

**SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCIENCE  
MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCIENCE PROGRAM**

**PROGRESSION STANDARDS FOR THE DIDACTIC AND CLINICAL YEARS**

**GENERAL AREA:** SECTION A: ADMINISTRATION from the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education

**OBJECTIVE: OPERATIONS, STANDARD A3.15a-d**

“The program must consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission:

- a) any required academic standards
- b) requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program
- c) policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration
- d) policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal”

Progression and continuance in the Saint Francis University Physician Assistant Program is based upon scholastic achievement and personal qualities, including defined professional behavior expectations and ability to meet Program Technical Standards, with or without accommodations, for the professional practice of medicine as a physician assistant. Students must continue to meet the academic progression standards, each of the technical standards and abide by the policies and procedures in the Program’s General, Didactic and Clinical Year Policy Manuals throughout the didactic and clinical years to graduate with the MPAS degree.

Didactic Year

During the didactic year, the student must meet the following academic requirements to maintain good academic standing and progress as a Physician Assistant student:

- 1) Obtain a minimum 2.75 cumulative Q.P.A. in the didactic phase course work by the end of the spring semester, and
- 2) Complete each letter-graded Physician Assistant course with a minimum grade of "C" and
- 3) Complete each pass/fail Physician Assistant course with a grade of “P.”

Clinical Year

During the clinical year, the student must meet the following academic requirements to maintain good academic standing prior to graduation:

- 1) Maintain a minimum 2.75 cumulative combined didactic and clinical phase Q.P.A. at the end of the summer, fall and spring semesters, and
- 2) Complete each letter-graded Physician Assistant course, including all clinical rotations, with a minimum grade of "C."

Course grades will be finalized throughout each of the semesters, upon completion of the course.

Didactic year students, who receive a “D” or “F” in a letter-graded PA course or an “F” in a pass/fail PA course, will be required to complete interventional remediation as soon as the course grade is finalized.

Students who receive one "D" or "F" in a letter-graded PA course or an “F” in a pass/fail PA course must appear before the Physician Assistant Program Performance Review Committee (PRC) (see General Policy Manual). The PRC will review the student's case and contract with the student the terms of Physician Assistant Program probation. The student will be allowed to repeat the course/rotation in question **once**, based on a schedule decided upon by the PRC. Students who do not achieve a passing

grade ("C" grade or better in a letter-graded PA course or a "P" in a pass/fail PA course) on their retake course will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program. Students should realize that repeating a course will cause a delay in starting rotations and graduation.

Any didactic phase student who receives two non-passing (below a "C" grade in a letter-graded PA course or an "F" in a pass/fail PA course) grades during the same semester or who gets a second non-passing grade in a letter-graded or pass/fail PA course in any subsequent semester through graduation will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program. Dismissal may occur at any time throughout the didactic or clinical year, as soon as course grades are finalized.

All didactic year courses must be satisfactorily completed, as listed above, and the student must successfully obtain Advanced Cardiac Life Support certification before the student is allowed to progress into the clinical year and start clinical rotations.

If at the end of the summer or fall semester, the cumulative didactic phase Q.P.A. is less than 2.75, the student will be placed on Physician Assistant Program Academic Probation for one semester and be required to complete interventional remediation. If the 2.75 cumulative didactic phase Q.P.A. is not met after one semester of PA Program academic probation, the student will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program. If the student falls below the 2.75 cumulative didactic phase Q.P.A. at the end of the spring semester, the student will be also be dismissed from the Program. Clinical year students who fail to maintain a 2.75 cumulative combined didactic and clinical phase Q.P.A. will also be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program.

If the Physician Assistant Program is notified about unsatisfactory academic or behavioral performance of a clinical year student on a rotation, the student will also appear before the PRC. Clinical year students who do not maintain minimum Program standards may be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program.

Dismissal from the Program may also result from any of the Causes for Disciplinary Action as listed in the Department of Physician Assistant Sciences Policy Manual (General Information - Personal Policies - Section F)

## **STUDENT TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

**GENERAL AREA:** SECTION A: ADMINISTRATION from the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education

**OBJECTIVE:** *OPERATIONS, STANDARD A3.13e*

" The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to ... students, policies and procedures to include: any required technical standards for enrollment."

**GENERAL AREA:** INTRODUCTION from the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education

Physician assistants are academically and clinically prepared to practice medicine with the direction and responsible supervision of a doctor of medicine or osteopathy. The physician-PA team relationship is fundamental to the PA profession and enhances the delivery of high-quality health care. Within the physician-PA relationship, PAs make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive and health maintenance services. The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. PA practice is centered on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activities.

Functions performed by physician assistants include, as a minimum, the following general categories of services: Evaluation, Monitoring, Therapeutic, Patient Education, Referral, and Professionalism

To provide the services listed above in a compassionate, competent and efficient manner, students in the PA Program will need to be capable of performing the following techniques on their own or with reasonable adaptations:

**General** The role of the physician assistant demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty,

**Characteristics:** appropriate interpersonal skills and the capacity to respond to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner.

The student needs to:

- have an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare
- have the mental capacity and physical abilities to assimilate large amounts of complex information and apply that information in an interpreted fashion to solve clinical problems and formulate therapeutic and diagnostic plans in an accurate and efficient manner
- remain calm and reasoned in a high stress environment and respond quickly and appropriately in emergencies
- consistently display honesty, integrity, empathy, and compassion
- function effectively under stress, making use of available resources to proactively maintain both physical and mental health

**History Taking:** Initially approach a patient of any age group in any setting to elicit an accurate, detailed history (appropriate to the situation) and record that data in an acceptable fashion.

The student needs to:

- be able to speak and understand English with a fluency level adequate to navigate most patient situations
- have the ability to adjust their level of communication to the patient's level of understanding
- demonstrate interactive verbal and proficient written communication skills

**Physical Examination:** Perform a comprehensive or focused physical examination of a patient of any age, gender or condition in any setting.

The student needs to possess:

- adequate auditory acuity to accurately use a stethoscope, tuning forks, etc.
- adequate visual acuity for inspection techniques and the use of an ophthalmoscope
- adequate depth perception for surgical/technical procedures, and the accurate use of an ophthalmoscope and microscope
- keen tactile sensation for palpation techniques

**Diagnostic Skills:** Identify, perform, order, and/or interpret, at least to the point of recognizing deviations from the norm, common laboratory, radiologic, cardiographic, and other routine diagnostic procedures used to identify pathophysiologic processes.

The student needs to possess:

- accurate visual and auditory acuity for the interpretation of diagnostic procedures
- the ability to reason a patient's problem in an orderly fashion
- competency in the integration of didactic skills, as demonstrated by written and practical examinations
- ability to record diagnostic and other findings accurately, efficiently and clearly

**Therapeutic Skills:** Performing routine procedures such as injections, immunizations, suturing and wound care, managing simple conditions produced by infection or trauma, assisting in the management of more complex illness and injury, and taking initiative in performing evaluation and therapeutic procedures in response to life-threatening situations.

The student needs to demonstrate:

- flexibility, dexterity and strength of his/her extremities for use in surgical/technical procedures
- degree of coordination in motor skills is needed to respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately