

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
DOWNSTATE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS (SOHP)

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM



PROGRAM HANDBOOK

(A3.02)

2025 - 2027

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

May 27, 2025

TELEPHONE: (718) 270 2325

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**I. STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and completely understand the policies and procedures of the Physician Assistant Program as set forth in this manual.

I am aware of the additional policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the School of Health Professions, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, as published in the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Student Handbook.

I also understand that I must comply with these policies in every way. I further understand that failure to comply at any time may result in disciplinary actions.

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*After reviewing this handbook, endorse and submit this page to the PA Program Administrator by August 29, 2025. This document will be part of your student record and retained by the Program.**

## WELCOME LETTER

Dear Member of the Class of 2027,

Congratulations and welcome to the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, Physician Assistant (PA) Education Program. The PA faculty is dedicated to ensuring that we educate and graduate highly qualified, competent, and committed healthcare professionals. We provide a caring and supportive learning environment while ensuring that each student possesses entry-level competency appropriate for professional Physician Assistant practice upon graduation. Please be reminded that an effective system of communication is an essential component of student success in this endeavor.

This handbook provides general program information that seeks to familiarize students with the professional principles, policies, and procedures that govern our Program within the School of Health Professions.

Please become familiar with and abide by the policies and procedures described herein, as well as the academic regulations and professional requirements published in the Bulletin and the University Student Handbook.

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University and the PA Program reserve the right to alter existing rules and regulations, and the Physician Assistant program of study, as deemed necessary by the University, School, or program. SUNY Downstate PA students are governed by the information on the program's rules and regulations, as published herein or subsequently altered. SUNY Downstate expressly reserves the right, whenever it deems advisable, to:

1. Change or modify its schedule of tuition and fees;
2. Withdraw, cancel, reschedule or modify any course, program of study, degree, or any requirement or policy in connection with the foregoing;
3. Change or modify any academic or other policy. The School and the PA program will provide written notification to all students regarding any change.

Necessary changes in information in this PA Program Manual and other University publications concerning new academic regulations, policies, or programs will be communicated to students via emails, memos, newsletters, Brightspace, or other University publications. It is the responsibility of each student to ascertain current information that pertains to their individual program, particularly regarding the satisfaction of degree requirements, in consultation with their advisor, the Office of the Dean of the School of Health Professions, the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of the Registrar, and other relevant offices as appropriate.

Updated copies of all regulations, course offerings, and specific program policies are available for review in the respective program office, the SOHP Dean's Office, and the Office of Student Affairs.

You are encouraged to address any questions or concerns that may arise following your review of this PA Program handbook with the Program Director or your faculty advisor. We welcome your questions and suggestions.

The faculty and I will be transparent in setting academic and professional objectives, effectively guiding your academic and professional development.

Finally, all incoming students are required to sign the attestation statement on the second page of this handbook and return it to the PA Program, on the published date on the attestation page.

Welcome, and I wish you all the best in the successful completion of your Physician Assistant education at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University.

Sincerely,

*Andrea Trimmingham*

Program Director

Room 8-056 ext. 7707

Email: [andrea.trimmingham@downstate.edu](mailto:andrea.trimmingham@downstate.edu)



## ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

The program director, faculty, and administrative staff conduct the day-to-day operations of the program. Listed are the faculty and staff members of the Department.

**Andrea Trimmingham, MA, PA-C**

Program Director & Chair/Assistant Professor

Room: 8-056, ext. 7707

Email: [andrea.trimmingham@downstate.edu](mailto:andrea.trimmingham@downstate.edu)

**Samy McFarlane, MD, MPH, MBA Medical**

Director/Professor

Associate Dean for Student Research and

Director of the Internal Medicine (IM) Residency Program

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University

Room B5-471 ext. 3711

Email: [samy.mcfarlane@downstate.edu](mailto:samy.mcfarlane@downstate.edu)

**Jennifer Otey, DMSc, PA-C**

Director of Didactic Education/Assistant Professor

Room: 8-054, ext. 7773

Email: [jennifer.otey@downstate.edu](mailto:jennifer.otey@downstate.edu)

**Candida St. Hillaire, MPAS, PA-C**

Director of Clinical Education/ Assistant Professor

Room 8-057 ext. 4414

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**Edward Perchik, MBA, PA-C**

Admissions Coordinator/Assistant Professor

Room 8-057 ext. 7620

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**Abdallah Saudi, MD**

Assistant Professor

Room 8-057 ext. 7645

Email: [abdallah.saudi@downstate.edu](mailto:abdallah.saudi@downstate.edu)

**Edison Ruiz, MPH, PA-C**

Clinical Coordinator/Assistant Professor

Room 8-057 ext. 7606

Email: [edison.ruiz@downstate.edu](mailto:edison.ruiz@downstate.edu)

**Norman McCulloch, MA, PA-C**

Remediation Committee Chair/Assistant Professor

Room 8-057 ext. 2312

Email: [norman.mcculloch@downstate.edu](mailto:norman.mcculloch@downstate.edu)

**Jonathan Silver, DMSc, PA-C**

Asst. Admissions Coordinator/Assistant Professor

Room 8-052 ext. 2415

Email: [jonathan.silver@downstate.edu](mailto:jonathan.silver@downstate.edu)

**Dawn Morton-Rias, EdD, PA-C**

Former Dean and Professor

School of Health Professions

Email: [dawn.morton-rias@downstate.edu](mailto:dawn.morton-rias@downstate.edu)

**Natasha N. Roberts, MBA, MA**

Program Administrator

Room 8-051, ext. 2325/2324

Email: [natashan.roberts@downstate.edu](mailto:natashan.roberts@downstate.edu)

**Nakia Alford-Saunders, MBA, MPA**

Program Administrator

Room 8-055, ext. 7712

Email: [nakia.alford-saunders@downstate.edu](mailto:nakia.alford-saunders@downstate.edu)



**DOWNSTATE**  
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

**Physician Assistant Program**

Policy Name: Program Handbook	Program: Physician Assistant Program
Prepared by: Andrea Trimmingham	Date: 10-7-25
Reviewed by: SOHP Academic Policy Committee	Date: 10-9-25
Approved by: SOHP Academic Policy Committee	Date: 10-9-25
Last Revision Date: 8/28/25	
Distribution to: Committee of the Faculty	

Annually, we conduct a formal review and update as needed of our program policies and processes to ensure their ongoing relevance and for purposes of continuous improvement of our curriculum and the overall educational experience. As part of the program's annual review and update, feedback from students, faculty, accrediting body, and other stakeholders are utilized to inform these changes and to make data driven decisions.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The department's staffing comprises a mix of full-time and part-time faculty and staff members. Every faculty and staff member participates in admissions, ongoing curriculum development, and program evaluation. Students are assigned to a member of faculty for advisement; however, students may also speak with any faculty member for advice and guidance.

### **Andrea Trimmingham MA, PA-C**

Program Director & Chair

Education:

- MA: Urban Studies, Queens College, CUNY
- BS: , Physician Assistant Studies, SUNY Downstate Medical Center
- BA: African American Studies/Communications, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Clinical Practice: Primary Care, Orthopedics, Internal Medicine, Urgent Care, Pulmonary/Critical Care

Certifications: NCCPA, ACLS, BLS, Infection Control

Current Projects: Providing didactic instruction in Clinical Procedures, Pathophysiology, Physical Diagnosis, Adult Primary Care Medicine, Clinical Decision Making, and team instruction across other courses in the PA program curriculum. Clinical Coordinator, Participation in Student Admissions, Student Advisement, and Program Evaluation.

The Program Director is responsible for the leadership and academic administration of the educational program, including budget management, faculty development, curriculum planning and evaluation, student admissions, and outcome assessment. Additional responsibilities include oversight of the clinical curriculum, coordination of student learning activities including clinical supervision of students, principal classroom instruction in Clinical Decision Making, Independent Studies and team instruction in Physical Diagnosis, Adult Primary Care Medicine, and Clinical Procedures/Skills, Issues of Professional Practice and clinical coordination of students during the senior year. Also responsible for managing student admissions, mentorship, and student advisement and participating in college and campus-wide committees

### **Jennifer Otey, DMSc, PA-C**

Director of Didactic Education and Assistant Professor

Education:

- DMSc: University of Lynchburg, VA
- MPAS: University of Nebraska Medical Center
- BS: Physician Assistant Studies, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
- BBA: CUNY Bernard Baruch College, NY

Clinical Experience: Family Medicine/Pediatrics

Certifications:

Current Projects: Manages all aspects of the didactic year to ensure that all curricula and ARC-PA accreditation guidelines are met. Maintains communication with didactic/adjunct faculty

regarding all issues concerning course content, learning objectives, scheduling, evaluation, student feedback, and remediation as necessary.

**Candida St. Hillaire, MS, PA-C, AAHIVS**

Director of Clinical Education and Assistant Professor

Education:

- MS: Physician Assistant Studies, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
- BS: Biology, Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Current Clinical Practice: HIV Primary Care

Certifications: AAHIVS (American Academy of HIV Medicine-Specialist)

Current Projects: Clinical course director of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery, OBGYN, Primary Care, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry, Geriatrics. Participation in Student Admissions, Student Advisement, and Program Evaluation.

**Edison Ruiz, MPH, PA-C**

Clinical Coordinator and Assistant Professor

Education:

- MPH: Brooklyn College, CUNY
- BS: Physician Assistant Studies, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
- BS: Biology, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Current Clinical Practice: Obstetrics and Gynecology, Family Medicine

Current Projects: Didactic instruction of Clinical Microbiology and Immunology, Pathophysiology, Physical Diagnosis, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Adult Primary Care Medicine, Clinical Decision-Making, and Clinical Procedures, and team instruction across other courses in the PA program curriculum. Clinical Coordinator, Participation in Student Admissions, Student Advisement, and Program Evaluation.

**Norman McCulloch, MBA, PA-C**

Remediation Committee Chair/Assistant Professor

Education:

- MBA: Colorado Technical University
- BS: Physician Assistant Studies, City College, CUNY
- BS: Radiologic Technology, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
- AS: Radiologic Technology, Westchester Community College

Current Clinical Practice: Norman McCulloch worked as an Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant at Woodhull Hospital and retired in December 2020 from clinical practice. He has been a conference speaker at the New York State Society of Physician Assistants.

Current Projects: Prof. McCulloch is a part-time professor in the PA program at SUNY Downstate and is writing board review materials for up-and-coming physician assistant students. He provides didactic instruction in Pathophysiology, Physical Diagnosis, Essentials of Emergency Medicine and Surgery, Adult Primary Care Medicine, and Clinical Procedures.

### **Edward Perchik, MBA, PA-C**

Admissions Coordinator/Assistant Professor

Education:

- MBA: Wagner College, Master of Business Administration, Staten Island, NY
- BS: Touro College, Physician Assistant Studies, Brooklyn, NY (Coney Island Hospital campus)
- AS: Kingsborough Community College, Biology, Brooklyn, NY

Current Clinical Practice: Surgery, SICU and Urology. In addition to clinical experience, served as a Performance Improvement Specialist in the Department of Quality and Patient Safety at one of the most prominent NYC academic centers.

Certifications:

Current Projects: Responsible for maintaining admission guidelines by writing, updating, and recommending changes to admission criteria, policies, and procedures, and conducting information sessions for prospective students. He provides didactic instruction in Physical Diagnosis, Pathophysiology, Clinical Decision Making, Adult Primary Care Medicine, and Clinical Procedures.

### **Abdallah Saudi, MD, MPH, FASPC**

Assistant Professor

Education:

- MD: Tech University of Santiago School of Medicine, Wayne State University
  - Affiliated hospitals: Internal Medicine—Catholic Medical Center; Cardiology—Saint Mary's Hospital

Post Graduate Education:

- Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Rutgers University Medical and Dentistry
- MPH: Global Health—University of Bridgeport

Current Clinical Practice: Preventive Cardiology

Certifications: FASPC, NHA-RHE, NYSED, AHA (NSC, BLS-P), ACEP (ECSI)

Current Projects: Interdisciplinary Education, Clinical Coordinator and Course Director of LTC/Gerontology, EKG, Capstone/Master Thesis Project, Masters Project I, II, III, Medical Writing. Participation in student admissions, advisement, and program evaluation.

### **Jonathan Silver, DMSc, PA-C**

Assistant Professor / Assistant Admissions Coordinator

Education:

- DMSc: University of Lynchburg, Va.
- MS: Pace University, NYC
- BS: Howard University, WDC

Clinical Practice: Orthopedics / Surgery

Conference: Former President – Academy of Doctoral PA (ADPA)

Mentor for the SUNY EOP undergraduate students – Bridges to Medicine

Current Projects: Director of the Master's Completion program, Didactic Director of Pediatrics, Teaching all aspects of suturing / Casting and OR training skills, provide didactic instructions for physical diagnosis.

### **Dawn Morton-Rias, Ed. D., PA-C**

Professor and Former Dean, School of Health

ProfessionsEducation:

- Ed.D: St. John's University, Queens, New York
- Professional Diploma (PD): Instructional Leadership, St. John's

- University
- BS: Howard University, Physician Assistant
- BA: SUNY at Stony Brook, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

Clinical Practice: Family Medicine and Obstetrics/Gynecology

Current Projects: Didactic and Clinical instruction; Introduction to Physician Assistant Practice, Interviewing and Physical Diagnosis, Human Sexuality

Professional Activities: National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants- President/CEO: 2014—Present, Physician Assistant Education Association- President 2005-2006, New York State Board of Medicine - Board Member 2002—present, Accreditation Review Commission for Physician Assistants (ARCPA) Commissioner 1999- 2006.

**Natasha N. Roberts, MA,**

**MBA**

Program Administrator

Education:

- MBA: Health Services Administration Concentration, SUNY Oswego
- MA: Urban Studies, Queens College, CUNY
- BS: Health Administration, Lehman College, CUNY

Certifications:

Current Projects: Compiles course, clinical, applicant, student, and graduate data, designs survey instruments, and communications. Manages in conjunction with the program director, the fiscal aspects of the program. She also provides administrative, secretarial, computer, and technical support for the Program and responds to inquiries about the Program.

**Nakia Alford-Saunders, MPA,**

**MBA**

Program Administrator

Education:

- MBA: General Management, Metropolitan College of New York
- MPA: Business Management & Public Policy, Metropolitan College of New York
- BA: Letters, The College of New Rochelle

Certifications:

Current Projects: Responsible for the clinical aspect of the program. Assists in the compilation of course, clinical, applicant, student, and graduate data, designs survey instruments, and communications. Also provides administrative, secretarial, computer, and technical support for the Program.

**Adjunct Faculty**

Over one hundred academic faculty, including Physicians and PAs from the College of Medicine, College of Nursing, and other programs within the School of Health Professions, participate in the

teaching of the basic science and medical science courses. They are all credentialed in their respective disciplines.

Several distinguished Physician Assistants are hired to teach and supervise clinical sessions in the program. The adjunct instructors participate in the program based on his/her qualifications and achievements in the area of expertise. Most of the adjunct instructors are alumni of the program and have earned graduate degrees or have specialized training or skills in an area of expertise.

## **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:**

Physician Assistant Education Program  
Health Science Education Building (HSEB)  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor Room 8-051,  
Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### **General Contact Numbers**

Phone: (718) 270-2324/25  
Fax: (718) 270-7459

### **MAILING ADDRESS:**

Physician Assistant Education Program  
State University of New York (SUNY)  
Downstate Health Sciences University  
450 Clarkson Avenue, MSC 1222, Brooklyn, NY 11203

### **DEDICATED PA CLASSROOM**

Room 7-026 on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Health Science Education Building (HSEB) 395 Lenox Avenue,  
Brooklyn, NY 11203

The rest of the faculty offices are on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, HSEB Rooms 8-052 to 8-057. Each faculty or staff member has their name and office hours beside their office doors.



