. In such instances, the student will receive a zero for the examination.

Examinations will begin promptly at their scheduled time. It is recommended to arrive 15 minutes early to allow for necessary testing preparations.

For PA program course examinations, students may be given assigned seating at the discretion of the faculty.

Any student engaged in academic misconduct during an examination is subject to the OUHSC Academic Misconduct Policy.

11. Examination Procedures

1. No questions will be answered after an examination begins. Students may write on the provided sheet of paper and direct this commentary to the course coordinator for review.
2. Students will not be allowed to leave an examination room for 15 minutes after an examination begins and no student will be granted access to an examination room after the first student leaves. **Restroom breaks will be permitted, if necessary, but are generally discouraged. A proctor is required to escort the student.**
3. The course coordinator and applicable faculty will review the performance on each examination question as well as the overall results of the examination. Grades will not be posted until all students have completed the Qualtrics course/module evaluation.
4. Examination questions will only be reviewed with individual students at the discretion and invitation of the course coordinator, such as when a student fails to achieve a passing score on the examination.

12. Grading

The academic standards of the University are expressed in terms of grades that are worth points. Each semester hour of credit for each letter grade carries the number of quality points indicated:

A = 4 points 90-100%

B = 3 points 80-89%

C = 2 points 70-79%

D = 1 point 60-69%

F = 0 points below 60%

Physician Assistant education is competency based. This means that students must achieve an acceptable final grade in each course. Final course scores are rounded up to the next whole percentage. For example, a final score of 89.5% would round to a 90%, with an A grade placed on the transcript.

A final grade of “C” in any Physician Assistant-designated course is the lowest acceptable grade for progression in the PA program. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 while enrolled in the program. Anything below 70% - i.e., D or F - is considered a failure of the course. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded courses are not used in the calculation of a student’s GPA, however, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) for a course is considered a course failure.

Physician Assistant Didactic Courses: In order to receive a passing grade in any course, it is necessary for a student to demonstrate competency by scoring 70% or greater for the entire course. Final course scores of 69.5% and above are rounded to a 70%. A final course score of 69.4% and below results in failure of the course.

13. Grade Appeal Policy

A student may appeal an academic evaluation if the student has reason to believe that the evaluation was based on a mathematical error, capricious evaluation by faculty, or by arbitrary actions of the faculty.

In general, students must appeal an academic evaluation (either subjective or objective) directly to the Course Director. If unsuccessful in resolving differences with the Course Director, the student must consult with the Program Director. Only after a student has notified the Course Director of a dispute and after an unsuccessful attempt to resolve differences with the PA Program Director can the student request a hearing before an Academic Appeals Board. Academic Appeals must be made in accordance with University policy, including the University’s Academic Appeals Process, which may be found in the Faculty Handbook (4.16) at:

<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>

14. Student Progress Committee (SPC)

- The Student Progress Committee (SPC) consists of all full-time and part-time Physician Assistant faculty members as well as adjunct faculty members and representatives of supporting campus resources when appropriate as determined by the Chair. The Chair of the SPC is the PA Program Director or their designee.
- The SPC reviews the academic achievement and professionalism of students at the completion of each semester in the program. Review includes term and cumulative GPA, professional behaviors, absences/tardies, and timely completion of course evaluations.
- Upon entry into the Physician Assistant program, each student is assigned to a faculty

advisor. Students are expected to meet with the appropriate course instructor or faculty advisor in the event of any failing grade on a course examination, a failing final course grade, or in the event of unprofessional conduct.

- The Chair will obtain the name, grades and GPA of the student in academic difficulty or professional conflict for review by the SPC committee.
- After reviewing the student's academic or professionalism records, the SPC will recommend actions based upon the program's policy and procedure guidelines and the professional judgment of the faculty. The SPC may recommend any of the following courses of action for a student: remediation, probation, suspension, deceleration, psychological and educational assessment and evaluation, dismissal from the program, or no action.
- All recommendations of the SPC shall be in writing and made available to the student within 5 days of the SPC meeting. The SPC monitors the student's progress and recommends removal from probation to the Program Director when the conditions of probation have been met.

15. Academic Standards and Progression

The Student Progress Committee oversees the academic and professional progression of each student matriculated into the PA Program.

The following standards are required of students for progression and retention in the PA Program.

1. Successful completion (grade C or higher) of all courses in the didactic and clinical phases, to include remediation of any course as directed by the SPC.
2. Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher after each didactic term. This minimum GPA must be achieved at the completion of the didactic phase to advance to the clinical phase of the training. A GPA lower than a 3.0 will require completion of a variable hour Special Studies course to reach the minimum GPA. Course content will be selected from the SPC based on individual performance in courses. Academic probation will be noted on the transcript if a Special Studies course is required. The Special Studies course may be utilized again following the clinical phase in order to meet the minimum GPA.
3. Compliance with all University, College of Medicine, and PA Program policies, including adherence to professionalism expectations.

Academic Probation

Academic probation is a formal notification of unsatisfactory academic progress when a student obtains a GPA below the minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA during any semester of the didactic phase. When a student is placed on academic probation, it is noted in the student's academic file in the program office and on the student's transcript. At the end of the probationary semester, the student will be returned to good academic standing if the cumulative GPA returns to 3.0 or higher. If the GPA continues below the minimum 3.0 GPA required by the program, the SPC may elect to continue the probationary status for an additional semester, assuming the student demonstrated sufficient academic improvement by achieving a term GPA of 3.0 or greater. Alternatively, the SPC may make a recommendation to the Dean for dismissal of the student from the PA program. Recommendation for dismissal may also occur if the student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 during any subsequent semester of the program or the student fails a PA program course.

The Academic Standards and Progression Policy can be found in its entirety on the Policy and Procedures page of the program website: https://www.ou.edu/tulsa/community_medicine/scm-pa-program/policies-and-procedures

Remediation Policy

Remediation is the opportunity to correct unsatisfactory performance, progress, and/or professional conduct. The Student Progress Committee (SPC) may offer a remediation plan to further assess/evaluate a student and to support the student in meeting the program's learning outcomes.

Didactic Phase Remediation

Course Performance: In order to receive a passing grade in any didactic course, it is necessary for a student to demonstrate competency by scoring 70% or greater for the entire course. Final course scores of 69.5% and above are rounded to a 70%. A final course score of 69.4% and below results in failure of the course.

Examination Performance: For Clinical Medicine I-III, Clinical Medicine for Special Populations, and Pharmacotherapeutics I-II, if a student scores below 70% on an examination, a remediation exam will be required. For Physical Diagnosis I-II, remediation will be required for non-passing scores (as detailed in the syllabus) on the performance checklists, simulated patient encounters, and OSCE. For other PA didactic courses, the need to remediate an examination will be determined by the SPC. Remediation examinations are to prove competency in the subject matter and are not factored into the final course grade. If a student fails to meet the remediation standard, the student will be referred to the Student Progress Committee to determine the appropriate course of action.

Remediation of an examination or failed Physical Diagnosis course component necessitates the student meeting with the course director to address areas of deficiency and to determine an appropriate remediation plan, including content review and reexamination.

SPC Action: An unsatisfactory score in a course (below 70%) or a failing score on a remediation examination (Clinical Medicine I-III, Clinical Medicine for Special Populations, Pharmacotherapeutics I-II, Physical Diagnosis checklist, simulated patient encounter, or OSCE) will be evaluated by the SPC. Based on a thorough evaluation of the overall academic and professional performance of the student, the SPC will recommend one of the following:

1. Administering a grade of I (Incomplete) on the transcript and completion of a course remediation plan.
2. Didactic Course: Administering a failing grade of D or F on the transcript followed by academic suspension with deceleration and remediation of the course in the next academic year.
3. Recommendation for dismissal from the PA Program. Recommendation is made to the Dean of the School of Community Medicine.

Incomplete (I):

A course grade of I (Incomplete) placed on the transcript will require the student to complete a prescribed remediation plan as determined by the SPC. The remediation plan will include addressing specific deficiencies noted during the course. Academic probation will be noted on the transcript when an Incomplete grade is assigned due to remediation. Upon successful completion of the remediation plan, the grade will be changed to a C on the transcript and academic probation will be removed at the completion of the term. Failure to complete the remediation plan as assigned will result in failure of the course.

The grade of “I” will be approved only when circumstances determine it, such as a serious illness that has prevented that student from completing work or when there is an unavoidable delay in receiving a course grade due to remediation.

- Mere inability to get work in on time will not constitute a reason for the grade of “I”.
- To remove the “I” a student must complete the course work within one year maximum from when the “I” was given. The specific timeframe will be determined by the Student Progress Committee based on academic progression requirements.
- If a student does not complete the required course work within the prescribed time period, the “I” grade will convert to an “F”.

Failure of the course (D or F)

When a student fails a PA program course during the didactic phase, the student is not permitted to progress further in the program. The student may be placed on suspension and offered the opportunity to decelerate and return the next academic year to remediate the course, per the deceleration policy guidelines. If the failed course is not successfully remediated as determined by the SPC, if the student fails a second course during the course of the PA program, or if the student’s cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0, the SPC may recommend to the Dean dismissal of the student from the PA program.

The student who has been suspended for a failed course and offered deceleration is guaranteed re-entry into the first year of the PA academic program, contingent upon all other programmatic requirements, including the successful completion of the re-entry plan, being met. Upon re-matriculation to the academic program, the student is placed on academic probation. Although progression in the program will occur if the student achieves a minimum 3.0 term GPA, the student will remain on academic probation until a cumulative 3.0 GPA is achieved. See the Deceleration Policy for further details.

Clinical Phase Remediation

Course Performance: In order to receive a passing grade in any clinical course, it is necessary for a student to demonstrate competency by meeting the minimum required examination score as noted in each clinical course syllabus. In addition, it is necessary to achieve a grade of C or above in each clinical course, regardless of a passing examination score, in order to successfully complete the course.

Examination Remediation: Failure to achieve a passing score on a clinical examination (PAEA EOR or NBME) will result in a requirement to remediate the exam. Remediation examinations are to prove competency in the subject matter and are not factored into the final course grade. If a student fails to meet the remediation standard, the student will be referred to the SPC to determine the appropriate course of action.

SPC Action: An unsatisfactory score in a course (below 70%) or a failing score on a remediation examination will be evaluated by the SPC. Based on a thorough evaluation of the overall academic and professional performance of the student, the SPC will recommend one of the following:

1. Administering a grade of I (Incomplete) on the transcript and completion of a remediation plan determined by the SPC; may include remediation of second failed NBME exam with the applicable PAEA EOR examination.
2. Clinical Course: Administering a failing grade of D or F on the transcript followed by academic probation; requires repeating the clinical rotation. Refer to the Deceleration Policy for determination of clinical delay or clinical deceleration.
3. Recommendation for dismissal from the PA program. Failure of more than one clinical course may result in recommendation for dismissal. Recommendation is made to the Dean of the School of Community Medicine.

Remediation Considerations

- Students are expected to perform at a high level in this intensive professional program. The SPC reserves the right to require an individualized remediation program for students who do not meet academic or professional expectations.
- A remediation program may consist of but is not necessarily limited to:
 - The requirement to retake a failed examination (failure is defined as a grade of “D” or “F” on an exam).
 - Completion of a prescribed remediation program with emphasis on any deficient area.
 - Referral to the Student Success Program or to services for further evaluation, e.g., outside counseling for evaluation of learning methods or deficiencies.
 - Deceleration: Rematriculating with the next cohort at the beginning of the didactic phase. Retaking courses is not limited to failed courses.
 - The requirement to retake a failed clinical exam in order to receive a passing course grade.
 - The requirement to retake a failed clinical course.
 - Pursuit of self-directed learning and/or tutoring at the expense of the student.

The curriculum is designed to be completed on a full-time basis over 30 months. Deceleration is a mechanism for allowing a student to complete the curriculum through required repetition of the didactic phase of the curriculum or delayed completion of the clinical phase. The maximum time to complete the program is 48 months from matriculation. Deceleration may be considered when a recommendation is made by the Student Progress Committee (SPC), or a student submits a request to decelerate.

