PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT HANDBOOK

2200 Hickory
Box 16236
Abilene, Texas 79601
www.hsutx.edu/pa
The formal academic remediation process for the DIDACTIC year is as follows: ...

The formal academic remediation process for the CLINICAL year is as follows: ...

PRECEPTOR EVALUATIONS: ...

CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS: ...

OBJECTIVE STRUCTURED CLINICAL EXAMINATION (OSCE) ...

END OF ROTATION (EOR) EXAMINATIONS: ...

SUMMATIVE EXAMINATIONS: ...
INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant student with the policies and procedures of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. This information includes the academic and professional standards and expectations reflected in University and Program policies. Adherence to these policies is important for progression through the program as well as maintenance of a beneficial learning environment for all members of the Program. The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook applies to all students regardless of their location or timing in the program.

PA PROFESSION / HARDIN-SIMMONS UNIVERSITY PA PROGRAM:

Physician Assistants (PA) are healthcare professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician collaboration. Physician Assistants graduate from an accredited physician assistant educational program and are certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Within the physician/PA relationship, Physician Assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision-making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. The clinical role of Physician Assistants includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings in rural, urban and suburban areas. Physician Assistant practice is primarily patient care-centered but may also include educational, research, or administrative activities.

The Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program is a graduate level, professional Program designed to produce clinicians who are committed to provide exceptional, compassionate, individualized patient care, serve their communities, advance the profession and engage in life-long learning and professional development. Upon graduation, students will be eligible to sit for the national certification examination and state licensure.

The Physician Assistant curriculum is delivered on a full-time basis for a total of 27 months. Students will matriculate as a cohort into a 12-month academic phase, followed by 13 months of clinical/professional education and 2 months of additional didactic studies prior to graduation.
UNIVERSITY MISSION, PROGRAM MISSION, PROGRAM GOALS:

A. University Mission

   It is the mission of Hardin-Simmons University to be a community dedicated to providing excellence in education enlightened by Christian faith and values.

   Founded in 1891 by a dedicated group of ministers, ranchers, and merchants, Hardin-Simmons University (HSU) continues its commitment to developing the minds and nurturing the spiritual lives of its students. HSU is a private University located in Abilene, Texas. HSU provides an academically challenging undergraduate education based on a liberal arts foundation and advances scholarly growth by offering specialized graduate and professional degree programs. Combining its commitment to academic excellence and a concern for the development of the total person with a distinctive Christian perspective, Hardin-Simmons serves students through quality educational Programs designed to provide An Education Enlightened by Faith.

B. Physician Assistant Program Mission

   The Hardin-Simmons University PA Program is dedicated to academic excellence in medical education. Our mission is to develop and prepare compassionate, professional PA providers who are committed to life-long leadership, learning, and community service. Our graduates will work as part of the healthcare team to deliver exceptional healthcare to rural West Texas and underserved communities worldwide.

C. Physician Assistant Program Goals

   1. Recruit outstanding PA students that display a commitment to community service.
   2. Prepare PA students for the practice of medicine as exemplified by
      • Pass rate on National Certifying exam that exceeds national average
      • Attainment of employment after graduation.
   3. Provide training opportunities for PA students in rural and underserved medical arenas.
TECHNICAL STANDARDS:

In order to ensure that patients receive the best medical care possible, the faculty have identified certain skills and professional behaviors that are essential for successful progression of PA students in the Program. A student must possess skills and behaviors at a level of capability to perform a variety of duties required of a PA as a healthcare professional. Students with disabilities who can perform these skills and successfully execute professional behavior either unassisted, with dependable use of assistive devices, or by employing other reasonable accommodations are eligible to apply for enrollment in the Program. Minimum performance standards include critical thinking, communication skills, observation skills, motor skills, and interpersonal abilities. These following descriptions define the capabilities that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant curriculum.

Intellectual Capability/Critical Thinking: The PA student must possess the intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence in critical thinking and problem solving required to seek entry to the profession. The ability to solve problems, a skill that is critical to the practice of medicine, requires the intellectual abilities of measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Students in the Program must be able to demonstrate these skills in working with patients, their families, and other members of the healthcare team. Intellectual abilities also encompass learning and retaining information and the ability to make decisions in a timely manner.

Communication Skills: The PA student must be able to effectively speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and to perceive nonverbal communications. The student must be able to communicate attentively, effectively, sensitively and efficiently in oral, written, and electronic forms with other clinicians, families, and patients in order to make appropriate and timely responses.

Observation Skills: The PA student must be able to observe a patient accurately, both at a distance and close at hand. Students must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational and clinical settings. Sensation must be satisfactory to receive verbal and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform inspection, auscultation, percussion, and palpation techniques during the physical examination.