## II. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

### PA PROGRAM CALENDAR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

### SUMMER 2025

The State University of New York Downstate Health Science University  
**School of Health Professions and College of Nursing**  
 Academic Calendar 2025-2026

Summer Semester 2025	
Mon. May 12	First Day for SOHP Clinical Courses
Mon. May 12	Tuition Payment Deadline if starting a Clinical Course
Mon. May 26	Memorial Day – No Classes
Tues. May 27	Orientation & Registration for Entering OT, PT, PA, PH and Students
Tues. May 27	First Day of Classes <u>Continuing Students</u>
Tues. May 27	Tuition Payment Deadline for <u>Continuing Students</u>
May 27–June 4	Add/Drop Period – All Sessions (No “W” grade posted)
Wed. May 28	First Day of Classes <u>New Students</u>
Fri. May 30	Tuition Payment Deadline for <u>New Students Only</u>
Wed. June 4	Last Day to Drop Courses Without Tuition Liability
Thurs June 19	Juneteenth – No Classes
Fri. June 20	Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a Grade of “W”
Fri. July 4	Independence Day Observed – No Classes
Fri. July 18	Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a grade of “WP” or “WF”
TBA	Web Registration Opens for Fall 2025
Fri. July 25	Last day to apply for New York State Residency for Fall Semester
Fri. Aug. 15	Last Day of Classes and Final

## FALL 2025

The State University of New York Downstate Health Science University  
**School of Health Professions and College of Nursing**  
 Academic Calendar 2025-2026

<b>Fall Semester 2025</b>	
Mon. Aug. 25-Sept. 3	Add/Drop Period (No "W" grade posted)
<b>Mon. Aug. 25</b>	<b>Mandatory New Student Orientation &amp; Registration</b>
<b>Mon. Aug. 25</b>	<b>First Day of Fall Classes – Continuing Students</b>
<b>Mon. Aug. 25</b>	<b>Tuition Payment Deadline – All Students</b>
<b>Tues. Aug. 26</b>	<b>First Day of Fall Classes – New Students</b>
<b>Mon. Sept. 1</b>	<b>Labor Day - No Classes</b>
Wed. Sept. 3	Last Day to Drop Courses Without Tuition Liability
Fri. Sept. 26	Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a Grade of "W"
<b>Mon. Oct. 13</b>	<b>Indigenous Peoples' Day - No Classes</b>
Fri. Oct. 31	Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a grade of "WP" or "WF"
Tues. Nov. 4	Election Day - Classes in Session
<b>Tues. Nov. 11</b>	<b>Veterans' Day – No Classes</b>
<b>Thurs-Fri. Nov. 27-28</b>	<b>Thanksgiving - No Classes</b>
Fri. Dec. 5	Last day to apply for New York State Residency for Spring Semester
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Web Registration Opens for Spring 2026</b>
Fri. Dec. 5	Last Day to Make-Up Incomplete Grades from Spring & Summer 2025
Fri. Dec. 5	Last Day of Classes
Fri. Dec. 5	Last Day for SOHP & Nursing Clinical Courses
Mon. Dec. 8-12	Final Exams
Fri. Dec. 19	Deadline to Enter Grades on Banner System

## SPRING 2025

The State University of New York Downstate Health Science University  
**School of Health Professions and College of Nursing**  
 Academic Calendar 2025-2026

<b>Spring Semester 2026</b>	
<b>Fri. Jan. 2</b>	<b>First Day for Nursing Clinical Courses (IP Grades <u>ONLY</u>)</b>
<b>Fri. Jan. 2</b>	<b>Tuition Payment Deadline if starting a Clinical Course</b>
<b>Mon. Jan. 19</b>	<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Classes</b>
<b>Tues. Jan. 20</b>	<b>First Day of Spring Classes</b>
<b>Tues. Jan. 20</b>	<b>Tuition Payment Deadline – All Students</b>
Jan. 20- Jan. 28	Add/Drop Period (No "W" grade posted)
Wed. Jan. 28	Last Day to Drop Courses Without Tuition Liability
<b>Mon. Feb. 16</b>	<b>Presidents' Day - No Classes</b>
Fri. Feb. 20	Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a Grade of "W "
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Last Day to File for Commencement Ceremony</b>
<b>Mon. Mar.16</b>	<b>Spring Recess Begins</b>
<b>Mon. Mar. 23</b>	<b>Classes Resume</b>
Tues. Mar 31	Last Day to Withdraw from a Course with a grade of "WP" or "WF"
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Web Registration Opens for Summer 2026</b>
Fri. May 1	Last Day to apply for New York State Residency for the Summer Semester
Fri. May 1	Last Day of Classes and Clinical Courses
Fri. May 1	Last Day to Make Up Incomplete Grades from Fall 2024
May 4-8	Final Exams
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Commencement</b>
Fri. May 15	Deadline to Submit Grades on Banner System

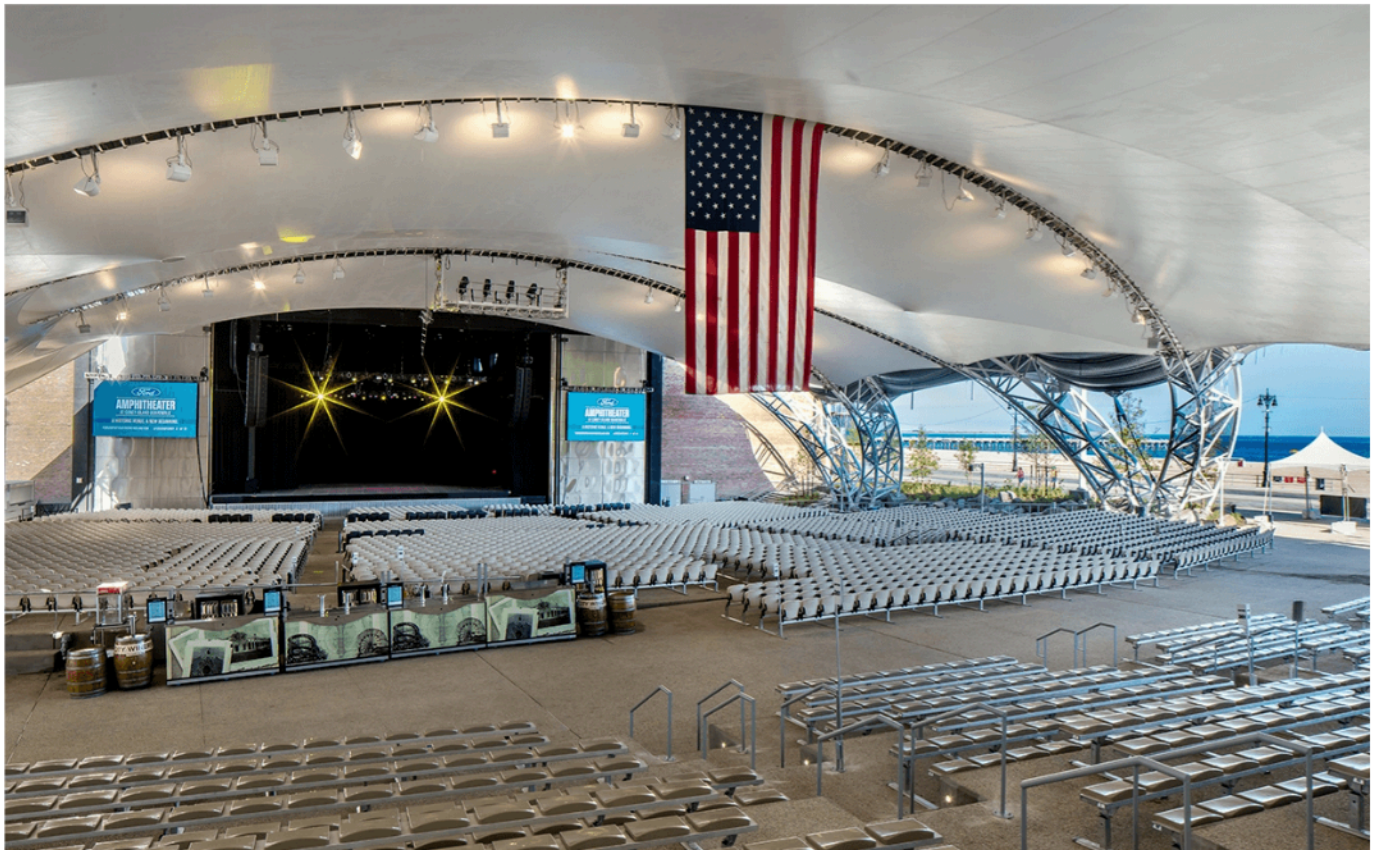
[https://www.downstate.edu/education-training/academic-calendars/\\_documents/2025-26-sohp-nr-calandar.pdf](https://www.downstate.edu/education-training/academic-calendars/_documents/2025-26-sohp-nr-calandar.pdf)

Please refer to the University Student Handbook for each semester (registration, withdrawals, add/drop dates).

**1. Didactic courses:** Classes are generally scheduled from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm daily. In the event of uncommon circumstances, and with prior notification, students are required to attend a special evening session until 9:30 pm at the latest. Full and regular attendance and participation in all coursework are required.

**2. Clinical schedules:** Students are required to be at their clinical site according to the site's schedule. The site determines if and when students will work on holidays. On-Call requirements are site-dependent. Students are required to work an on-call schedule, which may be typically late-night or overnight hours as determined by the site.

Any challenges encountered during the clinical year should be communicated to the Director of Clinical Education initially and promptly.



## MISSION, VISION, GOALS, EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, PROGRAM OBJECTIVES, AND BELIEFS

*State University of New York (SUNY) and SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University*

## THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The mission of the State University of New York is proudly expressed in its motto: To Learn, To Search, To Serve! The mission of the state university system is to provide the people of New York with educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional, and vocational postsecondary programs, including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary or customary. These services and activities shall be offered through a geographically distributed comprehensive system of diverse campuses, which shall have differentiated and designated missions designed to provide a comprehensive program of higher

education, to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students and to address local, regional, and state needs and goals.

## THE SUNY DOWNSTATE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University is the sole academic medical center located in the heart of one of the nation's largest, most ethnically diverse, and working-class urban communities. Our goal is to train the next generation of physicians, nurses, healthcare professionals, and researchers serving our community and New York State.

Through our research facilities, our mission is to advance medical sciences to the community at large. Through our hospital and education affiliates, our mission is to serve the healthcare needs of the 2.6 million residents of Brooklyn and Staten Island. Through graduate and continuing medical education, our mission is to provide lifelong learning opportunities for our physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals.

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The mission of the School of Health Professions is to educate healthcare professionals in the delivery of excellent healthcare services by developing their scientific competence and fostering their humane spirit. The College seeks to accomplish this by providing a challenging and supportive atmosphere for learning that offers opportunities for structured experiences as well as independent inquiry. The faculty contributes to knowledge in allied health through advancements in clinical practice, scholarly activities, basic and applied research. Collaboration is emphasized among the students, faculty, clinicians, and professionals in health care and related disciplines. Students are prepared for professional leadership roles through coursework, professional, and campus activities. The College fosters ongoing professional growth by sponsoring continuing education opportunities in all disciplines. The College strives to serve the urban community in which it is located, by providing health services and education to the population.

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physician Assistant Program is to educate and graduate highly qualified, professionally competent and culturally sensitive Physician Assistants who can provide quality patient care and readily respond to the evolving healthcare needs of patients in America's urban population.

### **Vision Statement**

Our vision is to be "a northeast leader in Physician Assistant education whose graduates are valued and remain at the vanguard of responding to the healthcare needs of patients at different medical settings and communities they serve. Our graduates will possess a keen appreciation of

the social determinants of health and will apply this knowledge in the care of their patients."

### **Educational Philosophy**

The educational philosophy of the SUNY Downstate Physician Assistant Program builds upon the rationale for the PA Profession. The PA Profession developed in response to shortages and the uneven distribution of providers. The profession has sought to develop creative ways to provide accessible, cost-effective health care services. In keeping with the rationale for the Physician Assistant profession, the SUNY Downstate PA Program continues to improve the health status of New York City residents through the education and deployment of primary care Physician Assistants.

The goals of the program are to provide the academic and clinical foundations for primary care Physician Assistants, to foster the development of attitudes, values, and behaviors appropriate for professional healthcare providers, and to prepare students to participate in a team approach to patient care. The emphasis is placed on student understanding of the role and responsibilities of Physician Assistants in the provision of quality health service, in the treatment and management of disease states, in meeting the health care needs of a richly diverse patient population, and in fostering health promotion and disease prevention.

### **Program Defined Competencies and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physician Assistant Program are tailored to ensure that our graduates attain all the competencies required of Physician Assistant graduates for entry to professional practice.

Below are the areas of expected competencies for the Physician Assistant graduate:

#### **Medical Knowledge**

- Utilize scientific principles related to patient care to differentiate between normal and abnormal anatomic, physiological, laboratory findings, and other diagnostic data.
- Analyze etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic processes, and epidemiology of medical and surgical conditions.
- Identify medical, surgical, psychosocial, and emergent problems, demonstrating an understanding of etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathology processes, and epidemiology.
- Interpret the clinical features, differential diagnosis, and management of common acute and chronic medical and/or surgical conditions seen in outpatient and inpatient settings.
- Identify the relationship between psychological and socioeconomic factors and their impact on health maintenance.
- Analyze and synthesize historical and physical findings, as well as diagnostic studies, to formulate differential diagnoses.
- Recognize signs and symptoms of serious and emergent medical/surgical conditions.

## **Interpersonal & Communication Skills**

- Provide patient and family education and counseling at a level of comprehension and sensitivity appropriate to the situation.
- Provide health education and counseling relative to healthful living, prescribed therapeutic interventions, normal growth and development, family planning, and emotional reaction to challenges of daily living, including stress, safety, illness, and death.
- Create and sustain a therapeutically and ethically sound relationship with patients.
- Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills.
- Record and present data in appropriate, accurate, and adequate oral and written formats, which satisfy medical, legal, quality, and financial requirements.

## **Clinical & Technical Skills**

- Perform physical examination, appropriate to the clinical situation and patient population.
- Present data in oral and written formats.
- Record patient information utilizing SOAP format.
- Record progress notes.
- Assist in performing surgical and emergency procedures.
- Assist in performing or directly perform life-saving interventions in emergent situations.

## **Clinical Reasoning & Problem-Solving Abilities**

- Order, perform and interpret therapeutic and diagnostic tests.
- Develop a thorough database and problem list.
- With appropriate physician collaboration, formulate and implement plans for treatment and management of common medical/surgical problems.
- Evaluate and monitor patient progress.
- Identify indications for and limitations of common diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.
- Perform and interpret appropriate diagnostic procedures.
- Prescribe pharmacotherapeutics within the scope of local prescriptive authority.
- Critically searching and evaluating medical literature as a component of their lifelong learning, in order to maintain knowledge of new medical findings.
- Implementing practice-based learning and improvement (PBLI).

## **Professional Behavior**

- Provide continuity of patient care.
- Consider issues of cultural diversity with regard to obtaining the patient history, performing the physical exam and in communicating with patients and family especially with regard to health education and counseling.
- Recognize the contributions of other health professionals in the overall delivery of health care.
- Refer patients to medical, health maintenance, mental health and social service agencies in the community as appropriate.
- Maintain current knowledge of community health facilities, agencies and resources.
- Recognizing and responding appropriately to issues of diversity, which impact on the delivery of patient care.
- Practicing in a manner consistent with the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior.
- Remaining abreast of current issues affecting Physician Assistant practice.
- To implement systems based on the Physician Assistant Professional Competency.

## **PROGRAM GOALS AND OUTCOMES**

1. Strengthen the diversity of the student body by recruiting and admitting a diverse cohort of students that matches the diversity of Metro New York City within 10%.
2. Recruit and retain a highly qualified and academically competent student body whose overall and science GPA is no more than 0.4 points from the national mean or within one standard deviation from the national mean.
3. Maintain an absolute academic attrition rate of 5% or less for any incoming cohort.
4. Provide the academic and clinical foundations for primary care Physician Assistants, as evidenced by PANCE outcomes that meet, exceed, or are within five percentage points of the national average for First-Time Test Takers.
5. Educate and graduate Physician Assistants who are capable of attaining the program-defined competencies required for entry into professional practice, as demonstrated by an exit survey mean score of 3.5 or higher in all skills.
6. Increase access to quality patient care for residents of New York City (NYC), as demonstrated by a retention rate of 90% or higher among graduates working in the Metro New York area.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physician Assistant Program

are interwoven with those of the School of Health Professions. Our objectives are tailored below for the PA program:

**1. Develop and expand educational experiences and related clinical training opportunities to meet the evolving and varied needs of the Physician Assistant profession.**

- Ensure adequate faculty/student ratio to meet ARC-PA accreditation standards and enrollment requirements.
- Enhance our outcomes assessment methods to improve the educational experience of students
- Enhance the utilization of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and other learning platforms to facilitate improved content delivery across all phases of the curriculum.
- Enhance IPE experiences for our students by collaborating with other colleges and programs on our campus.
- Develop continuing medical education, mentorship opportunities for graduates, and PAs returning to clinical practice.
- Stabilize the MS completion program, which was initiated in conjunction with the SUNY DownstateHSU School of Public Health.
- Develop global clinical rotation experiences pertinent to the Americas' changing urban demographics.

**2. Enhance clinical training by diversifying sites, preceptorships, and innovative clerkship placements.**

- Expand clinical affiliate training opportunities to increase the program's competitiveness in our geographic area.
- Strengthen relationships with preceptors through education opportunities and online offerings.
- Enhance evaluation of clinical training experiences to ensure attainment of set competencies for our graduates

**3. Strengthen the diversity of the student body and facilitate employment opportunities for graduates.**

- Improve student recruitment plan and overall enrollment management.
- Standardize articulation agreements with SUNY and CUNY feeder schools
- Develop an active SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA program Alumni Association.

**4. To foster faculty development, recognition, and support.**

- Encourage faculty development efforts in partnership with the SUNY Downstate center-wide Faculty Development Institute and PA professional organizations to build curricula and educational offerings on crucial elements of teaching and learning in PA education.
- Promote faculty excellence through the recognition of innovation, creativity, effectiveness, and productivity.
- Establish formal faculty mentoring opportunities in conjunction with other programs in our college.
- Ensure institutional funding to support faculty development and training.

- Enhance program faculty participation in professional activities and organizations within the PA field.

#### **5. Expand research, clinical, and educational opportunities both internally and externally.**

- Encourage faculty scholarly efforts and publications for promotion and professional advancement.
- Encourage continued clinical practice to improve clinical teaching.
- Improve the research capacity participation by PA faculty.
- Enhance collaborative research activities with other disciplines/departments and other institutions, with emphasis on urban and public health.