Deceleration Policy

Deceleration is defined by the ARC-PA as "the loss of a student from the cohort, who remains matriculated in the physician assistant program." The OU SCM PA program does not decelerate students who fail to meet the program's professionalism policies.

Deceleration may occur either through SPC recommendation or a student request.

SPC Recommendation

- The SPC may recommend deceleration to the PA program director when a student fails to progress as required in the Academic Standards and Progression Policy. An offer of deceleration is not guaranteed when a student fails to meet academic standards.
- The program director determines the final decision for deceleration.

Student Request

- A student may submit a written request to the PA program director to request deceleration. Reasons for deceleration may include, but are not limited to, personal, family, or health concerns that will impact the ability of the student to successfully progress through the curriculum.
- The program director determines the final decision for deceleration.

The maximum entering class size is approved by the ARC-PA. Any increase above the ARC-PA approved maximum entering class size for any reason (including a decelerated student) requires program notification to the ARC-PA using the Exceeding Approved Class Size required report.

SPC Interventions

The SPC may determine it appropriate to recommend a student to repeat specific components of the program curriculum or an entire phase of the program curriculum for reasons that may include, but not limited to, the student's taking of a leave of absence and/or failure of didactic or clinical course(s). The SPC will develop an individualized education plan, which may also include a re-entry plan, to support the student's success that details specific requirements to be met by the student in order for them to advance. Consideration will include the course(s) most affected by the leave of absence and/or failures. This SPC interventions are defined as follows:

Didactic Deceleration: Defined as a failure to satisfactorily complete didactic phase requirements prior to cohort advancement resulting in SPC recommendation for repetition of the entire didactic phase of the curriculum. Deceleration will require the student to rematriculate with the next cohort and successfully and satisfactorily complete didactic phase requirements to advance in the program.

Clinical Delay: Defined as a delay in completion of the clinical phase by four months or less, this is typically a result of an approved brief leave of absence and/or from retaking one or more failed clinical rotation(s). Delay will require the student to successfully complete the individualized education plan set by the SPC. Although the graduation date of the student may be delayed, the student will maintain matriculation with their original cohort for ARC-PA reporting requirements.

Clinical Deceleration: Defined as a delay in completion of the clinical phase by greater than four months, this is typically a result of an approved extended leave of absence and/or failed clinical rotation(s). Deceleration will require the student to successfully complete the individualized education plan set by the SPC. The SPC reserves the right to require the student to repeat the entire clinical phase. Although the graduation date may differ, the student will be considered a part of the next cohort for ARC-PA reporting requirements.

Deceleration interventions that require the student to join a new cohort will require them to comply with any revisions in curriculum requirements and policies of their new cohort. Decelerated students who return to the program and subsequently fail a course, fail to maintain academic progression, and/or fail to meet all technical standards will be recommended for dismissal from the program. Decelerated students who fail a course will not be offered course remediation.

Re-entry Remediation Plan

The option for deceleration will include a re-entry remediation plan determined by the SPC as part of the individualized education plan. Re-entry plans will define the student's responsibilities while decelerated. Plans may include, but are not limited to, a written examination, a practical examination, and/or completing a learning contract while on leave. Additionally, the student must provide a monthly update to the SPC on the progress of the re-entry plan.

The student must notify the program director in writing within seven (7) calendar days whether the terms of deceleration are accepted. If the student does not accept the option of deceleration, procedures for withdrawal or a recommendation for dismissal will be initiated.

Failure to meet the terms of the re-entry plan may result in withdrawal of deceleration and a notification of recommendation for dismissal from the program.

Finances

Deceleration results in delayed graduation and additional financial burdens to the student. Students are fully responsible for any additional tuition and fees and for any impact to financial aid eligibility. Students are advised to discuss these issues with the university financial aid office prior to making any decisions regarding requesting deceleration and/or returning to the program if granted the option of deceleration.

16. Graduation Requirements

Students who satisfactorily complete the 30-month program will be awarded the Master of Health Sciences (MHS) in Physician Assistant Studies. To qualify for graduation, students must:

- Follow an approved course of study leading to the completion of all master's requirements;
- Complete satisfactorily all professional courses with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0; no course or rotation below a C, and satisfactorily complete a final Summative Evaluation involving a comprehensive written examination, an observed assessment of history taking, physical examination and diagnostic skills, and an evaluation of professionalism by clinical faculty members;
- Complete satisfactorily the required 131 semester credit hours in the curriculum;
- Complete satisfactorily the required components of the program within 48 months or less from the time of initial matriculation.
- Repeat, as approved, and earn an acceptable grade for any required course or rotation in the professional program for which a failing grade (D or F) had been issued;
- Complete, at a minimum, the last 48 credit hours in the professional program within the College of Medicine;
- Complete successfully Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS);
- Receive a favorable recommendation for degree conferral from the PA Promotion and Graduation Committee;
- Be recommended for conferral of the master's degree by the University Faculty Senate;
- Settle all financial accounts with the University; and
- Submit a properly completed and signed graduation clearance form to the Office of the Registrar.

17. Working While a Student in the OU-Tulsa PA Program

Due to the rigorous time demands during the didactic year and clinical rotations, the PA Program faculty strongly suggest that students do not work while enrolled. Students who do choose to work despite this recommendation are expected to maintain all university and program attendance expectations, professional deportment, and academic standards. Students should consult with a counselor in the Financial Aid Office if they need more financial resources.

18. Student Responsibilities

Students enrolled in the PA program at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, College of Medicine are responsible for:

- Attending all scheduled activities associated with the PA Program unless prior approval is obtained from the Program Director or her designee.
- Understanding and meeting all established program academic requirements and standards as described in the course syllabi, University Catalog, and Student Handbook;
- Self-monitoring their academic performance in all required courses;
- Completing all course-related requirements in a timely and satisfactory manner;
- Seeking assistance if encountering academic difficulty;

- Contacting the appropriate faculty mentor, program director and /or course coordinator when performance has been unsatisfactory; and
- Regularly checking e-mail at least daily for information concerning educational programs. This is particularly important at the end of the semester when information concerning academic performance may be distributed.
- Maintaining compliance with documentation on Complio, including immunization records and health requirements, criminal background check and urine drug screen, attestations of policies, and training requirements. <https://www.ou.edu/tulsastudentaffairs/health/complio>

19. Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities

The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodation in a course are requested to speak with the course instructor as early in the semester as possible. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact The Accessibility and Disability Resource Center housed on the OU-Norman campus by email at adrc@ou.edu or visit their website at www.ou.edu/adrc. The OUHSC Reasonable Accommodation Policy can be found at:

<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>

20. Advanced Placement/ Exemption from Coursework

The OU-Tulsa PA Program does not allow for advanced placement or exemption from coursework for any student.

