

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

**PROGRESSION STANDARDS FRESHMEN through JUNIOR YEARS**

**Standard A3.17-** The program must define, publish and make readily available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include: ... any required academic standards...requirements for progression in...the program.

Progression and continuance in the Saint Francis University Master of Physician Assistant Program is based upon scholastic achievement and personal qualities for the professional practice of medicine as a physician assistant. In addition to academic standards for acceptance into the 3+2 PA Program, students must be able to meet the Program's Technical Standards, with or without accommodations, upon admission. Students must continue to meet the academic progression standards, each of the technical standards and abide by policies and procedures in the Program's General Policy Manual throughout the freshman, sophomore and junior years to progress into the didactic (4<sup>th</sup>) year of the PA Program.

Freshman (Year 01 - These requirements pertain to Fall and Spring semester)

All freshman students must maintain the following academic standards to progress into the sophomore year as a Physician Assistant major: 1) obtain a minimum 2.75 cumulative Q.P.A. at the completion of the spring semester of freshman year, and 2) earn a minimum grade of "C" in all collateral\* courses.

Upon completion of the fall semester (freshman year), any student with a Q.P.A. below 2.75 will automatically be placed on one semester of Physician Assistant Program Academic Probation. If a student fails to obtain a minimum "C" grade in any collateral\* courses during the freshman year, or at the completion of the spring semester (freshman year) falls below the minimum 2.75 cumulative Q.P.A., the student will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program.

Sophomore (Year 02 - These requirements pertain to Summer, Fall and Spring semester)

All sophomore students must meet the following academic requirements to progress into the junior year as a Physician Assistant major: 1) obtain a minimum 2.85 cumulative Q.P.A. by the completion of the spring semester of the sophomore year, 2) obtain a minimum 3.00 cumulative Q.P.A. for all major and collateral\* courses by the completion of the spring semester of the sophomore year, 3) earn a minimum grade of "B" in all major\*\* courses, and 4) earn a minimum grade of "C" in all collateral\* courses each semester.

Upon completion of the fall semester (sophomore year), any student with a cumulative Q.P.A. below 2.85 will be automatically placed on one semester of Physician Assistant Program Academic Probation. If a student fails to obtain a minimum "B" grade in a major\*\* course, minimum "C" grade in a collateral\* course during the sophomore year (including summer), or at the completion of the spring semester (sophomore year) falls below the minimum 2.85 cumulative Q.P.A., the student will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program. Upon completion of the spring semester (sophomore year), any student with the major\*\*/collateral\* courses cumulative Q.P.A. below 3.00 will be automatically placed on Physician Assistant Program Academic Probation.

Junior (Year 03 - These requirements pertain to Summer, Fall and Spring semester)

All junior students must maintain the following academic requirements to progress into the didactic year as a Physician Assistant major: 1) obtain a minimum 3.00 cumulative Q.P.A. at the completion of the spring semester of the junior year, 2) obtain a minimum 3.00 cumulative Q.P.A. for all major\*\* and collateral\* courses by the completion of the spring semester of the junior year, 3) earn a minimum grade of "B" in all major\*\* courses, 4) earn a minimum grade of "C" in all collateral\* courses each semester and 5) provide documentation of 100 hours of health care experience (40 of which must be spent directly shadowing a PA in clinical practice) by the last day of class before final examinations start.

Upon completion of the fall semester (junior year), any student with a cumulative Q.P.A. below 3.00 or the major\*\*/collateral\* courses cumulative Q.P.A. below 3.00 will be automatically placed on one semester of Physician Assistant Program Academic Probation. If a student fails to obtain a minimum “B” grade in a major\*\* course, minimum "C" grade in a collateral\* course during the junior year (including summer), or at the completion of the spring semester (junior year) falls below the minimum 3.00 cumulative Q.P.A. or the major\*\*/collateral\* courses cumulative Q.P.A. is below 3.00, the student will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program.

Any junior student who does not provide documentation of 100 hours of health care experience by the end of spring semester (junior year) will be delayed in entering the didactic year by at least one year.

Dismissal from the Program, during the freshmen through junior years, 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).

A student dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program as a freshman, sophomore or junior will need to contact the Office of Advising and Retention to be assigned another major. No seat in the didactic year of the Physician Assistant Program is guaranteed for students who do not meet the minimum progression standards.

All core, collateral\*, professional electives and introductory physician assistant major\*\* courses must be satisfactorily completed before the student is allowed to progress into the didactic year.

\*Collateral courses: Chemistry 103, Chemistry 104, Biology 205/205 lab, Biology 206/206 Lab, Biology 214/214 Lab, Psychology 101 and Statistics 101/205 (Math 110 or higher)

\*\*Major courses: PA 200, PA 201, PA 202, PA 301, PA 302, and PA 303

Please be aware that various background checks will be required to be completed at the start of the fourth (didactic) year. **A positive hit or report on the background check or clearances will be forwarded to the SFU legal counsel for review and recommendations.** A positive report and/or failure to complete the process in a timely manner may delay your progression in the PA Program and prevent or delay clinical experiences and/or graduation.

## STUDENT TECHNICAL STANDARDS

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

**OBJECTIVE:** *OPERATIONS, STANDARD A3.15e*

"The program must define, publish and make readily available to ... students admission related information 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, and Referral

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

**History Taking:** Initially approaching 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 fluent English to relate to most patient situations
- have the ability to adjust his/her level of communication to the patient's level of understanding
- demonstrate interactive verbal and written communication skills

**Physical Examination:** Perform a complete or partial 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 oto-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

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Freshmen through Junior Years Progression Standards. I understand it is the University's prerogative to make changes as needed to Progression Standards so the current Progression Standards in place for the didactic and clinical year may change prior to my matriculation into that phase of the PA Program.

I have also read and understand the Technical Standards for enrollment and continuation as a PA major. I attest that I am currently able to meet all of the above technical standards. I am aware that should there be any change in my status that may affect my ability to perform any of the above tasks; I am mandated to notify the MPAS Program Director in writing as soon as possible. If a student or the Program identifies any concerns with ability to meet the Program's Technical Standards, the student will be referred to the Office of Disability. The student may be required to complete appropriate academic and/or medical evaluation to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made to assure student compliance with the identified technical standard(s). Inability to meet any of the above technical standards, with or without accommodations, may delay progression in the PA Program or be a cause for dismissal from the major.