PA program curriculum integrates the basic sciences, social sciences, medical and clinical sciences, community service, and clerkship experiences to provide a comprehensive introduction to the practice of medicine. Students' spirit of collaboration and respect for contributions of all health professionals is promoted through inter-professional education (IPE) educational experiences. The learning objectives, instructional methods, and assessment methods of each academic and clinical course provide the opportunity for students to gain knowledge, skills, and the perspectives necessary to attain the outcomes required in the program curriculum.

Recognizing that our students are adult learners, responsible for their learning, the faculty provides an environment that engenders the acquisition of knowledge and skills essential to safe clinical practice.

The learning sequence is progressive, building on previously acquired knowledge and skills. Clinical problem-solving, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, the teaching-learning process, and respect for the rights and dignity of patients are introduced early and threaded through all Physician Assistant courses and activities.

The four-semester didactic phase consists of lectures, laboratory, hybrid, and traditional courses, as well as practical, simulation, and community service experiences designed to provide PA students with the knowledge necessary to address patients in a clinical context.

The clinical phase consists of ten supervised clinical training experiences (clerkships) at a broad range of clinical affiliate institutions. The clinical phase provides students with a valuable opportunity to hone their professional clinical skills. Graduates of the program are equipped with entry-level knowledge and clinical skills to practice medicine, as Physician Assistants, in physician-led teams. In addition to helping meet the specific shortages in New York State's health workforce, graduates of our program are qualified to practice in settings traditionally designed to address the healthcare needs of New York State's underrepresented and underserved populations.

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA program is committed to the following:

- Effecting change in our society through graduates who are tolerant, culturally sensitive, with a genuine appreciation for teamwork and a holistic approach to patient care.

- Preparing graduates who are critical thinkers and have a global perspective on their training.
- Supporting our students in all aspects of their professional development and training.



## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physician Assistant Program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education of Physician Assistants, Inc. (ARC-PA) and is a member of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). Our faculty are fellow members of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)\* as well as the New York State Society of Physician Assistants (NYSSPA)\*.

"The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) is the only national organization that represents physician assistants (PAs) in all aspects of their professional practice. Its membership includes physician assistant students and non-PA supporters of the profession."

PA students are oriented to the role and responsibilities of the professional associations. They are **required** to be members of the Student Association of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) and the New York State Society of Physician Assistants (NYSSPA). Membership and active participation in the activities of these professional associations provide opportunities to have a voice in shaping the direction and future of the PA profession.

Students are encouraged to participate in the activities of the professional associations at the national, state, and local levels. Membership in both AAPA and NYSSPA comes with associated costs and benefits.

- Membership in the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) - **\$75.00**. This is a one-time fee that expires 3 months after graduation.
- Membership in the New York State Society of Physician Assistants (NYSSPA) - **\$75.00**. The \$75.00 is at the student rate and for 2 years.

Membership in the AAPA through the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) and the New York State Society of Physician Assistants (NYSSPA) provides students with the opportunity to participate in the AAPA and NYSSPA annual conferences and

the special programs for students, like the Medical Jeopardy competition for students from different programs. Additionally, students become eligible for scholarships awarded by these organizations.

Membership in the aforementioned organizations is required of all students in the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physician Assistant Program.

NATIONAL AND STATE PA PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

 <p><b>American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)</b></p> <p>2318 Mill Rd., Ste. 1300, Alexandria, VA 22314 Customer Care Team: 703-836-2272 Option 1 customer@apa.org www.aaa.org</p>	 <p><b>New York State Society of Physician Assistants Inc. (NYSSPA)</b> PHONE: 917-679-4005 Customer Service: 860-437-5700</p> <p>E: info@nysspa.org <a href="http://www.nysspa.org">www.nysspa.org</a></p>
 <p><b>Physician Assistant Education Association</b> 655 K Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-2385 703-548-5538 <a href="mailto:info@PAEAonline.org">info@PAEAonline.org</a></p>	 <p><b>National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)</b> 12000 Findley Road, Suite 100 Johns Creek, GA 30097-1409 P: 678.417.8100 F: 678.417.8135 <a href="mailto:nccpa@nccpa.net">nccpa@nccpa.net</a></p>

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### PROFESSIONAL DECORUM

*"Professional is not a label you give yourself; it is a description you hope others will apply to you." (David Maister).*

Our professionalism construct at the SUNY Downstate Medical PA program combines virtue based, behavior based, and professional identity models. The criteria for assessing students' professional development, cover professional competence and skills, adherence to professional codes of ethics; sensitivity to patient and community needs; ability to work with and relate to peers and other members of the healthcare team; attitude; attendance; punctuality, and appearance.

The program uses the Professional Development Instrument (PDI), a rubric based self and advisor ratings form for student assessment and advisement. Professionalism also involves maintaining decorum and demeanor befitting health professionals. Physician Assistant students are expected to demonstrate sensitivity and maturity in addressing all classroom, on-campus, and clinical year conflicts. A student who demonstrates a lack of professional decorum shall receive individual advisement and counseling as well as a written warning from the Program Chairperson. Further infringement of this policy may warrant professional probation, and review by the School's Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing for investigation and recommendation.

### DRESS CODE

The program expects students to develop and project a positive professional image. Personal appearance is a significant part of this image. As health professionals, Physician Assistant students are expected to maintain the highest possible standard of appearance. Students are, therefore, expected to be neatly dressed and groomed throughout all phases of their professional education. Whether it is during the classroom lecture sessions, on campus, or with patient care experiences at any clinical site, PA students are expected to project a well-rounded professional image and to comply with all standards for attire as required by their clinical settings. Members of faculty and staff have the responsibility to model expected standards of dress and grooming.

The program also requires and expects from its students a standard of professional appearance and presentation, in both the didactic and clinical year phases of enrollment and has adopted the following guidelines to set the expected standards for professional presentation.

Students are required to dress in business casual attire for all Call Back Days in the senior year.

### GENERAL STANDARDS

Name badges identifying you as a SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA program student must be worn at all times and be visible to those with whom you are interacting, on campus and at clinical sites.

Good personal hygiene is to be maintained at all times. This includes regular bathing, use of deodorants/antiperspirants, and proper dental hygiene.

Avoid distracting perfumes or colognes (may precipitate allergies or sensitivities in faculty, preceptors, classmates, or anyone in close proximity).

## Didactic Year - On-Campus Dress Code

- Baseball caps, other hats, or non-religious headgear are not permitted in classrooms and lecture halls.
- Shirts with collars recommended, clean and neat T-shirts are permitted. Offensive logos are not permitted on any attire worn on campus.
- Casual slacks (chinos) or skirts recommended, clean and neat jeans permitted.
- Blouses and knit tops with collars recommended.
- No dresses with plunging necklines nor with exposed midriff or navels. An undershirt may be worn under the blouse or shirt.
- Open-toed shoes (female) and dress sandals permitted.
- Wearing beach footwear and shower shoes (flip-flops) are not permitted.
- The wearing of shorts is highly discouraged.
- Female students may wear capris.
- Cover all body piercings (except ears) or tattoos.
- No gaudy wearing of rings or jewelry. No more than one ring per hand (A wedding set counts as one ring).
- Wearing of earrings by male students is discouraged.

**Dress-Down Days** - Study days, when classes are out of session, and any other days determined by the Program, will be considered as dress-down days. Reasonable casual dress is acceptable on such days.

## Physical Diagnosis and other Patient Assessment Labs

During the didactic year, some program activities require the use of specific attire. Examples of such activities include the Physical Diagnosis, Clinical Procedures (including GYN teaching labs), Clinical Decision Making practicum, and other small group labs sessions. Closed-toe shoes are required during some of these sessions. Students will be informed by faculty when such a need arises.

- All students are required to come to all lab sessions with a clean lab coat and a set of scrubs.
- Short-sleeved SUNY Downstate T-shirt and shorts with elastic waistband also recommended
- All clothing worn during the patient assessment lab, including undershirts, must be clean and free of offending odors.
- Female students are, advised to wear a sports bra or similar gear for sessions that call for chest wall evaluation.
- All students need to be prepared and able to remove shirts for thoracic, cardiac, and abdominal examinations during the appropriate physical diagnosis lab sessions.

- Practical examination groups are assigned randomly and may not be changed.
- Students are not permitted into the Gynecology teaching sessions without the appropriate professional attire.

## Clinical Year: Professional Attire and Identification

- Clean, ironed short white coats with the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, School of Health Professions patch on the left sleeve and name badges mandatory.
- Proper identification badges bearing the student's name identifying him/her, as a "Physician Assistant Student" must be worn at all times.
- The Program defers individual clinical site-specific requirements.
- Shirts and ties (men), clean slacks/skirts, blouses, and tops are required.
- Skirt hems must be longer than the length of the white coats at clinical sites.
- Well-maintained footwear as required by site; open-toed shoes not permitted (safety issue).
- Clean, neat hair and good personal hygiene.
- Slippers are not allowed.
- Students are expected to wear formal attire on Call Back Days when students come back to campus. Other specific clinical year dress requirements are addressed in the Clinical Handbook.

Every effort should be made to avoid dressing in ways that may potentially offend classmates, instructors, and faculty, and for the clinical year, patients and clinical site preceptors, and other health care providers.

If for medical or religious reasons, a student is unable to fulfill the dress requirements, the student must request an appointment with the Associate Dean of Students to request a policy waiver. Appropriate documentation or justification will be required.

## PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to actively maintain a classroom environment conducive to learning. Engaging in activities or demonstrating behaviors that either distract or disrupt the learning environment is not tolerated. Such behavior includes but is not limited to; loud ring tones/calls, using the refrigerator or microwave during class sessions, walking into or out of class after it has started, destroying school property, interrupting students and instructors, monopolizing the class time during instruction, and sleeping during class. Students who fail to respond to advisement by the program may be subject to administrative withdrawal or be dismissal. (See Professional Development Evaluation)

## FOOD/DRINK

Eating meals is not allowed in the PA classrooms or any place where lectures take place, outside of lunch hours. Lightsnacks, water, and other beverages are allowed in the classroom, provided they are in a closable container. Eating during lectures is not allowed.

**Breaks:** Students should take advantage of regular breaks offered during lengthy classes. Students are firmly cautioned against exiting and returning to the classroom while a lecture is in

session.

**Punctuality:** The program requires timely attendance at the start of any class session and timely return from designated break periods. Students are also required to stay the entire duration of the class session. Please advise the Director of Didactic Education or the Program Administration in her absence of any emergencies that may lead to tardiness or absence. See the absentee section for more information.

**Visitors:** The program has a “no guest” policy. This policy is in keeping with the SUNY policy on unenrolled students who are not eligible to audit or attend classes.

**Conversations During Class:** If students have questions, they should ask them at appropriate times and should avoid talking and participating in other conversations during lectures.

## PENALTY FOR VIOLATION

The program and instructional faculty have the right and authority to counsel any student who violates the above standards. Such a student may be asked to leave the class or patient care areas (during the clinical year) if their appearance and behavior do not meet the above set professional standards. Class sessions and exercises missed by a student, because of enforcing the standards of dressing, will be marked as an unexcused absence. Any attendance penalty will be in addition to the dress code penalty.

The above policies reflect our SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA Program adopted standards as well as those prevailing at peer Physician Assistant Programs nationwide.

## ADVISEMENT

Every student is assigned a faculty advisor who is available for academic and clinical year advisement, as well as for personal concerns, throughout the student's enrollment. Advisement sessions between students and their faculty advisors are required at least once each semester, during both the academic and clinical phases. The intent of the student/faculty advisement sessions is to provide regular individual communications with each student, assist in the supervision of their progress in the program, identify strengths and weaknesses of the student, and assist the program in meeting the standards of accreditation.

Student Advisor office hours are posted on their office doors and/or via email. Students are advised to schedule an appointment and meet with their advisors at least twice a semester, and more frequently if they are experiencing academic difficulties or need to address any issues that may impact their academic performance.

An advisement document is completed during each session and placed in the student's file. Subsequent advisement sessions will be documented in the same format.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY – DIDACTIC YEAR

Full and regular attendance is mandatory for all lectures, laboratories, and clerkship assignments.

The Program seeks not only to present facts but also to assist students in developing the skills

and attitudes appropriate to the health professions. Therefore, cognitive knowledge alone may not be sufficient to pass a particular course or to acquire the skills required for professional practice. The student bears the sole responsibility of meeting all time and attendance obligations while enrolled in the SUNY Downstate PA program. The prevailing policies in this section are secondary to and support specific attendance policies published in individual course syllabi.

## ABSENCES

### ● Anticipated Absence

- Once a student becomes aware of an anticipated absence, such as job interviews or religious observances not published on the SUNY Downstate college calendar, he/she/they must inform the Director of Didactic Education or the Program Administrator, if the Director of Didactic Education is away. The program will determine how students will make up, within a week, the time away from academic work.

### ● Unanticipated Absences

- In the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency, the student must inform the Director of Didactic Education or the Program Administrator, if the Director of Didactic Education is away, the reason for the absence must be reported no later than 9:00 am the following day. This notification must come in written form, preferably via email. Except in the event of a real emergency, students are advised not to act on a request for an absence or early departure until given a written approval for such by the course director/s. Documented proof of the reason for the event leading to the unanticipated absence may be required by the program. The program will determine how and when students will make up unanticipated absences.
- Students are required to immediately notify Ms. Natasha Roberts at (718)270-2325 to inform the PA Program of any emergencies unless any such emergency makes this humanly impossible at the time.

(3) Anticipated absences of three (3) days or more will require notification to the Program Director for approval or refusal. Unanticipated absences that may be greater than three (3) days will require notification to the Program Director in writing.

Anticipated and unanticipated absences of greater than 3 days may affect the students' course progression and a withdrawal may be necessary depending on the circumstances.

If a leave of absence is taken, the date of program completion may be extended.

The following are examples of occurrences that commonly merit excused absences:

- Death in the immediate family

- Funeral services for a member of the immediate family - **limited to one (1) day in-state, and three (3) days out of state.**
- Family emergencies
- Personal illness
- Required personal court appearance (requires verification). Students should contact the office of Student Affairs when invited for jury duty.

The following are examples of reasons **not** accepted for excused absences.

- Family obligations: babysitting, or taking care of other family members. Students are obligated to make arrangements for childcare and other family responsibilities in advance, with back-up arrangements in place, so that students are able to attend all classes and submit assignments on time.
- Ceremonial events – i.e., **weddings**, christenings, etc. Requests for time off will not be honored.
- Employment, travel, and any non-PA program-related previous plans
- Personal problems
- Repairing a car, household items, or waiting for service or repair people to arrive
- Transportation not available/missing transportation
- Participating in a student demonstration off campus

Exceptional circumstances will be reviewed on their merit by the course or program director.

**Up to three (3) points may be deducted from the final course grade for each unexcused absence.** Three or more unexcused absences may result in course failure. Unexcused absences are not permitted in courses or sessions that are laboratory or experiential in nature, due to the challenges of rescheduling these experiences, the sequencing of lecture and lab sessions, and the curriculum in general. Students risk failing such course/s.

The above policies reflect our SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA Program adopted standards as well as those prevailing at peer Physician Assistant Programs nationwide.

Attendance will be taken by the program faculty across all the courses in the curriculum. Students are given one verbal warning for lateness and/or absence. Failure to address time and attendance issues will result in a meeting with the student to discuss implications and potential course/program progression. Three or more unexcused absences may result in course failure.

For students enrolled in the didactic phase, if an absence exceeds, or is expected to exceed two consecutive weeks, depending on the academic standing of the student, the Program Chairperson in conjunction with the program faculty, will evaluate the individual circumstances and recommend one of the following options:

- Failure of the course(s).
- A leave of absence for a maximum of one year (situation dependent).
- A medical leave of absence.
- Withdrawal from the Physician Assistant Education Program.
- Dismissal from the PA Program.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY - CLINICAL YEAR

Attendance policies during the clinical year are published in the Clinical Handbook. Students enrolled in the clinical phase clerkship are required to complete a minimum of 30-40 hours per week in each clinical clerkship service. PA students are also expected to participate in nights and weekend call assignments, per their team schedule.

- Anticipated Absence

**For any anticipated absence, the student must inform the Director of Clinical Education or the Program Administrator if the clinical coordinator is away via phone and email.** If approved by the program, the Director of Clinical Education will inform the Clinical Site Preceptor of the anticipated absence on behalf of the student. Absences must be made up to account for the lost time and be done during the same clerkship period.

- Unanticipated Absence

In the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency, the student must inform the Director of Clinical Education or the Program Administrator. However, if the Director of Clinical Education is unavailable, notification must be sent via phone or email, including the reason for the absence, no later than 7:00 a.m. on the morning of the absence or immediately following the cause of the absence. This notification must come in written form, preferably via email.

Except in the event of an emergency, documentation of the reason or event leading to the unanticipated absence or early departure from the clinical site may be required by the program. The program will review with the clinical site the logistics of making up for any lost time. Three or more unexcused absences may result in clerkship failure.

Failure to inform the PA Program or the Clinical Site regarding impending absences will result in the lowering of the preceptor grade by half a letter grade.

Students on clerkships are required to make up time lost due to absences. If an absence exceeds or is expected to exceed 5 days on a 6-week clerkship and 3 days on a 3-week clerkship, the student may need to withdraw from the clerkship. This action automatically extends the student's clinical year with all the associated implications.