21. Student Withdrawal & Tuition Reimbursement

Students wishing to withdraw from the PA Program must provide a letter of intent to the PA Program Director. Tuition reimbursement will conform to published University guidelines found at: http://www.ou.edu/enrollment/policies/refund_policy

22. Sexual Harassment & Discrimination

The OU-Tulsa PA Program is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all persons who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. The University and the PA Program condemn discrimination based on sex, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual misconduct. The University of Oklahoma and the OU-Tulsa PA Program Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination and Harassment Policy can be found at:

<https://studenthandbook.ouhsc.edu/hbSections.aspx?ID=346>

23. Infectious Disease & Environmental Hazard Exposure and Prevention

The OU-Tulsa PA Program policies on student immunizations, exposure to infectious and environmental hazards including care, treatment, financial responsibility, and subsequent limitations on student learning activities, and Universal Precautions are defined by University policy at the sites below. Student immunization requirements follow the CDC guidelines for immunizations for health care workers (HCWs).

<https://www.ou.edu/tulsastudentaffairs/health>

CDC immunization recommendations for HCWs: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf>

The Student Health Requirements Policy can be found on the website and the OU-Tulsa Student Pathogen Exposure Policy can be found on pg. 26 in the Clinical Handbook:
[Student Health Requirements and Clinical Handbook](#)

24. Student Counseling and Student Health

Counseling can help students manage stress, adjust to new academic demands, identify problems through assessment and testing, establish healthy problem-solving strategies, deal with grief, and develop and improve healthy relationships. The Student Success Program provides an avenue to recognize strengths and offer supplemental support for PA and medical students at the OU-TU School of Community Medicine in Tulsa. The goal of the Student Success Program is not only to provide support for students' academic advancement but to offer support for holistic development. To schedule an appointment, please contact Rosanne McDaniel at Rosanne-mcdaniel@ouhsc.edu or 918-660-3408.

In addition, student counseling is provided at no additional cost to all OU students as part of OU-Tulsa Student Affairs. Student fees assessed each semester pay for counseling services. Psychoeducational testing is also available at an additional cost. For appointments, call OU-Tulsa Student Counseling Services at 918-660-3109.

The OU-Tulsa Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day to respond to concerns of distressing behaviors in students, faculty, and staff. Team members coordinate resources and implement a coordinated response with the goal of providing assistance to the individual while mitigating risk in an effort to keep the OU-Tulsa community healthy and safe. BIT can be reached at 918.660.3BIT (3248) or at TulsaBIT@ouhsc.edu. An online reporting form is also available at <http://www.ou.edu/tulsa/bit>.

The University of Oklahoma desires its students to have convenient and efficient access to quality health care. OU-Tulsa students pay a student health fee each semester providing them with healthcare services. Please note there is no copay or visit charge for an appointment at the Student Health Clinic. Contact Student Health in the Student Affairs office at 918-660-3102 for scheduling an appointment.

25. Student Health Insurance

Per University of Oklahoma Regents' Policy, all students enrolled in OU Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) programs are responsible for maintaining health insurance and providing coverage information each semester of enrollment in their programs. A student who is found to be uninsured will receive notification from Student Affairs regarding lack of compliance and possible delay in academic program, including clinical participation, advancement.

Academic Health Plans (AHP) manages the University of Oklahoma sponsored student health insurance plan provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield PPO of Oklahoma. Enrollment forms and the Summary of Benefits are available online at <https://ou-tulsa.myahpcare.com/>

26. Drug Screening Policy

Drug Screening is required for OUHSC students/accepted applicants admitted to designated degree programs that include or may include a clinical component at a health care facility that uses drug screening as a condition of its affiliation with the University.

As applicable, students/accepted applicants who do not pass the drug screening may be unable to complete degree requirements or may be denied admission to or suspended or dismissed from the degree program.

The Tulsa PA Program includes testing at the time of provisional acceptance, as well as prior to the beginning of each academic year. See the policy for Drug Screening for Students Attending a Clinical Rotation Setting. The OU Tulsa PA Program requires repeat drug screening for a “negative dilute” result.

[OUHSC Drug Screening Policy](#)

27. Criminal Background Check Policy

A national Criminal Background Check (“CBC”) is required of each provisionally accepted applicant prior to full admission and at least annually thereafter for every continuing student. The student is responsible for the cost procuring a criminal background check. The complete policy can be found in the OUHSC Faculty Handbook (Appendix C):

<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>

28. PA Program Operations

- OU-Tulsa PA program policies apply to all program faculty and students irrespective of location unless specified otherwise in writing with approval by the Program Director.
- Students are prohibited from working for the OU-Tulsa PA program.

- Students are prohibited from substituting for or functioning as instructional faculty. However, students with specific prior knowledge, experiences, and skills may assist faculty in didactic and laboratory sessions to share their knowledge and skills. Students are prohibited from being the primary instructor or instructor of record for any component of the curriculum.
- Students are prohibited from substituting for clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical practice experiences.
- The OU-Tulsa PA Program Director, Medical Director, and program faculty are prohibited from serving as health care providers for students in the program except during medical emergencies.
- All program policies are subject to the OUHSC policies which can be found in the OUHSC Student Handbook and OUHSC Faculty Handbook.

[FacultyHandbookOUHSC](#)
[StudentHandbookOUHSC](#)

Appendix: Professionalism Policies

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

As a student at the University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine, I understand that it is a great privilege to study medicine. Over the course of my training, I will assume responsibility for the health and well-being of others. This undertaking requires that I uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior. Accordingly, I have adopted the following statement of principles to guide me throughout my academic, clinical, and research work. I will strive to uphold both the spirit and the letter of this code in my years at the School of Community Medicine and throughout my medical career.

HONESTY

- Students will maintain the highest standards of academic honesty.
- Students will neither give nor receive aid in examinations or assignments unless the instructor expressly permits such cooperation.
- Students will be truthful with patients and will report accurately all historical and physical findings, test results, and other information pertinent to the care of patients.
- Students will conduct research in an unbiased manner, report results truthfully, and credit ideas developed and work done by others.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Students will regard confidentiality as a central obligation of patient care.
- Students will limit discussions of patients to members of the health care team in settings removed from the public ear (not in elevators, hallways, cafeterias, etc.)
- Students will maintain patient confidentiality when required.
- Students will be truthful with patients and will report accurately all historical and physical findings, test results, and other information pertinent to the care of the patient according to the patient's wishes.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- Students will uphold an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Students will treat patients and their families with dignity, and respect their physical and emotional needs.
- Students will demonstrate respect and confidentiality when discussing patient issues with other members of the health care team.
- Students will strive to communicate effectively and cooperatively with all members of the health care team.

- Students will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, culture, socioeconomic status, or any other basis.
- Students will attempt to resolve conflicts in a manner that is fair and dignified to each person involved.

RESPONSIBILITY

- Students will conduct themselves professionally -- in demeanor, use of language, and appearance -- in the presence of patients, in the classroom, and in health care settings.
- Students will be reliable in completing course and clerkship tasks, and will attend and participate in all required activities, including (but not limited to) class, clinic, and rounds.
- Students will recognize their own limitations and will seek help when appropriate.
- Students will set patient care as the highest priority in the clinical setting.
- Students will provide unbiased constructive evaluations of colleagues and faculty and courses when asked.
- Students will not use alcohol or drugs in any way that could interfere with clinical or educational responsibilities.
- Students will not use their professional position to engage in romantic or sexual relationships with patients or members of their families.
- Students will report all apparent violations of the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Policy to the appropriate individual in accordance with the **OUHSC Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy**.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF FACULTY, RESIDENTS, AND FELLOWS

- Students have the right to expect clear guidelines regarding assignments and examinations, as well as to have testing environments that are conducive to academic honesty.
- Students cannot be compelled to perform procedures or examinations which they feel are unethical or beyond their level of training.
- Students have the right not to be harassed and not to be subjected to romantic or sexual overtures from those who are supervising their work.
- Students have the right to learn in a challenging but respectful environment.

Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) strives to attract, matriculate, and train health professions and public health, biomedical, and pharmaceutical sciences graduate students (hereinafter referred to as OUHSC students) who not only possess the intellectual capacity for health professions and graduate study but also have a high capacity for ethical and professional behavior. Since training in ethical and professional behavior is an integral part of training in the health professions, conduct during training is an academic issue. Professionalism is one critical cornerstone of a successful academic program, just as it is a cornerstone of the responsible conduct of research, maintaining integrity and compassion in the delivery of health care, and building a collegial and conscientious health professions team.

Circumstances may arise during a student's course of study that call into question the capacity or commitment of the student to maintain this academic standard. As such, the colleges and training programs retain the responsibility and authority to determine a student's fitness to continue in the program of study.

The process of transitioning from a student to a health care professional requires study, self-reflection and self-management on the part of learners. Ethical and professional behaviors are critical to the effective education of OUHSC students and are considered a core competency in the academic program, and, thus, are a key factor in academic good standing. When a student accepts an offer of admission into OUHSC programs, he or she commits to comply with all regulations, including those regarding ethical and professional conduct, established by the University, the OUHSC, the respective College, and the Program.

As a distinct learning community within the University, the OUHSC has established the Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy (referred to as "the Policy" or "this Policy") and adopted procedures for addressing standards of ethical and professional behavior for OUHSC students. The policy and procedures identify student responsibilities and rights in conjunction with standards of fairness, privacy, and due process. They are derived, in part, from the standards of conduct adopted by national organizations that accredit OUHSC programs (e.g., ASAHP, CODA, NLNAC, LCME, ACPE, ARC-PA) or license or certify OUHSC learners (e.g., NCCPA, state licensing boards) and the standards of ethical and professional behavior adopted by national and local professional organizations.

Since training in ethical and professional behavior is integral to the education of OUHSC students, violations of this Policy will be considered as academic issues. Failure to meet ethical and professional behavior standards will result in action up to, and possibly including dismissal and may jeopardize advancement and graduation.

In addition to the academic and clinical-related requirements of each college and program, this Policy and its related procedures shall govern academic and professional behavior at the OUHSC. In the event any OUHSC college and/or health professions program develops a statement of principles and responsibilities related to standards of ethical and professional behavior specific to its respective profession, such statements must conform to the Policy and its procedures.

This Policy is not intended to address the types of student conduct violations described in the University of Oklahoma Student Rights and Responsibilities Code, Section VI 1-22; academic misconduct, as described in Section 4.18 and Appendix C of the OUHSC Faculty Handbook. For cases in which both the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code and the Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy may apply, this Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy shall take precedence.

A. Objectives:

1. Document the priority placed by the Health Sciences Center on the academic standards related to student ethical and professional behavior.
2. Provide students, faculty, and staff with clear articulation of the expectations regarding student ethical and professional behavior.
3. Provide the OUHSC colleges with clearly articulated authority to act when dealing with student ethical and professional behavior issues.
4. Identify procedures for managing and addressing student ethical and professional behavior issues.
5. Ensure standards of fairness, privacy, and certain processes are applied, as applicable.