Students requesting to take a temporary leave of absence exceeding 5 days during a semester in the clinical year will need to withdraw from the course.

Unexcused absences that exceed 5 days of the clerkship will result in a grade of "F," and the student will be required to repeat the clerkship. Additionally, the student will be reviewed for their academic and professional status, with the potential for being placed on professional probation or recommended for dismissal from the program.

Please review the policy on **leave of absence (LOA)** and withdrawal from the college and course, as outlined in the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Student Handbook: **School of Health Professions, Leave of Absence (LOA) p.60 and Withdrawal from the College p.63**

**Neither the PA Program course of study, its sequencing or schedules—didactic or clinical, will be altered to accommodate any student’s personal circumstances.**

Following a prolonged absence due to illness or medical leave, a medical clearance from the student's clinician or the Student Health Service will be required to return to classes. If a student’s clinician provides the medical clearance, they must be cleared for return by Student Health. Any outstanding course examinations will be rescheduled as the calendar permits and at the discretion of the course director.

### MODIFIED PROGRAM/DECELERATION

Unique circumstances may lead to a student being placed in a modified academic program. Please carefully review the policy on placement in a modified program or deceleration in any program in the college, as is clearly enumerated in the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University -Student Handbook – under the "Academic Standing and Promotion" section Academic Probation.

### CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS, AND/OR PHONE NUMBER

Students are required to notify the PA Program of any change of name, address, or telephone number within 7 days. In addition, students must notify the Office of the Registrar. The student is required to provide the program with a reliable contact number at all times.

The program is not liable for adverse outcomes if we are unable to contact the student in a timely manner due to a change in contact information that was not communicated to the program.

### SCHOOL-WIDE ACTIVITIES

School-wide events such as the Interprofessional Health Day, Ethics Day, Research Day, SOPH Interdisciplinary Roundtable, and the Dean’s Lecture Series are in line with the mission of the School of Health Professions (SOHP) to promote cultural and interprofessional education (IPE) amongst a culturally diverse student and faculty body. The dates of these events are published prior to each semester and will be reflected in the class schedule. Attendance at these events is mandatory. Failure to attend may impact the grade for the associated course.

### Computer Access

Didactic and clinical coursework is frequently posted on the Brightspace Electronic Web page. Regular access to a computer is required. Computers are available at a variety of locations on campus.

## Counseling and Academic Support Services

Psychological & Educational support services are available to all students while enrolled in the program. Students may access these services directly or be referred by the program faculty. For psychological counseling, please contact Dr. Stanley Tam via email or phone at stanley.tam@downstate.edu or (718) 270-1408 to schedule an appointment.

Services are private and confidential. The PA Program faculty is not notified of the purpose or attendance for these services. All information revealed to the counselor is strictly confidential. The Counseling Service is not part of the University administration. The Student Counseling Service, which is part of the Student Health Services, provides counseling and psychological services for students at SUNY Downstate.

### Academic Support

Academic support is available from assigned program faculty and the university counseling services. Students are strongly encouraged to seek support early. Utilization of academic support has proven valuable in improving test-taking skills, study skills, and paper/write-up assignment preparation of students.

**Contact the Office of Academic Support for advisement needs.** Their offices are located in room 620 in the Health Science Education Building or call **(718) 270- 7536. For appointments, please call Ms. Sze-Ying Lee.**

### CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR/ELECTRONIC USE POLICY

Email & Electronic Bulletin Boards: Faculty notices to students are sent via the SUNY Downstate email and electronic bulletin boards on Brightspace D2L. Students are encouraged to contact faculty and staff through the SUNY Downstate email or, secondarily, by phone. Students are expected to check their Downstate email & electronic bulletin boards at least twice a day. The SUNY Downstate Microsoft Outlook email is the official means to communicate with students. Students are strongly encouraged to download the Outlook and Brightspace apps and enable notifications to receive the most up-to-date information in real-time.

### Classroom Seating

The seating arrangement in the classroom is at the discretion of the SUNY Downstate PA program, and students may be assigned specific seating in the classroom or during any specified instructional or exam-related sessions. The goal of any seating assignment is to improve the learning environment. **Students cannot lay claims to a particular seat.** If a student requires accommodation due to an identified disability, they will be referred to the Office of Student Affairs to determine the appropriate accommodation.

### Electronic devices

The classroom environment can be enhanced by the utilization of laptops and recordable devices. However, the use of laptops, voice recording, and picture-taking devices must be done with respect for the educational environment and protection of intellectual property rights. All electronic devices (phones included) not required during any class session must be placed in an

OFF or SILENT/VIBRATE mode during lectures.

Examinations and Electronic Devices: All electronic devices, including but not limited to cellphones, laptops/computers, watches (Apple, Samsung or otherwise) not being used for the examination must be put away. If such devices are found on a student while taking an exam, disciplinary actions **will** be taken.

If a personal event (such as an illness of a family member) necessitates a phone to be available during class time, you must notify the instructor prior to the start of class. PA faculty reserves the right to dismiss you from the classroom at any time (with or without a prior verbal warning) for unauthorized use of an electronic device during lectures/examinations.

Any disruption to the educational environment, such as web surfing, sending emails or text messages, or other disruptive behaviors during class, may result in the instructor asking the student to leave the classroom.

*Being dismissed from class for these reasons will be counted as an absence, which can negatively impact the student's course outcome.*

Recording someone's voice and taking pictures for educational purposes requires the consent of the person.

The above policies reflect the standards adopted by our SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA Program, as well as those prevailing at peer Physician Assistant Programs nationwide.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Employment – Didactic Year

The substantial academic requirements during both the didactic and clinical phases preclude students from gainful employment. Experience has shown that academic and clinical performance suffers for students who hold part-time jobs while enrolled. Therefore, students are strongly discouraged from holding any level of outside employment while enrolled in the program. During the didactic year, classes are generally scheduled 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and with assignments that often require due attention during the evening and weekend hours. Three or more unexcused absences may result in course failure.

### Employment – Clinical Year

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant prohibits PA programs and institutions from using students for regular clinical or administrative staff. While on clerkship or during any clinical assignment, PA students may not replace any paid staff or receive any compensation, monetary or otherwise, for services provided or tasks performed. If a student is asked by a clinical site to perform in a capacity equivalent to a paid clinician or in another healthcare or professional capacity, they must inform the Director of Clinical Education immediately.

PA students are not permitted to work for the Physician Assistant program in any capacity, including those participating in a work-study program.

Additionally, clinical year experiences may occur Monday through Friday and with call duties over the weekends. Any plans for outside employment during the clinical year are simply untenable. Unexcused absences that exceed 5 days of the clerkship will result in a grade of "F," and the student will be required to repeat the clerkship.

Neither the PA Program course of study nor its sequencing will be altered to accommodate any student's work obligations.

### PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS COURSE LAB EQUIPMENT

Upon completion of the first summer semester, all Physician Assistant students are required to purchase the following professional equipment.

- Stethoscope
- Sphygmomanometer (Blood Pressure Cuff)
- Otoscope/Ophthalmoscope kit
- Penlight
- Snellen vision chart
- Tuning forks (128 and 512 mHz)
- Measuring tape
- Reflex hammer
- Short white lab jacket
- SOPH PA Program patch
- Physical Diagnosis lab uniform – 2 pairs of ciel blue colored scrubs for the labs
- The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA Program may also suggest authorized vendors for the purchase of some of the above equipment. The program only recommends vendors. If we do, said vendors, may provide students with cost savings.

### FACULTY/STUDENT RELATIONS

Academic challenges tend not to diminish with time, but rather multiply if left unattended. Students should address all academic problems or concerns as soon as possible, in the following order.

- Course Instructor
- Course Director
- Faculty Advisor
- Director of Didactic Education/Director of Clinical Education
- Program Chairperson

Appointments with the Program Chairperson may be scheduled through the Program Administrator. Students may also submit their suggestions directly to the Program Chairperson. At least one faculty-student meeting is held each semester (more if necessary) to facilitate open and ongoing informal communication between faculty and students and to discuss programmatic changes or issues.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The procedure for addressing and filing grievances arising out of '**equal opportunity, sexual harassment or academic issues**', is clearly enumerated in the **SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University – Student Handbook pp. 148, 149. Please also review the Student Bill of Rights section.**

PA students are, however, encouraged to bring general grievances, concerns, or suggestions for improvement directly to the PA Program Director or during faculty/student meetings. The purpose of these sessions is to encourage open communication between the students and PA Program administration, and to give the Program Director/faculty an opportunity to share current information about the PA Program. The topics addressed during these sessions are general in nature. The goal of these meetings is to encourage feedback for the purpose of quality improvement. Students are equally encouraged to express their concerns in a thoughtful and constructive manner.

Issues involving specific faculty members, individual students, or student grades should be addressed in individual sessions, as outlined below.

- Grievances with a specific faculty member should initially be addressed directly with that faculty member, unless the nature of the complaint is such that the student feels uncomfortable doing so.
- Complaints should be expressed using a diplomatic, reasoned approach with the goal of amicable conflict resolution, if possible.
- If the student feels uncomfortable approaching the involved faculty member for any reason, or if they have not been successful in resolving the conflict with the faculty member, they should register the grievance with the Director of Didactic Education or the PA Program Director.

If a student's grievance is with the Physician Assistant Program Director or if they have not been able to resolve a conflict at that level, they should contact the Dean of the School of Health Professions.

The above policies reflect the standards adopted by our SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA Program, as well as those prevailing at peer Physician Assistant programs nationwide.

## FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

The Financial Aid Office, located in the Basic Science Building, makes current information about financial aid, loans, and scholarships available to students. Additionally, the program makes information about other external scholarships available and posts it on the Program bulletin board.

## HOUSEKEEPING - CLASSROOM

Students are required to maintain a clean classroom environment. All trash must be placed in the garbage containers in the classrooms, in addition to keeping the sink, refrigerator, and microwave ovens clean. Failure to maintain these facilities may result in the removal of the refrigerator and microwave ovens from the classroom. Personal belongings such as shoes, clothing, etc., stored in the PA classroom will be disposed of. Day-to-day arrangement of the

classroom chairs, tables, and equipment is the responsibility of every student.

### LABORATORY AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FEES

All students are required to participate in laboratory and professional development activities while enrolled. The lab experiences include: Physical Diagnosis, Clinical Procedure Skills, Clinical Decision Making, Adult Primary Care Medicine and the Obstetrics/Gynecology lab.

Professional development activities include:

- Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) examination
- Attendance at Physician Assistant Professional Practice Day Conference, where applicable
- Infection Control Certification
- TyphonPAST - Clinical Year electronic student tracking and data collection system

Fees will be included in the tuition to cover these activities, where applicable. (The amount may be subject to change).

Prior to the start of the clinical phase of the PA curriculum, students are also required to:

- Obtain Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) for Providers.
- Obtain health clearance and present documentation to the Program
- Document current OSHA & HIPAA training
- Obtain student liability insurance through the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) approved malpractice provider. Student membership in AAPA does offer cost privileges with liability coverage.

*All of the above requirements must be completed before a student can be placed at a clinical site in the clinical year.*

### LIABILITY (MALPRACTICE) INSURANCE

Proof of current malpractice insurance coverage is required before participating in clinical rotations. Following the purchase of malpractice insurance, a copy must be submitted to the PA program prior to the start of the clinical phase of the curriculum. Liability coverage must be maintained throughout the duration of the clinical year. If the clinical phase is extended due to student deceleration, repeat of clerkships or for any other reason, the student must extend their malpractice insurance to cover the period leading up to their new date of program graduation.

The current American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) approved malpractice provider is:

#### CM&F Group Inc.

99 Hudson Street 12th Floor  
New York, NY 10013-2815  
212-233-8840 or 800-221-4904

[pa@cmfgroup.com](mailto:pa@cmfgroup.com)

<https://www.cmfgroup.com/documents/pa-and-np-group-application/>

## ORIENTATION AND REGISTRATION – NEW STUDENTS

New students matriculate to the program on a full-time basis only. A mandatory, college-wide orientation is done at the start of the program. Once admitted, and prior to the initial first day orientation, matriculating students are required to complete all the required clearances and provide proof of satisfactory completion of any outstanding prerequisite coursework or degree, i.e., transcripts, diplomas. Students are given a tour of the college and facilities, and are introduced to some of their professors and the University administrative leadership, where feasible.

During orientation, new students are also familiarized with the support services available at the University. The registration process is completed by the end of the first day of orientation. In addition, new students participate in a PA Program Orientation, as well as an orientation to the library and computer network system.

New students may be assigned lockers for use during the didactic phases, if available. Lockers are the property of the university and must be vacated upon completion of the third semester of the didactic year (Spring #1).

## ORIENTATION AND REGISTRATION – CONTINUING STUDENTS

The Office of the Registrar and the PA program will provide information related to registration for continuing students. During the pre-registration period, students will receive guidance on curriculum sequencing to ensure registration in the appropriate courses during web registration. Students who are placed on a modified course of study will meet with the Program Director for review of their modified curriculum. A modified semester course registration slip may then be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar for processing. Students are expected to submit proof of registration to the Program Administrator for placement in their files.

Clinical year students must be registered in their respective clerkships before proceeding to their clinical sites. Students will be withdrawn from their clinical site if they are not duly registered and cannot return to their assigned sites until they have been cleared by both the Offices of the Registrar and the Bursar.

## PA STUDENT SOCIETY



The Physician Assistant Student Society at SUNY Downstate is a chapter of the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA), a constituent chapter of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). Each incoming class elects its officers during the second semester.

The PA Club was established in the spring of 1997 on behalf of the PA class of 1998 and future PA classes. It is officially recognized and acknowledged by the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University's Council.

The goal of the PA Club is to promote our profession through organized monthly meetings, discussions on the present and future practices of PAs, fundraising, arranging National PA Day activities, and participating in University activities as one of the programs in the School of Health Professions. In doing so, we hope to unify students in the PA Program and establish a deeper understanding of the PA profession among the general public.

Jiyon Jennifer Kim PA-C

Founding President PA Club



### PA CLASS OFFICERS/ORGANIZATION

**The class leadership positions for election are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Class Historian.**

#### **Class President**

1. Develops the agenda for class meetings
  - A. Monthly meetings with the faculty member(s), if needed
    - Class organization/evaluation meetings
    - Organize fundraising projects
  - B. Set objectives for the year (class dues, educational meetings, etc..., where applicable)
2. Monitors class morale
  - A. Identify and notify the Program Director of the mood/tone of the class
  - B. Informally meet with Program Director to assess class and program progress in goal attainment.

### 3. Represents the class

- A. To the program faculty, when the need arises
- B. On the School of Health Professions Student Council

#### Class Vice-President

1. Coordinate student involvement with the interviewing process, where needed
2. Represents the class in the absence of the President
3. Assists the President in monitoring class morale
4. Monitors and evaluates student support systems, within the scope of the vice president
5. Works with the President in implementing class programs

#### Class Secretary

1. Record and make available minutes of class meetings
2. Responsible for class correspondence as directed by the President or Program Director

#### Class Treasurer

1. Responsible for all class monies
  - Manage the class funds in coordination with the SOPH council student account
  - Give a periodic financial report on class funds during class meetings and with the other class officers
  - Manage all funds raised and receive and maintain an accounting of social funds
  - Arranges for payment of all approved indebtedness of the class
2. Assists in fundraising efforts
  - Works with the Secretary in communicating with fundraising organizations
  - Works with the class to organize fundraising efforts

#### Class Historian

1. Chronicles the history of the class for use during the White Coat Ceremony
  - Takes and collates pictures of class activities for use during class events
  - Records brief descriptions of activities.
  - Submit photographs/materials for SUNY Downstate yearbook
  - Maintains student bulletin board
2. Maintains an up-to-date photo album

#### Class Representative to Student Government

1. Represents the PA Program to the SOHP Council
2. Attends the SOHP Council meetings.
3. Reports to the class on the SOHP Council functions and business.

#### Student Representative - New York State Society of Physician Assistants

1. Attend NYSSPA Board Meeting as voting representative

2. Encourages student membership in NYSSPA
3. Submits items for NYSSPA Newsletter

The class may elect students to serve on ad hoc committees for any class events, such as, but not limited to, volunteer activities or social events.

The Program has the discretion to appoint faculty to supervise the election of class officers.

### SCHEDULING AND COMMUNICATION

A record of all faculty, didactic, and clinical scheduling is maintained by the PA program administrator. Faculty mailboxes are located in Room 8-055. Mails and hard copies of completed assignments should be placed in the faculty member's mailbox or in the respective course assignment drop boxes. Program and School-wide information are generally communicated to the students via the college email system as well as the Physician Assistant Department Community Group on Brightspace.

### EMAILS

All students, including those completing clinical year clerkships, are reminded to check their SUNY Downstate emails at least twice a day and the electronic bulletin board regularly, in addition to contacting their clinical coordinator weekly, to stay informed about sudden scheduling modifications. Additionally, students should be aware that faculty may utilize email to advise students of class assignments.

All official email communication to SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA students, including vital information from faculty members, is sent to their SUNY Downstate email address or to their Brightspace electronic board accounts. Students are advised to communicate any concerns or questions with faculty and other students only through their Downstate email account. Students will be held responsible for any negative outcomes stemming from not checking and responding to official email instructions.

Current professional association announcements and general employment opportunities are commonly posted on the PA program bulletin board located on the 8th floor of the PA administrative office area. Information on some specific center-wide opportunities is also usually emailed to students. The notices for professional vacancies, which are posted on the bulletin boards, are removed after three months.

### SCHEDULING THE CLINICAL CLERKSHIPS

The Program arranges students' clinical schedules to ensure the best possible clinical educational experience with the clerkship sites currently available.

#### 1. Preparation for the Clinical Year

The PA program provides a pre-orientation to the clinical year in the first spring semester, followed by a detailed "Orientation to the Clinical Year" in the last pre-clinical summer semester. These events offer the opportunity to address and respond to student questions

regarding the clinical year. The PA Program determines the adequacy of clinical sites and establishes clinical site affiliations. Students may submit information on potential individual clinicians and sites that can be utilized for clinical training. The Director of Clinical Education visits and investigates the adequacy and possibility of establishing affiliation agreements with any such potential clinical site. PA students are not authorized to make direct arrangements with current or potential clinical sites.

## 2. Clinical Site Placement

The decision for student placement at specific clinical sites and dates rests with the Director of Clinical Education and the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University PA Program. The Director of Clinical Education assigns students to their clinical sites for completion of respective clerkships, primarily based on our active clinical affiliates and the best educational interest of the students and the PA program. Students cannot refuse clinical site placements based on preference.

With the approval of the Dean, the PA program selects clinical sites, which will provide the best possible range and quality of instruction and experience. The PA program also ensures that the required clinical affiliation agreements with SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, School of Health Professions, and all approved clinical sites are completed and in place. Each student is responsible for arranging personal transportation to and from clinical assignments and accommodations.

All questions or concerns related to clinical clerkships should be directed to the Director of Clinical Education. All students must complete two elective clerkships, each in the respective medical and surgical subspecialty areas. During the clinical year, students must inform the Director of Clinical Education and the Program Administrator of their preferred elective clerkship choice at least 9 weeks before the anticipated start of the clerkship. An early request improves the possibility of placing students in their preferred clerkship and site for an elective. Students may also inform the Director of Clinical Education of identified potential sites for their preferred subspecialty clerkships, initiating the process of assessing the site's adequacy and establishing a clinical affiliation agreement.

## CPR CERTIFICATION

In preparation for the clinical year, students are required to obtain and maintain certification in Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS)/Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) from an American Heart Association-certified instructor and at the Healthcare Provider level. Copies of the BCLS certification cards must be submitted to the Director of Clinical Education by the end of the summer semester preceding the start of the clinical year. Students who have not completed this training or submitted copies of their certification will not start their clinical year experiences.

## STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

### 1. Medical Emergency Alert on Campus

Student Health Services (SHS) clinic provides primary care for acute illnesses and injuries for students and employees while they are on campus. It also provides routine health

clearances, immunization, and tuberculin testing as needed.

Health care services provided to students off-campus or during clinical affiliation are covered under the student's insurance plan.

The following procedures should be followed in the case of a medical emergency:

- If a student suddenly becomes ill while on the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University campus and cannot be taken to Student/Employee Health Services, or if the Student Health Service is closed, call the University Police (extension 2626) to arrange for assistance.
- If a student is in the vicinity of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University and the Student Health Service is closed, and such a student has an urgent medical situation, they may visit the University Hospital of Brooklyn – Acute Care Receiving Center (ACRC)- the same as the Emergency Department for evaluation and care.
- Any student with life-threatening emergencies, and in the vicinity of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, should go to the Emergency Room at Kings County Hospital Center and inform the physician that they are a student at SUNY Downstate. Transportation to an emergency room may be obtained by calling 911.
- All visits to the emergency room must be reported to the Student Health Service within a specified timeframe.

## 2. Needle Stick Procedures for SUNY Downstate Students

If you receive a needle stick injury or blood exposure while on clinical rotation, you should follow the universal/standard procedures on the card given to you at orientation, i.e.:

- Immediately cleanse the area with soap and water
- All exposures (splash or sharps injury) must be immediately reported to your appointed supervisor (if you are at a clinical site), the PA Program faculty, and the Student Health Service (270-1995) or the Infection Control Department (270-1940).
- If the SHS (Student Health Services) is open, you may go directly to 440 Lenox Road, Apt. 1S. They will initiate the proper reporting procedures and treatment if required.
- If exposure occurs during the evenings, nights, weekends, or holidays, students should go to SUNY's University Hospital Acute Care Receiving Center (ACRC) – the same as the Emergency Dept.
- If you are at a clerkship site at another hospital, please report to your supervisor first and then follow their procedures for accessing the emergency room. Students should identify themselves as SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University students.
- Students must also report any exposures to biohazards to the Student Health Service at the first possible opportunity. The SHS will provide the usual follow-up care.

You are also required to contact the PA Program and advise your Course Instructor/Clinical Coordinator of any of the above incidents immediately. Please cooperate with the reporting procedure. It is essential for the hospital's safety and your own protection.

### 3. Health Insurance and Clearance

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University requires health insurance for all matriculated students. Information about the health insurance plan currently available to all students can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs (BSB Room 114). A Health Insurance form is included in the admission package sent to all new students admitted to the university. The information provided on the Health Insurance form is screened by Student Health Services to determine the health insurance status of each student. Proof of recent health clearance from the Student Health Service, or from a private physician, is required upon enrollment and before starting the clinical clerkships. Students must submit a photocopy of their Health Clearance Form to the PA program.



### CADAVERS AND THE ANATOMY COURSE LAB

At the completion of the course, donated bodies are cremated here at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. The ashes are returned to the family if they desire or buried in a cemetery plot purchased by the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. Some remains are returned to the family without cremation at their request. A memorial service is usually held in early spring to honor all donated individuals. Some bodies have had their brains removed shortly after death, and these organs are stored in formaldehyde for use in the Neuroanatomy course.

**Students are encouraged to attend the memorial service as a token of respect for the donors and their families.**

### BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS:

#### **Embalming Fluid:**

Exposure to phenols and formaldehyde (especially the latter) is potentially hazardous. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have recommended standards for environmental levels during occupational exposure to these chemicals.

At SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, the fluid used to embalm all cadavers contains a minimal amount of phenols and formaldehyde. Environmental tests are conducted annually, and the Medical Center Gross Anatomy laboratories consistently meet the ceiling of acceptability set by OSHA and NIOSH for environmental levels of these chemicals (time-weighted in parts per million). The ventilation system in the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Anatomy laboratories is designed to considerably exceed the recommended standard of five (5) air exchanges per hour.

The Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology continues to monitor the environmental conditions in its laboratories. Nonetheless, students are also informed of the potential hazards. Formaldehyde fumes are potentially hazardous to pregnant women. For advice and recommendations, speak directly to your prenatal care physician. Contact lenses, especially the soft lenses, may damage the eye by trapping fumes from embalming fluid. We suggest that students do not wear these while in the cadaver laboratory. Contact dermatitis and/or any skin sensitivity may occur in some students; if this should happen, go to Student Health (440 Lenox Road) for examination. Further detailed information on potentially hazardous substances can be found in folders attached to a central wall in each laboratory.

#### COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:

No cadaver known to have communicable diseases is accepted for teaching in the SUNY Downstate cadaver laboratory. However, the possibility that some cadavers may have harbored a communicable disease cannot be ruled out. Of the known communicable diseases, only tuberculosis and slow viruses are known to survive the embalming process. We, therefore, require that gloves be worn, during all contact with the cadavers, in the lab.

The embalming fluid is known to destroy the AIDS virus (HIV). According to the Centers for Disease Control, "embalming fluids are similar to the types of chemical germicides that have been tested and found to completely inactivate HIV".

#### STUDENT RECORDS

The Program maintains student departmental and clinical performance records. These files are available for review upon written request to the Chairperson. Written assignments (i.e., position papers, clinical case write-ups) are normally returned to students once performance is graded and recorded. Student performance on examinations and quizzes is recorded and distributed/communicated to students by the course director. Completed exams may be available for review by students, by appointment with the course director, under the supervision of the instructor or course director, and then retained by the program.

All records, evaluation instruments, and examinations (paper and electronic) are the property of the PA program, and reprinting or copying of any kind is prohibited.

#### WEATHER EMERGENCIES/NATURAL OR MAN-MADE DISASTERS

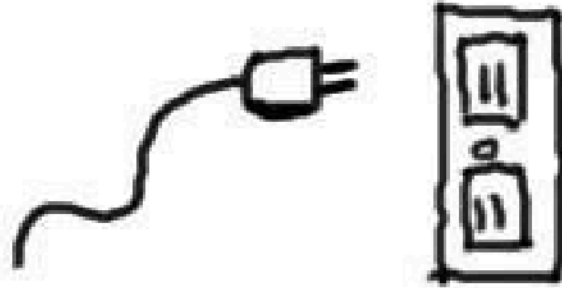
All matriculated SUNY Downstate students are enrolled in the campus Emergency Alert Response System (EARS) [www.downstate.edu/ears/signup.html](http://www.downstate.edu/ears/signup.html). Downstate EARS is used to communicate essential information during any life-safety event or potential emergency, such as a snow delay or closing, Department of Homeland Security Advisory, weather warning, gas leak, fire, crime watch, power failure, boil-water advisory, or other event. In the future, it may also be used to announce registration deadlines and campus life activities.

Students are advised to call the institution's emergency class cancellation line 718-270-7703 or 718-270-1000 and follow prompts to get to the SOPH message for updated information on class cancellation due to weather emergency, natural or human-caused disasters. You may also call the PA program 718-270-2324 for updates.



## DISABILITIES

Any student with a diagnosed disability or who may require special accommodation by the PA program, is required to inform the Office of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Affairs coordinates arrangements for students with disabilities. Students who wish to request accommodation(s) after matriculating into the college must complete the appropriate form available from the Office of Student Affairs. Please note that the accommodation may require time to process and put in place. (University Student Handbook)



# TECHNICAL STANDARDS

## TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ENTRY, CONTINUATION, AND GRADUATION

### INTRODUCTION

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of SUNY Downstate services, programs or activities or be subjected to discrimination by SUNY Downstate.

The term "qualified individual with a disability" means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or for participation in programs or activities.

The Committee on Admissions and Academic Standings will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. Students must be able to perform the essential functions of the program in order to meet certain minimum academic and technical standards. In carrying out their functions, the Committee will be guided by the technical standards set forth in this proposal as standards necessary for admissions, continuance, and successful completion of the program. This information is used in conjunction with the policies and procedures as delineated in the Physician Assistant Educational Program student handbook.

### TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The candidate for the M.S. Degree in Physician Assistant must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Performing in a reasonably independent manner is an essential function of the program and profession. In order to carry out the activities described below, candidates for the M.S. Degree in

Physician Assistant must be able to consistently and accurately learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

A candidate for the M.S. Degree in Physician Assistant must have abilities, attributes, and skills in five major areas:

- Cognitive Abilities
- Communication Skills
- Motor and Sensory Abilities
- Emotional and Behavioral Attributes
- Ethical and Professional Conduct

**Cognitive Abilities:**

- Demonstrate the ability to acquire, integrate, and apply knowledge across various disciplines, including but not limited to anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and medical sciences.
- Possess critical thinking skills to analyze and synthesize complex medical information, formulate differential diagnoses, and develop evidence-based treatment plans.
- Ability to comprehend and interpret medical literature, research findings, and healthcare policies to inform clinical decision-making.

**Communication Skills:**

- Effectively communicate with patients, families, healthcare professionals, and colleagues in verbal, non-verbal, and written forms.
- Demonstrate active listening skills to comprehend patient concerns, provide clear explanations of medical conditions and treatment options, and address questions or uncertainties.
- Ability to document patient encounters accurately and comprehensively in medical records, ensuring clarity, conciseness, and adherence to professional standards.
- Exhibit proficiency in delivering oral presentations to faculty and student groups, as well as conducting in-service presentations to clinical staff.

**Motor and Sensory Abilities:**

- Possess fine motor skills and dexterity necessary to perform physical examinations, procedures, and surgical tasks safely and accurately.
- Demonstrate tactile sensitivity and manual dexterity to palpate anatomical structures, administer injections, suture wounds, and manipulate medical instruments with precision.
- Maintain visual acuity, depth perception, and color vision sufficient to assess patient conditions, interpret diagnostic tests, and perform invasive procedures with attention to detail.

**Emotional and Behavioral Attributes:**

- Exhibit empathy, compassion, and cultural competence in interactions with patients from diverse backgrounds, demonstrating respect for individual beliefs, values, and preferences.
- Manage stress, anxiety, and emotional reactions effectively in high-pressure clinical environments, maintaining composure, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

- Collaborate with healthcare teams and adapt to changing circumstances, demonstrating flexibility, resilience, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

**Ethical and Professional Conduct:**

- Uphold ethical principles, integrity, and confidentiality in all aspects of patient care, research, and professional interactions, adhering to legal and regulatory standards.
- Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning, continuing education, and professional development to stay abreast of advances in medical knowledge, technology, and best practices.
- Accept responsibility for personal actions, decisions, and outcomes, recognizing the importance of accountability, integrity, and self-regulation in the practice of medicine.

**Conclusion:**

The technical standards outlined above provide a framework for evaluating candidates' suitability for admission to the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physician Assistant program. Candidates are expected to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations, as determined on a case-by-case basis. By maintaining rigorous standards for cognitive abilities, communication skills, motor and sensory abilities, emotional and behavioral attributes, and ethical and professional conduct, SUNY DHSU ensures that graduates are competent, compassionate, and capable of providing high-quality healthcare services to patients across diverse settings.



## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the contents of the College Academic Regulations, Professional Requirements, and the Academic Integrity Policy. These documents can be found in the University Student Handbook.

In addition to the "Responsibilities of Incoming Students" as outlined in the SOHP Bulletin, it is the student's responsibility to:

- Realistically assess personal development and recognize problems which demand intervention.
- Communicate academic, clinical, or individual needs that may require intervention from Physician Assistant Education Program faculty.
- Utilize all resources available through the University; initiate academic support.
- Abide by the Code of Ethics of the School of Health Professions, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, and the Physician Assistant Profession.
- Inform the Program Administrator of any changes to their correspondence address, telephone number, pager, and cell phone number.
- Follow the assigned didactic and clinical schedules and learning experiences as outlined by the program faculty.
- Maintain professional behavior and decorum.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The provision of safe, professional medical services by Physician Assistants relies not only on factual knowledge but also on non-cognitive, personal factors, including the ability to relate to patients and other members of the health care team, the ability to integrate information, and the ability to apply theory to practice. The faculty is charged with the responsibility of assessing student performance objectively, utilizing methods such as written examinations, observation in laboratories and discussion groups, and observation of clinical performance.

Methods of assessment and length of the examination are at the discretion of the course instructor and are published in each course syllabus. The Physician Assistant Program courses are competency-based and, as such, appraise the individual's performance according to a given standard (competency).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

The purpose of this professional development evaluation, completed using the **Professional Development Instrument (PDI)**, is to provide feedback to the student regarding their professional development towards becoming a Physician Assistant. Scores **equal to or above 32** will be recorded as **SATISFACTORY** on the student's grade report. A student may be presented to the Physician Assistant Program Student Evaluation Committee and placed on Didactic, Clinical, and/or Professional probation if they receive an **UNSATISFACTORY** professional development rating, **below 32**.

**Any single incident that is a violation of the School of Health Professions' personal and professional conduct code may warrant an UNSATISFACTORY rating for the semester.**

## EXAMINATIONS

The following are the prevailing policies and procedures for exam administration.

- Students must be present and sit for all examinations on the scheduled dates and times.
- Each student is responsible for properly marking the answers on the computer-based exams and/or on the answer sheet, if applicable.
- Students will not be permitted extra time to complete these tasks and cannot challenge a low grade resulting from failure to mark answers on the computer and/or answer sheet.
- During examinations, students are allowed a beverage in a closed container. The program will supply dry-erase boards, markers, and erasers during the exam.
- Cellular phones, food, recording devices, Apple or Samsung watches, written materials of any kind, unauthorized laptop computers, and any other electronic devices are prohibited.
- If a student needs a bathroom break, they must inform and obtain permission from the faculty or exam proctor prior to exiting the exam hall. To avoid distractions to the rest of the class, students are highly advised to attend to their personal needs before the start of the exam.
- When a student completes their exam, they must show the proctor their laptop **prior** to signing off the Respondus Lockdown browser. They should turn in all dry-erase boards, markers, and erasers to the proctor and leave the room quietly, so as not to disturb other students still completing the examination.
- After exiting the room, students are not to gather outside the door of the examination room, re-enter the examination room for any reason, or discuss the examination.
- Discussing the examination prior to the end of the examination period will be considered academic dishonesty and will be reported to the Program Director for appropriate action.
- Lateness of more than **15 minutes** to a scheduled examination will result in the student being unable to sit for the exam. The student must contact the course director regarding next steps.
- All students are required to demonstrate competency in both the theoretical as well as practical components of each course/clerkship. Comprehensive re-examinations are only offered at the discretion of the course director and as outlined in the course syllabus.
- Students who are caught cheating or violating any testing policy will be expelled from the exam room and will receive a score of "0", for the exam or activity. Additionally, such students will be reviewed for academic dishonesty by the Program Director or faculty committee and may be referred for dismissal.
- In the event of an illness or other emergency leading to an absence from an exam (such as a family crisis or medical emergency), the student must inform the Program Chairperson and the course director before the scheduled examination begins or within 24 hours after the scheduled exam to notify them of the reason for the absence.
- A student's failure to notify the faculty about an absence from a scheduled exam within 24 hours will result in a score of zero (0) for that examination.
- Examinations will not be rescheduled for individual students, except in cases where reasonable circumstances necessitate it.
- On uncommon occasions and with written requests representing a consensus of the class, an exam may be rescheduled for the entire class or for a group of students as per the discretion of the course director and/or the Director of Didactic Education.