B. Scope:

All OUHSC students are expected to demonstrate high standards of ethical and professional behavior in all educational and clinical settings, including but not limited to:

1. classroom-based milieu (e.g., classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, on-line and technology-based classes);
2. professional, clinical and community sites that are part of the learning program (e.g., hospitals, clinics, community health centers, community-based organizations, ambulatory settings);
3. other settings not part of the formal learning program but which contribute to the learning process (e.g., student-run special interest group meetings and activities, clubs and governance structures, interactions with University or OUHSC administrators and other members of the campus community); and
4. Other settings as described below:

This Policy is intended to guide the ethical and professional behavior of students studying in the OUHSC programs. It is not intended to directly guide or address behavior that is a part of a student's private life, but such behavior may come to the attention of the OUHSC in several ways and become the focus of a Policy investigation or charge:

- a) Conduct may be reported to a member of the faculty or administration by a variety of sources (e.g., police, friends, parents, other agencies) that raises a concern about the student's capacity to continue his or her studies. If such reported conduct raises a concern about the safety of the student or the safety of others that the student may have contact with at the institution or includes behavior that could indicate an issue with moral, ethical, or personal values that would preclude satisfactory functioning in the discipline, an investigation may be conducted, and action taken on the basis of the investigation.

b) If a student is charged with an offense in the civil justice system and the University becomes aware of and verifies this circumstance through self-report of the student or a reliable, verified source, the University may elect to not pursue an investigation until the outcome of the civil court proceeding is known, unless the alleged offense is such that allowing the student to continue his or her studies could be detrimental to the safety of patients or others, as determined by the OUHSC Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

c) If a student is charged with a criminal offense, he or she is obligated to report this to the college Dean immediately. If a matriculating student has been charged with a criminal offense between the time he/she wrote an application and the time he/she arrives at school, or at any time while a student, he/she must inform the Dean of the charges before the first day of classes. If the University later discovers that a student withheld disclosure of a criminal charge, he/she may be subject to immediate dismissal by the Dean. Depending upon the nature of the criminal charge, the student may not be allowed to continue the course of study until there is final disposition of the criminal charge either by verdict, plea, or dismissal. This is consistent with the obligation of the University to ensure the safety of patients and others.

OUHSC students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. As part of their education and training, these students must begin to practice professional behaviors that they will uphold for the rest of their professional lives. Fundamental attributes of professionalism and ethical and professional behavior include, but are not limited to, honesty and integrity, dedicated desire to learn and respect for the academic process, concern for the welfare of patients and their families, a commitment to patient confidentiality, respect for the rights of others, emotional maturity, and self-discipline.

While not all inclusive, examples of unacceptable ethical and professional behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- Lack of integrity and honesty (e.g., lying about, misrepresenting, or not reporting information about care given, clinic errors, or any action related to clinic functions; acting outside the scope of his/her role in a clinical, academic, professional or administrative setting). NOTE: Allegations of academic misconduct, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, destruction, bribery or intimidation, assisting others in any act proscribed by the Academic Misconduct Code, or attempting to engage in such acts, as defined under the Academic Misconduct Code are addressed in the Academic Misconduct Code.
- Failure to demonstrate professional demeanor or concern for patient safety (e.g., use of offensive language and gestures, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the educational or clinic setting). Failure to demonstrate professional demeanor with patients and families (e.g., insensitive to the patient's or family's needs, inappropriate personal relationships with patients or members of their families, lack of empathy).

- Unmet professional responsibility (e.g., not contributing to an atmosphere conducive to learning due to poor attendance, punctuality issues, and/or distracting, or insensitive behavior in class, lab, or clinic; poor personal hygiene; needing continual reminders to complete responsibilities in a timely manner; not responding to requests [written, verbal, e-mail, telephone] in a timely manner; breaching patient confidentiality)
- Exhibiting disruptive behavior (e.g., pushing, punching, throwing things, making inappropriate gestures, threats, verbal intimidation, language that belittles or demeans, negative comments with racial, ethnic, religious, age, gender or sexual overtones, making impertinent or inappropriate written entries in the medical record or making statements attacking students, faculty or staff)
- Lack of effort toward self-improvement and adaptability (e.g., resistant or defensive in accepting constructive criticism; remaining unaware of own inadequacies; resisting considering or making suggested changes to improve learning, behavior, or performance; not accepting responsibility for errors or failure; abusive or inappropriately critical, arrogant)
- Inappropriate interpersonal interaction with respect to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, age, religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran.
- Exhibiting diminished relationships with members of the health care team (e.g., not functioning appropriately within the health care team or not demonstrating the ability to collaborate with fellow students, staff)
- Failure to maintain and safeguard the confidentiality of patient and research participant information, including paper and electronic records, verbal communications, and social networking and electronic media sites
- Failure to comply with college and program academic and clinical-related requirements (e.g., training, immunization, HIPAA)

C. Procedures for Handling Breaches of Ethical and Professional Behavior Standards

Violations of this Policy will be handled as follows:

1. Who May File

Complaints about possible breaches of ethical and professional behavior may be initiated by individuals within the College or Department/Section (students, faculty, staff, and administration) or by external sources (patients, families, visitors, extramural rotation sites, other agencies with which a student has had contact). If reported elsewhere, the initial complaint should be promptly forwarded to the student's program director or assistant/associate dean of student affairs or directly to the Dean of the College. The formal complaint must be in writing, with a brief description of the evidence, and submitted within 10 University business days after discovery of the incident, exclusive of University breaks and academic intercessions.

2. Complaints Review and Investigation; Sanctions

Any egregious unethical or unprofessional behavior must be reported to the Dean and could result in the student's being immediately suspended or dismissed from the program. Examples of egregious or unprofessional behavior would include but are not limited to patient endangerment, unacceptable patient management, inappropriate alteration of patient records, or behavior that poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of or disruption of the academic process. The Dean must consult with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Legal Counsel and other officials as appropriate to determine if the matter should proceed under other applicable University policies. Should the Dean take the immediate action of suspending or dismissing a student from the program, the student may request a hearing under the Academic Appeals Board process, as described in Section 3 below.

For less egregious unethical and unprofessional behavior, rather than filing a formal complaint about professional behavior, the faculty member or program director may conclude (but is not required to conclude) that the incident is more appropriately treated as an instructional rather than a disciplinary matter. In such cases, the faculty member or program director will contact the student directly to discuss the issue, provide feedback, and make suggestions for how the behavior at issue can be improved. If the faculty member or program director believes that an effective resolution resulted from meeting with the student, no further action is required. The incident shall be documented in the student's file and may be used in the future, where applicable, to indicate a pattern, practice, failure to benefit from redirection.

In the event that the faculty member or program director determines that giving the student feedback about issues of concern was not successful in resolving the issue or if the behavior is of a significant or serious nature (but not warranting immediate suspension or dismissal), a Professionalism Concerns Report (PCR) will be completed by the faculty member or program director. The focus of this PCR process is educational, with the goal of helping the health professions student move forward successfully in coursework, clinical practice experience, and interactions within the Health Sciences Center community.

A PCR must be filed with the college's assistant/associate dean of student affairs within 10 University business days from the time the behavior was observed or reported, exclusive of University breaks and academic intercessions.

Following receipt of the PCR, the college's assistant/associate dean of student affairs will meet with the student to discuss ways in which the unprofessional behavior can be improved, thus allowing the student adequate opportunity to make appropriate behavioral changes. The student will be asked to sign the PCR to acknowledge that the PCR has been reviewed and may respond to the PCR by providing additional written information. The college's assistant/associate dean of student affairs may require remedial action, such as a corrective action plan, mandated counseling or probationary status, which shall be noted on the PCR. The PCR is then forwarded to the college Dean and to the Graduate College Dean, if applicable.

In the event that a student fails on three occasions to meet the expected standards of ethical and professional conduct as documented by PCRs and/or documentation in the student's file, the assistant/associate dean of student affairs or if appropriate, the Graduate College Dean, has the option to place the student on probation, suspend the student, or dismiss the student, depending

on the nature of the student's behavior. Prior to any such action, the student affairs dean, Graduate College Dean, or other appropriate administrator will meet with the student, identify the concerns, identify the anticipated action, and provide the student an opportunity to present his/her version of events leading to the situation. Within 3 days of such meeting, the student will be provided notice of the action taken. If dissatisfied with the action taken, the student may request a hearing in accordance with Section 3 below.

3. Appeal Process

Students who are dismissed or suspended from their program may request a hearing under the OUHSC Academic Appeals Policy (Section 4.16 and Appendix C of the OUHSC Faculty Handbook). A student may not appeal an action taken simply because he/she does not agree with it.

Guidelines for the Teacher-Learner Relationship

This policy outlines: i) the expected standards of conduct for both students (including University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine PA Program students) and those individuals with whom students interact during the PA program, and ii) the professionalism attributes and associated behaviors expected of students.

This policy defines the following:

- The principles of a positive learning environment
- The expected standards of conduct (i.e., responsibilities) of teachers
- The expected standards of conduct (i.e., responsibilities) of learners, including the expected professionalism attributes and behaviors
- The definition of student mistreatment

Background

The School of Community Medicine is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in learners and teachers at all levels. The achievement of such success is dependent on an environment free of behaviors that can undermine the important mission of our institution.

The SCM holds in high regard the time-honored personal virtues of altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honor, integrity, and respect for others and believes that these principles apply equally to students, PAs, resident physicians, other health care providers, faculty (including full-time, part-time, and volunteer faculty), and staff who participate with our educational programs.

This policy serves to establish goals for the teacher-learner relationship as well as to provide examples of behaviors that can impair optimum learning. A separate policy establishes procedures for evaluation and/or intervention when difficulties have been perceived.

Principles of a Positive Learning Environment

The School of Community Medicine holds that a positive learning environment:

- is supportive, respectful, and collegial
- inspires students to learn and give their best
- encourages the development of professional behaviors among both students and faculty
- emphasizes the importance of medical education among its stakeholders
- provides effective instruction and fair assessment activities
- provides an avenue for students to voice concerns
- provides support for students that are experiencing difficulty
- is a comfortable place for people of all genders, ethnicities, and sexual orientations to learn
- protects students against mistreatment, coercion, and other unacceptable behaviors

Responsibilities of Teachers and Learners

Behavior that embodies the ideal teacher-learner relationship fosters mutual respect among the participants, minimizes the likelihood of mistreatment, and optimizes the educational experience.

In the context of medical education, the term instructor or teacher is used broadly to include peers, PAs, medical students, resident physicians, full-time and volunteer faculty members, clinical preceptors, nurses and ancillary support staff, as well as others from whom students can and do learn.

Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers must be mindful of their role and responsibility during their interactions with their colleagues, patients, and those whose education has been entrusted to them. Students learn professional behavior primarily by observing the actions of their teachers as role models. Teachers are expected to model the below behaviors with students.

Teachers are expected to...

- treat students fairly, respectfully, and without bias related to age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or national origin.

- comply with all applicable college, campus and University policies and procedures related to unlawful discrimination, harassment (including all forms of sexual harassment) and misconduct.
- avoid asking or expecting students to perform personal errands or tasks.
- Refrain from any act of retaliation against a student who has reported an incident of mistreatment.
- Avoid behaviors that violate professional boundaries (e.g., engaging in a romantic or business relationship while in the teacher/student role).
- Be prepared and on time.
- Provide up-to-date information.
- Provide explicit learning and behavioral expectations early in the contact period.
- Provide timely, focused, accurate, and constructive feedback regularly.
- Be cognizant of their own behavior as representatives of the University and as role models for the profession.
- Display honesty, integrity, and compassion.
- Use professional language and avoid the use of derogatory language.
- Distinguish between insightful (Socratic) questioning, which stimulates learning or self-discovery, and overly aggressive questioning which may be perceived as hurtful, humiliating, degrading, or punitive.
- Respect other specialties and health professions.
- Resolve conflicts in ways that respect the dignity of all involved.
- Provide thoughtful and timely evaluation as required by courses or the College.
- Solicit feedback from learners regarding students' perceptions of the nature of the educational experience and personal interaction.

Responsibilities of Learners

As future members of the PA profession, students must recognize that their responsibility to patients, healthcare professionals, and society requires that they acquire and maintain behaviors that are compatible with the medical profession's standards of conduct.

The expected student behaviors listed below are organized by professionalism attributes that were approved by the Medical Education Committee. These professionalism attributes are addressed throughout the curriculum. Students are expected to exhibit the below behaviors.