The class president may then present a written request, which represents the consensus

of the class and the reasons for the request, to the course director. The course director, in conjunction with the faculty and Chairperson, will consider the request and reach a decision. The Program Administrator will communicate a response to the scheduling request. **Exam dates will not be changed except in cases of pressing and extenuating circumstances.**

- With valid reasons, an equivalent examination may be administered after the PA program is satisfied with the documented cause of an absence. Examples of such documents are: a funeral notice, medical note, and a legal discharge note, etc., and must be presented to the Course Director.
- Administration of all make-up exams must occur within one week of the initial exam administration or the student's return to campus activities as the schedule permits. The date and time will be set by the course director.
- Scores or grades for written exams are made available within 3-5 days of the test administration. The Director of Didactic Education or course director will provide posted grades electronically through the Brightspace web portal.
- Unexcused absences from lectures the day prior to an examination will result in a reduction of 5 points from class attendance and participation for each occurrence, in addition to other disciplinary actions.

### **Remote Examinations**

Secondary to COVID-19 and the distance learning mode of instruction, the program has utilized Respondus LockDown Browser and the monitoring feature Respondus Monitor to provide remote proctoring for examinations during the didactic year.

The following guidelines apply.

- Please log into Respondus LockDown Browser via Brightspace at the designated examination time.
- Your space should be professional and free of visual and auditory distractions.
- Please follow the instructions as given by Respondus Monitor.
  - SUNY DHSU identification in full view
  - A review of the full examination space, including but not limited to:
    - Full view of laptop/computer being used for examination
    - Full view of the examination space adjacent to both sides of the laptop/computer and above approximately four feet on each side, where applicable.
    - Full view of the area behind the laptop/computer being used
- Cameras are to be turned on with your exam space in full view for the duration of the test. If your camera is not on and/or you/your computer/laptop are not in view, your exam may be considered invalid.
- You are allowed to bring a drink to the examination space; however, no food is allowed.
- Bathroom breaks are allowed. Your timer will not be paused.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS DURING CLASSROOM EXAMINATIONS**

Testing for competency is critical in the health care fields; consequently, it is crucial for our examination procedures to be valid and reliable. Students should adhere to the following regulations during all exams:

- Arrive on time to the examination room. Students who arrive over 15 minutes after the exam starts will not be allowed to sit for the examination. Students who arrive after the exam has begun but before the 15-minute grace period will not be given additional time to complete the exam.
- Turn off all cell phones and other portable electronic devices.
- Sit in assigned seats, where applicable.
- Avoid talking or engaging in other forms of communication with students during the examination.
- Be aware that exam proctors will walk around the room to observe student behavior and will not discuss the test with the students.
- For written exams, keep the tests and answer sheets flat on the desks. The tests and answer sheets must not be moved or placed anywhere other than on the desks.
- Do not ask the instructor questions about the test content during the examination period, as this is disruptive to the exam process. Write down any questions, misunderstandings, corrections, etc., on a piece of paper to be submitted with the answer sheets and/or at the end of the examination. The instructors can consider the information when scoring the exams.
- Exams delivered electronically are monitored using the Respondus Lockdown browser and recorded for suspicious activity. Zoom proctoring may also be applied.
- Following the submission of the completed tests and answer sheets, students may be required to sign their names next to their names on a student roster.
- Abide by the Academic Integrity policies of the SOHP as written in the University Bulletin and Student Handbook. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these policies. SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University - Student Handbook. School of Health Professions, Academic Integrity/Examinations p. 48

The faculty will review all activity that Respondus Monitor has flagged as inappropriate. If confirmed, the student's examination will be considered invalid until further investigation is concluded.

If you are flagged for turning off your camera, your exam may be nullified, and/or you will be required to have additional Zoom proctoring for subsequent examinations.

## REVIEWING AN EXAM

When the opportunity allows, the course director may review major course exams with the entire class, during a scheduled exam review session. All students are expected to attend these sessions but may be optional for students with an exam score of 90% and above. When in-class reviews are provided by the course director/instructor, students who opt-out of this review session will not be given another opportunity to review the respective exam.

In the absence of any scheduled in-class review by the course director, students who fail an exam must make an appointment with the Director of Didactic Education or course director/s to review their exams or papers, for content areas that they have not performed well in, and within 2 weeks of receiving their score on such exam or paper. Students are not allowed to take notes but focus on the content areas needing additional review.

The time allotted in which a student can conduct a review is limited by the time of the administration of the exam, i.e. if the exam was a 60-minute test, students will be given 30 minutes to review the exam etc. Again, the focus of any post-exam review by the student is on the questions that the students got wrong and avails the student of the opportunity to improve their knowledge in such subject or topic areas.

Students who forego the opportunity to review session any failed exam within 2 weeks of receiving their score will not be given a second opportunity to do this.

Students who are eligible for a Comprehensive Examination, in a course, will be allowed to review only the exams not previously reviewed during the course semester. The time allotted for any such review is limited by the time of the administration of the exam/s i.e. if the exam was a 60-minute test, students will be given 30 minutes to review the exam, etc. Students are not allowed to take any notes during an exam review. The focus of the pre-comprehensive exam review for the student is on the content areas that the student performed poorly and must not be interpreted as an opportunity to study or memorize the exam. A comprehensive exam covers the course content for the entire semester.

Any makeup exams given to a student, as a result of failing score or not meeting published course expectations, will not be based on previous exams but based on assigned course content given for review. This is to prevent the habit of students depending on memorizing prior exam questions, in order to pass the subsequent exam rather than actually reviewing the covered content for better understanding.

The opportunity for further exam review is not offered after the final course grade is posted.



## **Remediation Committee**

The goal of remediation is to identify, based on course instructional objectives and evidenced by poor performance on examination(s), areas of weaknesses of material, and, once identified, to assist the student in overcoming those weaknesses and develop mastery of the material. Within courses that do not utilize formal exams, course directors may allow remediation of other assessment tools/methods at their discretion.

The Chair of Remediation Committee is Norman McCulloch, MA, PA-C.

### Responsibilities of Remediation Committee

1. Identify all students who perform below the defined course-specific minimum level and begin the intervention process.
2. Provide opportunities for frank discussion of student-specific factors affecting performance.
3. Referral to academic counseling to assist students with professional support with time management, work hour management, professional commitment, and personal issues.
4. Observe confidentiality of student information consistent with academic policies and procedures.
5. Develop a written personalized intervention plan. If extenuating personal circumstances are identified, that component of the plan will be augmented by the assistance of personal/mental health counseling.
6. Facilitate future learning.
7. Proactively follow student performance on subsequent assessments/advisements once a student has entered an intervention plan.

The policies and procedures of the Remediation Committee can be found in the Remediation Committee Policy in Brightspace.

## POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in the School of Health Professions are expected to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior, be mature and responsible individuals of good moral character, and be accountable for their behavior while in the College. It is expected that students' academic work will be their own. Students will actively uphold these standards and report any misconduct to the Program Chairperson. Academic dishonesty (i.e. cheating on exams, passing off someone else's work as your own) is grounds for dismissal. (See School of Health Professions Policy on Academic Integrity.) Acceptance of these academic regulations is assumed with registration (SOHP Bulletin).

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## ACADEMIC POLICIES SPECIFIC TO THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION

### PROGRAM GRADE SCALE

The academic policies relating to the grading scale, promotion, and probation status, described below, are specific to the Physician Assistant Education Program.

**Grading Scale:** Letter grades are based on actual numeric values and assigned by the course director or clinical coordinator, upon completion of each course or clinical clerkship. The grading policy of the Physician Assistant Education program is as follows:

#### Below is the grading scale for the MS Program

<u>Alphabetical Grade</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Value Score</u>
A	4.00	95 - 100
A-	3.67	90 - 94
B+	3.33	85 - 89
B	3.00	80 - 84
F	0	79 and under
<u>There are no A+.</u> In any course in which no comparative grade is given, designations "P" (Pass) or "F" (Fail) are used. "P" or "F" may be used for seminar-based and/or elective courses.		

Across the courses in the PA curriculum, the current minimum passing score is 80%. For the interdisciplinary courses offered by the program (Gross Anatomy, Physiology & Biochemistry, Research Methods, Neuroanatomy, Healthcare Delivery in the US), the grading scale is set by the course instructor.

WF (withdrew failing) carries a numerical value of zero (0.00) and is calculated in the grade point average, (GPA)

I -- Incomplete due to unforeseen circumstances i.e. (illness)

IP--Clinical Course in progress

R-- Borderline failure (re-exam pending)

The grades of P, WP, E, and I carry no numerical value and are not calculated in the grade point average.

A grade of WF is calculated in the GPA as a

zero(0)

## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

- A. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 is required and must be maintained to be in good academic standing.
- B. The performance standard or grading policy for the PA Program follows that established by the School of Health Professions. However, a grade of C+ or better may be accepted as passing in courses taken outside of the Physician Assistant Education Program. Examples of such courses are Human Gross Anatomy, Human Physiology and Biochemistry, Health Care Delivery in the United States, Neuroanatomy and Research Methods.
- C. If a student receives a final grade of "F" in any course, the course must be repeated. The failed course/clerkship may only be repeated once.
- D. When a student fails any 2 (two) courses or clerkships and/or the same course or clerkship twice, such student may be presented to the Admissions and Academics Standings Committee for dismissal.
- E. Due to the sequential structure, pre- and co-requisite requirements, and clinical supervision necessary in the Physician Assistant Education Program, didactic courses are taught generally once during the academic year.
- F. A student is placed on academic probation at the end of any semester in which his/her cumulative grade point average for that semester is below 3.0 (including the grades for the interdisciplinary courses).
- G. Students are admitted to the Physician Assistant Program on the strength of their academic credentials. Proficiency examinations, exceptions, and course waivers will not be considered.
- H. Students shall complete all professional courses outlined in the PA Program course of study in 5 years. Failure to complete all coursework in 5 years and in absence of mitigating circumstances, the student will be presented to the Admissions and Academics Standings Committee for dismissal.
- I. Opportunities are provided to ensure that student rights are protected and that students are afforded due process. The procedure for grade appeal is described below and is as outlined in the University Student Handbook and Bulletin.
- J. The procedures for appeal of academic standing decisions are as outlined in the University Student Handbook and Bulletin.

## EXAM OR ASSIGNMENT GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURES

The student must contact the course director for an appointment to review the paper or test in question within 2 weeks of receipt of the grade to appeal an individual exam or paper grade. It is up to the course director to change his/her decision at this stage. If the student is not satisfied with the course director's decision, he/she/they may, at this stage, submit an appeal in writing to the Program Chairperson. The written appeal should contain adequate background information about the course and the reasons the student believes the grade is incorrect or should be changed. The Student Evaluation Committee will review the student appeal, and a

decision will be made and conveyed in writing to the student by the Chairperson.

### GRADE REAPPRAISAL

Course grade reappraisal should be requested by a student within (3) business days following posting of course grades. The procedure is outlined in the **SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Student Handbook under (Grade Reappraisal) p.54.**

**Below are the acceptable bases for student appeal for grade reappraisal.**

- A. An error in the calculation of the exam or course grade.
- B. The assignment of this grade to the student was more exacting or demanded standards that were not applied to other students in the same section of the same course, in the same semester, with the same instructor.
- C. The assignment of this grade to you was on some basis other than performance in the course.
- D. The assignment of this grade to you was by a substantial departure from the instructor's previously announced standards for that section of that course.
- E. The assignment of this grade was based on a substantial departure from the written program approved standards or published grading rubric for this course.

### PROFESSIONAL REGULATIONS AND BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

- A. Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional behavior in both phases of the program curriculum.
- B. Evaluation of a student's professional behavior is documented every semester or at least annually by the Program through the completion of a professional development instrument. During the didactic phase, feedback is solicited from classroom instructors, program faculty, students, and administrators. During the clinical phase, feedback is solicited, and information gathered from the clinical coordinator and preceptor evaluations.
- C. In addition, annually, each student completes a self-assessment of his/her professional behavior. Students are expected to achieve a combined student/faculty score of 32 or higher on the **Professional Development Instrument** and a clinical coordinator/ preceptor evaluation of greater than 80%.
- D. If a student's behavior is deemed below standard through formal evaluation, the student will be placed on didactic, clinical or professional probation with the Program.
- E. A student placed on didactic, clinical or professional probation is reviewed every 6-9 weeks by the program's Student Evaluation Committee. Students are notified in writing of their probation status at the end of the program or sooner if further disciplinary actions are warranted.
- F. A student may not be on probation with the Program for more than one successive semester.
- G. The program may recommend to the College's Admission and Academic Standing Committee that a student be dismissed if he/she/they fail to demonstrate improvement in academic or professional behavior and maintenance of the standards.

- H. Behavior so negative, unprofessional, disruptive, or destructive as to compromise the work of fellow students, the effectiveness of the faculty and/or inability to work positively in a collaborative environment shall constitute grounds for probation or presentation for dismissal without any prior period of probation.

## PROMOTION AND GRADUATION

Upon completion of each semester, the Student Evaluation Committee reviews student performance. Student Evaluation Committee consists of the Program faculty, Medical Director, Physician Assistants & Physician Preceptors, and others as appropriate. Promotion to the next semester is contingent upon the successful completion of all required courses offered in the preceding semester and payment of all fees. The Student Evaluation Committee may recommend one of the following to the College Committee on Admission and Academic Standing.

### PROMOTION AND CONTINUATION IN THE PROGRAM

With the full academic course load, following completion of all courses traditionally offered in the Physician Assistant Education Program course of study.

### CONTINUATION IN THE PROGRAM ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

This occurs when a student's cumulative or semester grade point average falls below a 3.0 GPA, but he/she/they are deemed to be making satisfactory progress. A student whose cumulative grade-point average drops below 3.0, if permitted to continue in the program of study, is normally expected to raise his/her cumulative average to 3.0 or above at the end of the next semester.

### CONTINUATION IN THE PROGRAM ON DIDACTIC PROBATION

This is when a student's schedule is modified until he/she/they can successfully repeat the course(s) and resume a full course load. Students on a modified course of study must register for Independent Study courses and courses for which the prerequisite and co-requisite requirements have been fulfilled with a B or better. While on modified course of study full and regular attendance in all didactic courses offered during that semester as outlined in the modified course of study. Students shall resume full time enrollment upon successful completion of the repeated course(s). Students on a modified course of study and/or those who have grades: W/F will be automatically classified as on Probation. Students may be allowed or advised to audit appropriate lectures that will enhance their knowledge and prepare them for successful completion of upcoming course work.

### CONTINUATION IN THE PROGRAM ON CLINICAL PROBATION

Whenever a student's clinical performance is judged to be grossly deficient and/or unsafe, the student may be placed on PA program clinical probation. A student **may** be placed on probation for any or all of the following reasons: failing one or more initial administration of the end rotation exams, receiving a score of <80% on the preceptor and/or clinical coordinator evaluation for professional behaviors or receiving a score of less than 32 on the professional development evaluation. The above reasons may also be ground for

dismissal.

A student may not remain on clinical probation for more than one successive semester. After this time, and upon review by the faculty and chairperson, dismissal from the program may be recommended.

### CONTINUATION IN THE PROGRAM ON PROFESSIONAL PROBATION

Whenever a student's professionalism is judged to be grossly deficient and/or unsafe in the didactic and/or clinical years, the student may be placed on PA program professional probation. A student may be placed on probation including but limited to the following reasons; if a student's behavior is deemed below standard through formal evaluation (as measured by the completed professional development instrument score less than 32, clinical preceptor rating less than 80% and/or disciplinary action notices), behavior so negative, unprofessional, disruptive, or destructive as to compromise the work of fellow students, the effectiveness of the faculty/staff and/or inability to work positively in a collaborative environment. A student may not remain on professional probation for more than one successive semester. After this time, and upon review by the faculty and chairperson, dismissal from the program may be recommended.

### SUSPENSION

The student may be suspended from the program until he/she/they can repeat the course(s). Upon successful completion of the course(s) and with approval of the Student Evaluation Committee, the student will be permitted to resume full-time study and continue in the program.

### DISMISSAL

A student may be dismissed from the program, due to unprofessional behavior, in either phase of the curriculum.

Additionally, if:

- he/she/they have failed any Summer I semester courses (Human Gross Anatomy, Clinical Microbiology, Physician Assistant Practice)
- he/she/they are on academic probation for two consecutive semesters,
- he/she/they are on professional probation for two consecutive semesters,
- he/she/they are on didactic/clinical year probation for two consecutive semesters,
- he/she/they have failed two courses in the didactic year,
- he/she/they have failed two clerkships in the clinical year,
- he/she/they have failed two courses in the same semester,
- he/she/they have failed two clerkships in the same semester,
- he/she/they have failed a REPEATED course or clerkship,
- he/she/they have failed two courses in during the program (didactic and/or clinical year) or,
- he/she/they have/have consistently performed poorly while on didactic or clinical probation.