Professionalism Attribute	Behaviors
	Students are expected to . . .
Honesty and integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate honesty and integrity in all interactions with others* • Perform and submit assignments, exams, research and clinical activities, etc., in an honest, professional, and ethical manner

Care and compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to legal and professional standards of conduct, including those established through college, campus and university policies, procedures and guidelines
Courtesy and respect for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display empathy and compassion towards others* • Display courteous, considerate, and respectful behaviors in all interactions with others* • Avoid inappropriate, repetitive, disrespectful or unprofessional demands on teachers, fellow students and administrative and other healthcare staff
Cultural sensitivity and humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to others* • Recognize the privileges and responsibilities which derive from their opportunities to interact in clinical settings and the need to place patient welfare above their own
Accountability and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete tasks in a timely manner and in accordance with the teacher expectations • Recognize that not all learning stems from formal structured curricular activities • Provide teachers and the College with constructive feedback which can be used to improve the educational experience
Punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive prepared and on-time
Professional appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate respect for others and uphold the standards of the profession by maintaining a professional appearance when in the company of real and simulated patients
Attentiveness and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active, engaged, enthusiastic, curious learners who enhance the learning environment
Accuracy in representation of clinical findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately represent all clinical findings
Commitment to self-improvement and accepting feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept and learn from constructive criticism • Recognize personal limitations, solicit feedback and engage in self-improvement

Admission of mistakes or errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for mistakes or omissions and disclose errors to appropriate supervisors
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and respect patients' rights of privacy
Recognition of patient autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a commitment to patient autonomy by understanding the patient's preference and delivering patient-centered care
Recognition of conflicts of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the nature of conflicts of interest and how they pertain to the practice of medicine
Maintenance of a "fitness for duty"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept their responsibility for developing resilience in an atmosphere that can be inherently uncomfortable and challenging • Maintain awareness of and take steps to manage stress levels • Maintain a level of personal physical and mental health that is required to successfully complete all medical school requirements for graduation • Exercise appropriate judgment in seeking evaluation and assistance for their own injury, illness, impairment, and mental/emotional health

*Others include faculty, peers, staff, and patients.

Behaviors That Impair Education and Erode the Ideal Teacher-Learner Relationship:

Student Mistreatment - For purposes of this policy and the PA Student Mistreatment Policy, student mistreatment is defined as perceived behavior that reasonably may be expected to cause counterproductive emotional or physical distress on the part of the student that erodes the ideal teacher-learner relationship. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any behavior that is not consistent with the expected teacher behaviors listed above.
- Any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment (including all forms of sexual harassment) or misconduct.*

- Criticism which serves to belittle, humiliate, or excessively embarrass.
- Intellectual bullying (aka “pimping”), which is perceived as malicious.
- Intentional neglect or selective exclusion from educationally valuable activities.
- Implied or explicit requests for a student to perform personal services that benefit the teacher or supervisor but have no significant intrinsic educational value.
- Repetitive performance of clinical procedures (commonly referred to as “scut”) beyond what is necessary for personal educational enrichment or demonstration of proficiency.
- Real, threatened, or implied physical contact which serves to intimidate, threaten, or injure.
- Disregard for patient or student safety by requiring a student to perform a procedure or engage in patient care without adequate supervision.

PA Student Mistreatment Policy

This policy defines the policy and procedure for reporting student mistreatment. The definition of mistreatment may be found in the Guidelines for the Teacher-Learner Relationship Policy.

NOTE: Issues related to Sexual Harassment/Assault (Appendix H), Consensual Sexual Relations (Appendix I), or related to Racial or Ethnic Harassment (Appendix J) are specifically addressed in the Health Sciences Center Faculty Handbook and are to be reported to the University Office of Equal Opportunity, Room 113 of the Service Center Building, 405-271-2110. They are not explicitly incorporated into this policy.

1. Education

Disseminate the document: *Guidelines for the Teacher-Learner Relationship.....*

- a. to students
- b. to faculty members
- c. to residents
- d. preceptors
- e. course directors

Disseminate the expectation that Course Directors will inform students of their right to report perceived mistreatment as a part of the orientation of students to their rotations. Course Directors will be encouraged to actively and regularly solicit feedback from students on the nature of the educational environment they experience.

Disseminate to all students, Course Directors, and Department Chairs the reporting and evaluation

processes which are available to students if mistreatment is perceived.

2. Evaluation and Reporting of Perceived Mistreatment

Several options exist for reporting, evaluating, and resolving issues of perceived PA student mistreatment. The affected student, or a witness to student mistreatment, may select from among the following processes:

- As “adult learners” PA students are encouraged to address perceived breaches of the principles of the ideal teacher-learner relationship directly to involved parties. Utilization of this option does not require that any documentation be maintained or other steps taken if satisfactory resolution is achieved.
- A student who perceives that the principles of the ideal teacher-learner relationship have been breached may choose to report the alleged incident(s) to the **Course Director** for the involved course, clerkship, or rotation. The student may also elect to contact the PA Program Director or the Associate Dean for Academic Services.

Course Directors shall provide the student an impartial hearing, and gather information from others as necessary, while maintaining the confidentiality of the involved parties consistent with information gathering. Appropriate protection of the accused must be preserved. If the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the respondent, and the Course Director, the issue will be considered closed.

The Course Director shall submit a report to the PA Program Director, which summarizes the essence of the complaint, its evaluation, and the nature of its resolution. Identity of the principals may remain anonymous. A record will be maintained by the PA Student Progress Committee and reviewed to detect repetitive incidents or trends toward which additional educational or corrective efforts should be directed.

The affected student may report perceived breaches of the ideal teacher-learner relationship directly to the **PA Program Director or Associate Dean for Academic Services in Tulsa.**

Information will be gathered initially from the affected student, and others will be consulted as necessary. Records of all such contacts will be maintained by the PA Student Progress Committee and used to determine the need for additional preventive educational efforts.

- Allegations of mistreatment may be made and investigated without fear of retaliation. Retaliation is governed by the Retaliation Statement in the University of Oklahoma Non-Discrimination Policy which strictly prohibits retaliation associated with any form of adverse action against a person because of his or her filing of a complaint of discrimination or harassment and/or participating or assisting in any manner with an investigation or resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Adverse action includes, but is not limited to, making threats, intimidation, reprisals, or any other adverse

action relating to employment, academic, health care, or institutional benefits.

Academic Handbook revised 5/2/2024 PA Faculty Committee