The student will be given an opportunity to discuss and clarify any issue regarding dismissal with the Program faculty and chairperson.

## COURSE REPETITION

At the discretion of the Student Evaluation Committee and upon approval by the Committee on Admission and Academic Standing, students may be required to repeat specific courses for credit in which they earned "C+" grades. Students who may be required to repeat specific courses are those on a modified program of study, on academic or clinical probation, readmitted students, and those returning from a leave of absence.

## PROMOTION TO THE CLINICAL PHASE OF THE CURRICULUM

Progression to the clinical phase of the curriculum requires successful completion of all didactic course work and payment of all necessary fees. In addition, all students must meet the following criteria:

- Maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better
- Obtain University Health Services clearance
- Purchase individual student liability insurance
- Obtain a Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) certificate for Providers
- Maintain current HIPAA certification

Progression to the clinical phase of the program will be delayed if any of the above requirements are not met.

Physician Assistant students must pass each component of the clinical curriculum, as outlined in the Clinical Handbook. All clerkships, courses and program requirements for completion must be achieved prior to graduation, therefore a repeat or extension of any clerkship will automatically extend a student's graduation date.

## GRADUATION

A. Requirements for graduation from the PA Program, as outlined in the – Program Course of Study.

- Successful completion of all didactic courses
- Successful completion of all clinical year courses and clerkships
- Successful completion of the Summative Evaluation (End of Curriculum exam, Procedural Skills Assessment, Clinical year OSCE, Professional Development Instrument (PDI))
- Demonstration of professionalism

B. To graduate, students must meet all College and Program requirements as established in the Bulletin and the Student Handbook of the University.

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University at Brooklyn has one commencement exercise in May of each year, and students who are scheduled to complete all degree requirements by December 30<sup>th</sup> of the same year are expected to participate in the May commencement exercises.

Graduation Awards Offered by the Physician Assistant Program at Convocation



### **Academic Excellence Award**

This award is granted to the student(s) that have maintained a high GPA during the didactic phase and have demonstrated outstanding professionalism.

### **Clinical Excellence Award**

This award is granted to the student(s) that have demonstrated outstanding clinical acumen, professionalism, and other qualities, which typify the Physician Assistant Profession.

### **Patricia Devine Award for Achievement, Perseverance and Professional Commitment**

This is awarded to a senior student who performed very well while experiencing extraordinary personal circumstances.

### **PA Class Facilitator Award**

This award is granted to the student/s who demonstrate/s exemplary facilitation of the success of their fellow classmates above and, beyond their own individual needs.

### **Research Award**

This is awarded to the student(s) who have demonstrated exceptional performance in their research project/s.

### **Special Recognition Award**

Criteria for award determined by the PA program and, on a case by case basis.

### **Dean List Recognition**

Is given to students whose semester GPA is 3.5 or greater.

Other forms of recognition may be bestowed on students at the discretion of the PA Program.

## UNIVERSITY SERVICES

The university provides a wide range of services for students including:

- Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Bursar
- Financial Aid
- Student Affairs
- Library Service
- Student Health etc.

All of these are outlined in detail in the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Student Handbook.

## Terminal Objectives/Outcomes

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- Expressions of the behavioral changes students are expected to achieve upon completion of the program
  - The ends
  - Address knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes
-

### **III. OBJECTIVES FOR ENTRY TO PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE—NCCPA**

Physician Assistant Program Graduates Should Be Able to Complete the following tasks and responsibilities:

#### **MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE**

- Appropriately use history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate a differential diagnosis
- Identify signs and symptoms of medical conditions and be able to select, perform, and interpret therapeutic, diagnostic, and lab studies.
- Perform physical examinations appropriate to the clinical situation and patient population
- Provide appropriate care for patients with chronic conditions
- Identify medical, surgical, psychosocial, and emergent problems, demonstrating an understanding of etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathology process, and epidemiology.
- Manage general medical and surgical conditions to include understanding the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities, prescribing Pharmacotherapeutics within the scope of local prescriptive authority.

#### **INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- Create and sustain a therapeutically and ethically sound relationship with patients.
- Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills.
- Record and present data in appropriate, accurate, and adequate oral and written formats that satisfy medical, legal, quality, and financial requirements.
- Demonstrate and apply an understanding of human behavior
- Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group

#### **PATIENT CARE**

- Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families.
- Accurately and effectively obtain historical information and provide information to patients in sensitive and appropriate ways.
- Counsel and educate patients and their families, choosing the appropriate level of comprehension and sensitivity.
- Develop and implement patient management plans and monitor and evaluate patient progress accordingly.
- Make informed clinical judgments about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, taking into account the limitations of common procedures, up-to-date scientific evidence, patient preferences, and information.
- Competently perform medical, surgical, and emergency procedures, including the performance of life-saving interventions in emergent situations.
- Work effectively with physicians and other health professionals to provide patient-centered, continuous care.

- Provide health education and health care services aimed at preventing health problems, enabling normal growth and development, and maintaining health, considering the challenges of daily living.

## PROFESSIONALISM

- Demonstrate an understanding of legal and regulatory requirements
- Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to issues of patients' age, gender, disabilities, and culture.
- Maintain current knowledge of community health provision to enable accurate and appropriate referral.
- Show a commitment to accountability – to patients, society, and the profession.
- Maintain professional relationships with physician supervisors and other health care providers, recognizing their contributions to the overall delivery of health care.
- Be committed to excellence and ongoing professional development, using critical engagement with medical literature and self-reflection as a component of lifelong learning.
- Remain abreast of current issues affecting PA Practice
- Demonstrate a commitment to the highest ethical and professional principles, including but not limited to issues of provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices.

## PRACTICE BASED LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

- Locate, appraise and integrate evidence from the medical literature related to their patient's health and medical problems
- Understand the relationship between a population of patients and the larger population from which they are drawn.
- Recognize and appropriately address gender, cultural, cognitive, emotional, social, and fiscal conditions as they impact the patient's care, recovery, and health maintenance.
- Recognize one's gaps and limitations in medical knowledge and social understanding relative to direct patient care.

## SYSTEMS-BASED PRACTICE

- Be able to integrate information technology into clinical decision making to support patient care decisions and patient education.
- Understand how to interact effectively with members of the health care team in a variety of settings and disciplines, capitalizing on the contributions of each member team in the provision of quality patient care.
- Understand the health care delivery and finance systems, including funding and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and the importance of appropriate coding of patient encounters.
- Be able to promote a safe environment for patient care through understanding the systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care reduction of medical errors.

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

### AI Policy Statement

#### Introduction

The mission of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University is, “To provide outstanding education of physicians, scientists, nurses and other healthcare professionals; to advance knowledge through cutting edge research and translate it into practice. To care for and improve the lives of our globally diverse communities. To foster an environment that embraces cultural diversity.”

The School of Health Professions (SOHP) acknowledges the growing presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in health care and education. Therefore, SOHP recognizes the need to address AI in the context of the education of students and promote responsible use of this technology. SOHP is developing policies to teach our students how to use AI responsibly. The development of AI literacy is increasingly important for health professionals. We anticipate that students with proper preparation will be able to discern the difference between improper, appropriate, and ethical use of AI.

#### Definitions

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is computer-based technology that uses algorithms to drive computers and robots to react; mimic, and work like humans. AI is also assistive technology that provides quick and easy access to information, facilitates decision-making, and supports creative endeavors.

**Generative AI** is AI that is capable of generating images, text, and other media in response to prompts. It is capable of producing output that extends well beyond the material students have been trained on, it is often inaccurate, and is to be used with extreme caution only as a supplement to traditional scholastic effort.

#### Privacy and Security

At this time generative AI does not assure privacy. Therefore generative AI is not to be used in HIPPA regulated data either in research or clinical charts or practice. This will ensure data security and privacy are not compromised.

#### Responsible use of AI in SOHP

- AI tools may be used to enhance learning of new concepts and ideas. AI generated information is not to be used to replace student and faculty analytical thinking or in place of completing one’s own assignments.
- Students should refer to individual course syllabi for policies regarding use of AI for specific assignments.
- AI tools may be used to improve writing at the sentence level. This is predicated on students generating the sentences first and using the tools to offer a point of view for consideration in enhancements. Inclusion of an AI generated paragraph is prohibited and is not considered original student work. Inclusion of an AI generated paragraph is improper use of the technology.

*Here are some general guidelines for AI usage:*

- Improper use of AI in assignments or exams may constitute plagiarism and is subject to the same penalties. Taking credit for AI-generated content without appropriately assigning attribution is a case in point.
- Verify accuracy and validity of all AI generated information.
- Use proper citation of sources and check that the sources are appropriate (follow discipline-specific citation guidelines).
- Students must follow policies in place during clinical rotations.
- Do not enter protected information or health record data into AI tools.
- Instructors have discretion to use AI tools in creative ways.
- Instructors have discretion to limit or prohibit the use of AI tools for particular purposes and as needed as per instructor prerogative and consistent with academic freedom.

- Ultimately, students are fully responsible for the content of work they submit.

**SOHP Honor Code and AI**

- Individual assessments, assignments and examinations must be original work and not AI-generated unless otherwise stated by the instructor of the course.
- Students are responsible for assuring their work adheres to all other policies and procedures in regard to academic integrity and policies on course syllabi.

To ensure a student understands the information above when turning in an assignment each student is to attest to the following:

I, (sign name electronically), pledge that I have neither received nor provided unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.

Or

I, (sign name electronically), acknowledge that I have received or used the following tools during the completion of this work.

List tools including but not limited to grammar checking programs, academic support services, outside tutoring services etc.

**COURSE OF STUDY**  
**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**COURSE OF STUDY 2024 - 2026**  
**DIDACTIC YEAR**

Summer Term I		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
ANAT 5012	Human Gross Anatomy	5.5
PAMS 5100	Clinical Microbiology/Immunology	2.0
PAMS 5207	Physician Assistant Practice	0.5
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>8.0</b>
Fall Term I		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
MSCI 5100	Research Methods	2.5
PAMS 5006	Interviewing and Physical Diagnosis	4.0
PAMS 5011	Neuroanatomy for PA Students	1.0
PAMS 5300	Pathophysiology	3.0
PAMS 5316	Introduction to Pharmacology	1.0
PHYS 5110	Principles of Human Physiology and Biochemistry	6.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>17.5</b>
Spring Term I		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 5101	EKG Interpretation	0.5
PAMS 5102	Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	2.0
PAMS 5212	Introduction to Psychiatry	2.0
PAMS 5251	Human Sexuality	1.0
PAMS 5301	Adult Primary Care Medicine	8.0
PAMS 5311	Pharmacotherapeutics	4.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>17.5</b>
Summer Term II		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 5211	Clinical Decision Making	2.0
PAMS 5241	Clinical Procedures	3.0
PAMS 5252	Long Term Care and Gerontology	2.0
PAMS 5411	Essentials of Pediatrics, Obstetrics & Gerontology	4.0
PAMS 5421	Essentials of Emergency Medicine and Surgery	5.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>16.0</b>
Recommended During Spring I or Summer II		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
INDI 5014	Brooklyn Free Clinic Experience - Elective	0.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>0.0</b>

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**COURSE OF STUDY 2024 - 2026**

**CLINICAL YEAR**

<b>Fall Term II</b>		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
ADMN 5100	Health Care Delivery in the United States	1.5
PAMS 6001	Masters Project I	1.0
PAMS 5501	Issues of Professional Practice	1.0
PAMS 6xxx	Six Week Clinical Clerkship	6.0
PAMS 6xxx	Six Week Clinical Clerkship	6.0
PAMS 6xxx	Three Week Clinical Clerkship	3.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>18.5</b>

<b>Spring Term II</b>		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 6002	Masters Project II	1.0
PAMS 6xxx	Six Week Clinical Clerkship	6.0
PAMS 6xxx	Six Week Clinical Clerkship	6.0
PAMS 6xxx	Six Week Clinical Clerkship	6.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>19.0</b>

<b>Summer Term III</b>		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 6003	Masters Project III	1.0
PAMS 6xxx	Six Week Clinical Clerkship	6.0
PAMS 6xxx	Three Week Clinical Clerkship	3.0
PAMS 6xxx	Three Week Clinical Clerkship	3.0
PAMS 6xxx	Three Week Clinical Clerkship	3.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>16.0</b>

**TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION AND GRADUATION - 112.5**

The order of clerkship assignments will vary among students during the clinical year.

CLINICAL CLERKSHIPS ARE SCHEDULED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL EDUCATION AND ASSIGNED BY THE PROGRAM

All students are required to complete the following 6-week/6-credit clinical clerkships:

6-week clerkships		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 6000	Clerkship in Internal Medicine	6.0
PAMS 6100	Clerkship in Pediatrics	6.0
PAMS 6200	Clerkship in Surgery	6.0
PAMS 6300	Clerkship in Emergency Medicine	6.0
PAMS 6400	Clerkship in Obstetrics and Gynecology	6.0
PAMS 6500	Clerkship in Family Medicine	6.0

All students are required to complete the following 3-week/ 3 credit clinical clerkships:

3-week clerkships		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 6600	Clerkship in Psychiatry	3.0
PAMS 6700	Clerkship in Geriatrics	3.0
PAMS 6010	Medical Elective Clerkship	3.0
PAMS 6210	Surgical Elective Clerkship	3.0

Students on a Modified Course of Study are also required to register for:

Independent Study Courses		
Course Number	Course Name	Credits
PAMS 5000	Independent Study 1	4.0
PAMS 5001	Independent Study 2	3.0
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>7.0</b>

TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION 112.5

Students on Modified Course of Study 119.5 credits\*

(\*Students on Modified Course of Study complete the Brooklyn Free Clinic Experience, where available, and the two Independent Study Courses: 7 credits)

## SUNY DOWNSTATE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CURRICULUM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES

- **ANAT 5012- Human Gross Anatomy**
- **ADMIN 5100- Health Care Delivery in the United States**
- **PHYS 5110- Principles of Human Physiology and Biochemistry**
- **MSCI 5100- Research Methods**

### PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM COURSES

\* **Interdisciplinary course**

#### Didactic First Year Courses

##### SUMMER I

##### PAMS 5100 - Clinical Microbiology/Immunology

This course builds upon the general principles of microbiology and examines the role of bacteria, fungi, parasites, protozoa, and viruses in disease, immunity, and public health practice. Emphasis is placed on medical application and basic clinical diagnostic procedures.

Lecture/Laboratory Demonstration - 2 Credits

##### \*ANAT 5012 - Human Gross Anatomy

Regional dissection and observation of the human body are combined with lectures and use of models and films.

Lecture-Laboratory - 5.5 credits

##### PAMS 5207 - Physician Assistant Practice

The course provides physician assistant students with an introduction to clinical practice through the study of the development of the physician assistant profession. Emphasis is placed on understanding the physician assistant's role in the team approach to primary health care through cost-effective treatment and management, health promotion and disease prevention, and patient/community education.

Lecture-Field Work - 0.5 Credits

#### STUDENTS WHO FAIL ANY SUMMER I SEMESTER COURSE(S) WILL BE PRESENTED FOR DISMISSAL.

##### FALL I

##### PAMS 5006 - Interviewing and Physical Diagnosis

This course introduces the student to the fundamentals of the medical interview and the physical examination. Students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a complete medical history. Topics include interviewing techniques, cultural barriers, and effective communication methods. Students develop the skills necessary for performing and recording a complete physical examination, including medical notetaking. This course is also designed to prepare the physician assistant student for the clinical phase of the curriculum. Emphasis is on the development of the skills and techniques necessary for performing comprehensive and focused physical examinations, utilizing specific techniques and diagnostic procedures. As part of the development

of these clinical skills, students participate in the Physician Assistant Mentoring Program, in which students are paired with and observe a practicing physician assistant.

Lecture-Practicum - 4 credits

**(Pre-requisite: Human Gross Anatomy)**

### **PAMS 5316 - Introduction to Pharmacology**

This course provides the student with the basic concepts and underlying principles of Pharmacology.

Emphasis will be on the areas of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. Formalized models will be used to systematically demonstrate the behavior of drugs in the body.

Lecture - 1 Credit **(Co-requisite: Neuroanatomy)**

### **PAMS 5011 - Neuroanatomy for PA Students**

This course is designed to introduce the student to the major functional components of the central nervous system. Emphasis is given to those aspects that relate to the role of the central nervous system in health and disease.

Lecture/Practicum - 1 credit

**(Pre-requisite: Human Gross Anatomy)**

**(Co-requisite: Introduction to Pharmacology)**

### **PAMS 5300 - Pathophysiology**

Pathophysiology provides a basic introduction to the study of disease and disease processes as a scientific basis for understanding health and disease in the study of medicine. A clear understanding of structural and functional changes in cells, tissues, and organs is imperative for optimal patient management, including appropriate utilization of diagnostic techniques, therapeutic management, and patient education and counseling.

Lecture - 3 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Human Gross Anatomy, Clinical Microbiology & Immunology)**

### **PHYS 5110- Principles of Human Physiology and Biochemistry**

A study of the basic physiological and biochemical principles governing the properties of living tissue and the functions of various systems of the body (cardiovascular, respiratory, excretory, digestive, and endocrine), emphasizing the underlying unity of biological processes in responding and adjusting to environmental change.

Lecture-Demonstration - 6 credits

**(Pre-requisite Human Gross Anatomy)**

### **MSCI 5100 Research Methods**

Introduction to designing and critiquing research studies. Lectures includes the fundamentals of defining a research problem, designing a study, measuring variables, selecting a sample, and analyzing data. In separate program seminars, students design research proposals and apply general research concepts to their individual professions Lecture - 2.5 credits

## **SPRING I**

### **PAMS 5301 - Adult Primary Care Medicine**

This course provides physician assistant students with the didactic foundation necessary to address patients in the clinical context. It introduces the fundamentals of disease processes and

principles of Primary Care Medicine. Emphasis is on the primary care approach to patient care, including the common clinical presentations, signs, and symptoms, as well as evaluation and management techniques.

Lecture - 8 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Principles of Physiology & Biochemistry, Pathophysiology, Interviewing and Physical Diagnosis, Neuroanatomy)**

**(Co-requisite: Pharmacotherapeutics)**

### **PAMS 5101 - EKG Interpretation**

This course provides the student with knowledge and skills in electrocardiogram interpretation.

Lecture-Laboratory .5 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Principles of Physiology & Biochemistry, Pathophysiology)**

### **PAMS 5102 - Health Promotion Disease Prevention**

This course is designed to provide PA students with a didactic foundation in the principles of health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention so that they will be able to integrate components of clinical preventive services into their daily clinical PA practice.

Lecture/Practicum - 2 credits

**(Pre-requisites: Pathophysiology, Research Methods)**

### **PAMS 5251 - Human Sexuality**

This course is designed to introduce the student to the bio-social basis of gender development, including sex, gender and sexual orientation, variety of sexual behaviors, values and attitudes, and dysfunctions.

Lecture - 1.0 credit

**(Pre-requisite: Interviewing and Physical Diagnosis)**

### **PAMS 5212 - Introduction to Psychiatry**

This course utilizes didactic instruction, role-playing, and responsibilities in the recognition, assessment, treatment, and referral of the psychologically impaired and the mentally ill as encountered in the primary care and emergency department settings. Students are introduced to techniques utilized in performing a psychiatric interview and formulating appropriate treatment and management plans.

Lecture - 2.0 credits

**(Pre-requisite: Interviewing and Physical Diagnosis)**

### **PAMS 5311 - Pharmacotherapeutics**

This course is an intensive review of clinical pharmacology and clinical pharmacy. Drug classifications are discussed as they affect specific organ systems with an emphasis on common dosage, potential side effects, and drug reactions, factors influencing safety and effectiveness.

Lecture - 4 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Principles of Physiology & Biochemistry, Intro to Pharmacology)**

**(Co-requisite: Adult Primary Care Medicine)**

## **SUMMER II**

### **PAMS 5211- Clinical Decision Making**

This course is designed to reinforce and refine the skills obtained in Interviewing & Physical

Diagnosis and to further prepare the physician assistant student for the clinical phase of the Curriculum. Students begin to integrate information, formulate diagnoses and differential diagnoses through critical thinking, and establish appropriate treatment plans.

Lecture-Practicum - 2 credits

**(Pre-requisite: Adult Primary Care Medicine)**

### **PAMS – 5241 - Clinical Procedures**

A series of lectures and practical exercises provides the physician assistant student with the basic knowledge and clinical skills necessary to perform minor suturing, venipuncture, medication administration, splinting and casting, endotracheal and nasogastric intubation, urinary bladder catheterization, and lumbar puncture. In addition, issues of the principles of radiology are presented.

Lecture-Laboratory - 3 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Adult Primary Care Medicine, EKG Interpretation)**

### **PAMS 5411 - Essentials of Pediatrics, Obstetrics, and Gynecology**

This course serves as a basic introduction to the diagnosis and management of common problems in the areas of obstetrics/ gynecology and pediatrics.

Lecture and Community Service - 4 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Adult Primary Care Medicine, Pharmacotherapeutics)**

### **PAMS 5421 - Essentials of Emergency Medicine and Surgery**

This course serves as a basic introduction to the diagnosis and management of common problems in the areas of surgery and emergency medicine.

Lecture - 5 Credits

**(Pre-requisites: Adult Primary Care Medicine, Pharmacotherapeutics)**

### **PAMS 5252 - Long-Term Care and Gerontology**

This course will provide an overview of the physiologic and psychosocial aspects of aging that are appropriate for primary care PAs.

Lecture - 2.0 credits

**(Pre-requisite: Introduction to Psychiatry)**

## **CLINICAL YEAR COURSES & CLERKSHIPS:**

**Pre-requisite: Successful completion of all didactic year courses**

## **SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCES (SCPEs) – SECOND YEAR**

### **PAMS 6000 - Clerkship in Internal Medicine**

This clerkship provides physician assistant students with practical clinical experience to interpret and integrate information obtained via the comprehensive history and physical examination, to formulate diagnoses, and to develop effective treatment plans. In addition, physician assistant students learn the indications and limitations of diagnostic procedures and therapeutic regimens common to internal medicine.

6 Credits/6 weeks

### **PAMS 6010 - Clerkship in Internal Medicine (Sub-Specialty Elective)**

This clerkship provides the physician assistant student with an additional opportunity to experience patient management in medical subspecialties such as cardiology, hematology, infectious disease, etc.

3 Credits/3 weeks

### **PAMS 6100 - Clerkship in Pediatrics**

This clerkship acquaints the physician assistant students with practical clinical experience in diagnosis, evaluation, and management of primary care pediatric patients encountered in the ambulatory as well as in-patient setting. Emphasis is on the recognition of normal as well as abnormal findings, diagnosis and management of common childhood illnesses, assessment of developmental milestones, immunizations, and well-child care from birth through adolescence.

6 credits/6 weeks

### **PAMS 6200 - Clerkship in Surgery**

This clerkship acquaints physician assistant students with the diagnosis and management of general surgical problems encountered in the hospital as well as ambulatory setting. Students participate in surgical management during the preoperative phase, assist during surgery, and provide post-operative management.

6 Credits/6 weeks

### **PAMS 6210 - Clerkship in Surgery (Sub-Specialty Elective)**

This clerkship provides the physician assistant student with an additional opportunity to experience patient management in surgical sub-specialties such as trauma, neurosurgery, orthopedics, and/or plastic surgery.

3 Credits/3 weeks

### **PAMS 6300 - Clerkship in Emergency Medicine**

This clerkship provides physician assistant students with practical clinical experience by working in an urban acute care setting. It enables the student to develop a focused and systematic approach in the diagnosis and treatment of common medical and surgical emergencies.

6 Credits/6 weeks

### **PAMS 6400 - Clerkship in Obstetrics and Gynecology**

In this clerkship, physician assistant students gain practical clinical experience in the diagnosis, evaluation, and management of the normal and abnormal conditions in obstetrics and gynecology. In addition, students learn to provide prenatal and postpartum care, family planning, and health education and counseling as appropriate to obstetrics and gynecology patients.

6 Credits/6 weeks

### **PAMS 6500 - Clerkship in Family Medicine**

This clerkship provides physician assistant students with the opportunity to gain experience in the treatment and management of ambulatory medical conditions. Emphasis is on effective and empathetic interviewing and counseling as well as management of the broad spectrum of primary care medical conditions that are encountered in the ambulatory setting. It will also focus on health promotion and disease prevention.

6 Credits/6 weeks

### **PAMS 6600 - Clerkship in Psychiatry**

This clerkship acquaints physician assistant students with the diagnosis and management of ambulatory as well as emergency psychiatric problems. Students learn to recognize and treat acute as well as chronic mental health disorders, affective and cognitive disorders, as well as disorders associated with substance abuse.

3 Credits/3 weeks

### **PAMS 6700 - Clerkship in Geriatrics**

This clerkship provides physician assistant students with practical clinical experience in the diagnosis and management of common geriatric medical conditions. Additional emphasis is placed on rehabilitation techniques, nutritional support, and psychosocial issues associated with the care of the elderly patient.

3 Credits/3 weeks

All clinical placements are assigned by the PA program and cannot be refused by students except in extraordinary circumstances.

### **CLINICAL YEAR COURSES**

#### **\*ADMIN 5100 - Health Care Delivery in the United States**

This course provides an overview and analysis of the US healthcare delivery system and the Inter-relationships among the various elements of the system. The organizational structures and types of hospitals are described, along with ambulatory care, long-term care, home care, and mental health services. Financing and DRGs are reviewed and described. Quality assurance measures and ways to better control healthcare delivery are reviewed.

Lecture - 1.5 credits

(Pre-requisite Successful completion of all didactic year courses)

### **PAMS 5501 - Issues of Professional Practice**

This course provides a personal exploration of values as well as a survey of contemporary thoughts on ethical and legal issues concerning medical treatment and professional practice.

Lecture/Discussions - 1 Credit

### **PAMS 6001 - Masters Project I**

This is the introductory segment of the clinical year Masters Project coursework. During this course, salient topics that cover the masters project overview, selection of project topics, plagiarism, citation & writing, and capstone presentation are presented over the course of the first clerkship semester. Key issues in primary care, as well as current changes/trends in medicine, are also addressed. Students develop and demonstrate the skills necessary to research and prepare formal presentations. Students are assigned to project advisors who will guide them in selecting a topic acceptable for the master's project. By the end of this course, students will have settled on their choice/title of a masters project. The project topics will be focused on topics in medicine and public health. After final review by their faculty advisor(s), the student can start working on the initial draft to be used as a basis for the final paper that will be covered in Masters Project II and Masters Project III.

Lecture/Discussions - 1 Credit

### **PAMS 6002 – Masters Project II**

During this course semester, the students will continue to follow up with their advisors as they continue to progress and revision of their project. The students will meet with their course advisors no less than three times. The student comes prepared to meetings and provides the mentor with a reasonable amount of time to review the materials before meeting. The student makes arrangements, with the mentor to review the problem statement, bibliography and rough draft at a time convenient to the mentor, but within the confines of the class deadlines.

[Lecture - 1 Credit](#)

### **PAMS 6003 – Masters Project III/Senior Seminar**

Masters Project III is the capstone component of the clinical year master's project and a continuation from Masters Project II. It culminates in a completed written project and its oral presentation, concluding the MS curriculum. Students will continue to work with assigned advisors to revise their papers and PowerPoint presentations.

The findings from the Master's Project work are presented to the PA Program in two ways: as a written paper of high scholarly or clinically relevant quality that is potentially publishable in a peer-reviewed publication or other medical journal, and as a PowerPoint presentation to their classmates and PA Program or college faculty. During the final capstone practicum, students are expected to demonstrate subject mastery by delivering a presentation on their chosen topic and responding to questions posed by faculty and/or peers.

Students are also required to satisfy the program requirements for graduation within this course, including the End of Curriculum exam, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), the Clinical Procedures Checklist, and a PDI score of greater than or equal to 32, all of which must be completed within the last four months of the program.

[Lecture - 1 Credit](#)

### **OTHER PROGRAM OFFERINGS**

#### **PAMS 5000 AND PAMS 5001 - Independent Study**

Each of these courses provides students who are on a modified course of study an opportunity to review subjects including but limited to, anatomy and physiology, interviewing, physical examination, fundamentals of pathophysiology, primary care and specialty medical/surgical topics, pharmacotherapeutics and laboratory review. Courses are individualized to meet students' academic and clinical needs. This is accomplished through written assignments, independent reading, auditing of lectures, reviewing software, audio, and video resources, classroom demonstrations, and presentations.

[Lecture/Discussions/Practicum - PAMS 5000: 4 credits; PAMS 5001: 3 credits](#)

## **IV. CODE OF ETHICS OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION**

- The American Academy of Physician Assistants recognizes its responsibility to aid the profession in maintaining high standards in the provision of quality and accessible health care services. The following principles delineate the standards governing the conduct of Physician Assistants in their professional interactions with patients, colleagues, other health professionals, and the general public.

- Realizing that no code can encompass all ethical responsibilities of the physician assistant, this enumeration of obligations in the Code of Ethics is not comprehensive, and it does not constitute a denial of the existence of other obligations, equally imperative, though not specifically mentioned.
- Physician Assistants shall be committed to providing competent medical care, assuming as their primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all humans.
- Physician Assistants shall extend to each patient the full measure of their ability as dedicated, empathetic health care providers and shall assume responsibility for the skillful and proficient transactions of their professional duties.
- Physician Assistants shall deliver health care services to health consumers without regard to sex, race, creed, socioeconomic and political status.
- Physician Assistants shall adhere to all state and federal laws governing informed consent concerning the patient's health care.
- Physician Assistants shall seek consultation with their supervising physician, other health providers, or qualified professionals having special skills, knowledge, or experience whenever the welfare of the patient will be safeguarded or advanced by such consultation. Supervision should include ongoing communication between the physician and the physician assistant regarding the care of all patients.
- Physician Assistants shall take the personal responsibility for being familiar with, and adhering to, all federal/state laws applicable to the practice of their profession.
- Physician Assistants shall provide only those services for which they are qualified via education and/or experiences and by pertinent legal, regulatory process.
- Physician Assistants shall not misrepresent in any manner, either directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, identity, or services.
- Physician Assistants shall uphold the doctrine of confidentiality regarding privileged patient information, unless required to release such information by law or such information becomes necessary to protect the welfare of the patient or the community.
- Physician Assistants shall strive to maintain and increase the quality of individual health care service through individual study and continuing education.
- Physician Assistants shall have the duty to respect the law, to uphold the dignity of the Physician Assistant profession, and to accept its ethical principles. The Physician Assistant shall not participate in or conceal any activity that will bring discredit or dishonor to the Physician Assistant profession and shall expose, without fear or favor, any illegal or unethical conduct in the medical profession.
- Physician Assistants, ever cognizant of the needs of the community, shall use the knowledge and experience acquired as professionals to contribute to an improved community.
- Physician Assistants shall place service before material gain and must carefully safeguard against conflicts of professional interest.
- Physician Assistants shall strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with their professional organizations and the general public.
- Physician Assistants shall have the duty to respect the law, to uphold the dignity of the Physician Assistant profession, and to accept its ethical principles. The Physician Assistant shall not participate in or conceal any activity that will bring discredit or dishonor to the Physician Assistant profession and shall expose, without fear or favor, any illegal or unethical conduct in the medical profession.
- Physician Assistants, ever cognizant of the needs of the community, shall use the

knowledge and experience acquired as professionals to contribute to an improved community.

- Physician Assistants shall place service before material gain and must carefully safeguard against conflicts of professional interest.
- Physician Assistants shall strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with their professional organizations and the general public.



## V. CODE OF HONOR OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

"I would prefer even to fail with honor than win by cheating." Sophocles

### STUDENT CODE OF HONOR

When we sought acceptance into college, it was not just enrollment into SOPH that we desired, but rather induction into professions, arts, and a lifestyle, with responsibilities that all of society will entrust to us. When we enrolled, we accepted the invitation offered to us to aspire to a level of honesty, ethical morality, and responsibility.

In accepting this challenge, we agreed, consciously or otherwise, directly or implied, to pursue, develop and maintain certain ethical and moral values which, though seemingly self-evident are hereby formally declared. Any deviation from this course is contrary to the beliefs of the professions to which we aspire; therefore, we, the students of SUNY Downstate School of Health Professions, have adopted this Code of Honor, by which we pledge to abide.

Violations of the Student Code of Honor include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

**1. Academic Integrity** - inappropriately giving or receiving information, whether it be labeled as lying, cheating or plagiarizing, in any way which may allow any student to obtain an unfair advantage over their colleagues.

**2. Clinical Integrity** - knowingly falsifying scientific or educational data, university documents, or patient records, or in any other way engaging in any action that may harm, physically or emotionally, any patient whom we have been privileged to encounter.

**3. Respect for the Right to Confidentiality** - not willingly or inappropriately sharing any personal, academic, or clinical information with which we have been entrusted under the auspices of confidentiality.

**4. Community Cooperation** - concealing or destroying educational materials meant for community use to advance oneself at the expense of others. Information and knowledge are of value only when they are shared.

As students, we learn from information offered by another, be it a professor, colleague, or patient. We are willing to share experience, knowledge, and particular expertise with our colleagues, while maintaining a level of tolerance so that we may learn from them as well.

**Please carefully review the Academic Integrity policy on page 48 of the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Student Handbook.**

## PLEDGE OF HONOR

I understand that unethical behavior violates the spirit of my education, and if there should ever be suspicion regarding my actions, I accept and expect a fair investigation with due process to be undertaken, and I will cooperate to the best of my abilities, both for my own defense and for the defense of the judicial process.

If I am ever in a position whereby, I have knowledge or suspicion that any of the above standards may have been breached, it is my duty to me, my colleagues, and to my profession, that I report such information, as best I can, to the proper administrative authority. Failure to do so represents a violation of the Student Code of Honor on my part, and I may be subject to disciplinary action as a result.

I agree to abide by the Student Code of Honor:

Print your name: \_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_ Date: \_

This Student Code of Honor was adapted by SOPH Council, Spring 1997, from the College of 'Medicine Code of Ethical Standards.'