Motor Skills: The PA student should have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities required of a Physician Assistant. The student should have sufficient motor coordination to move about patient care environments and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments. Students must have sufficient stamina to sit, stand, and move within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms and operating rooms for long periods of time. Students must also be able to calibrate and use large and small equipment and execute movements required for moving patients, positioning patients, and providing care to patients routinely and in emergency settings. Typical lifting requirement is a minimum of 50 lbs. unassisted.
**Interpersonal Abilities:** The PA student must possess the ability to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships. The student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities required for the diagnosis and care of patients, to be compassionate, empathetic, responsible, and tolerant toward patients, families and colleagues. This also includes the ability to prioritize competing demands and function in stressful circumstances.
The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the recognized accrediting agency that protects the interest of the public and PA profession by defining the standard for the PA education and evaluating PA education Programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards. The ARC-PA encourages excellence in PA education through its accreditation process, by establishing and maintaining minimum standards of quality for educational Programs. It awards accreditation to Programs through a peer review process that includes documentation and periodic site visit evaluation to substantiate compliance with the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education.

Source: www.arc-pa.org

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Hardin-Simmons University.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program’s ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class.

Additionally, Hardin-Simmons University is accredited by the regional accreditor the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) who has reviewed and approved the addition of the Physician Assistant Program.
PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:

The following outlines some examples of the demands and performance requirements required of the HSU PA student. (Examples included are not limited to training opportunities offered at the HSU PA Program.)

Typical Mental Demands
The HSU PA student must possess the ability to:

- Process, retain, comprehend, integrate, analyze, synthesize, and apply a large volume of data related to the art and science of medicine, including legal, ethical, and moral concepts
- Be present during long hours in the following settings: classrooms, laboratories, clinicals, and self-directed study situations and environments
- Respond appropriately and in a timely manner to constructive faculty feedback
- Effectively communicate through written and verbal communication skills
- Participate in educational activities that include laboratory dissections, skills tests, examinations, demonstrations, simulations, presentations, written communication skills, frequent and exacting evaluations
- Demonstrate the ability to gather patient data, perform the physical examination, conduct patient assessment and evaluation, formulate a treatment plan, and perform patient education

Typical Physical Demands
The HSU PA student must possess:

- Full range of body motion including manual and finger dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and the ability to assist with patient movement
- Normal visual and hearing acuity with assistive devices when appropriate
- Physical capacity to stand and walk for extended hospital and clinic visits, and during frequent and prolonged patient and professional interactions
- Physical capacity to sit for long periods during classroom and laboratory experiences
- Capability to work in physically and mentally stressful situations with long and irregular hours and with exposures to communicable diseases and body fluids

Typical Working Conditions
The HSU PA student must be able to:

- Work in clinical and classroom environments with exposure to communicable diseases, medicinal preparations, hostile individuals, and other such conditions common to the medical and surgical environments
- Interact with a diverse patient population of all ages with a range of acute and chronic medical and surgical conditions

Student Performance Requirements
The HSU PA student will be required to perform in the following situations:
- Medical, surgical, pediatric, obstetric/gynecologic, emergent, behavioral and other primary care medicine settings (inpatient and out-patient) at off-campus locations
- Didactic and clinical education and training
- Invasive and non-invasive procedures
- Pre-, intra-, and post-operative activities
- Emergency care
- Demonstrate a professional ethical demeanor and understanding of medical ethics and medical-legal concepts
- Display an ability to perform for long hours (physical and mental stamina)
- Complete demanding didactic and clinical evaluations, examinations, etc.
- Perform at the level determined and required by the faculty/program to be successful in the profession
- Participate in community and/or professional service activities
- Complete other responsibilities and tasks as assigned or required
GRADUATE FUNCTIONS AND TASKS:

This is a summary of major tasks, skills, and functions HSU Physician Assistant students are expected to perform at the completion of their training Program. This listing includes major concepts and techniques but is not limited to all experiences and opportunities presented during training at the HSU Physician Assistant Program.

Subjective Data Gathering and Utilization
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to:

- Take a complete medical history
- Perform a comprehensive physical exam
- Order and interpret complete basic laboratory work (CBC, urinalysis, etc.)
- Obtain a history, gather patient data, and perform a physical examination in a reasonable period of time
- Identify data from the history and physical examination which is relevant to the patient's illness
- Synthesize all abnormal data collected in the data base into a separate problem or a collection of problems
- Develop a list of problems and properly separate them into active and inactive groups in a reasonable period of time
- Refine problems to the maximum extent possible with consistent accuracy and state clearly the overall therapeutic goal for each problem
- Develop accurate therapeutic plans for each problem that are relevant to the resolution of the patient's problems or treatment of conditions/maintaining of wellness
- Write thorough progress notes that include subjective and objective information as well as an assessment and plan
- Write and record accurate progress notes within a reasonable period of time
- Possess a general knowledge of pathophysiology of common diseases and disposition of patients

Objective Data Collection
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to order and interpret:

- Routine and special radiographs (chest, abdomen, skull, skeletal, and barium) studies
- Chemistry and fluid/electrolyte balance studies
- Hematology studies
- Culture and sensitivity studies
- Electrocardiograms
**Counseling and Patient Education**
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Provide counseling and patient education for problems, procedures, and methods of treatment in a manner consistent with the understanding of the patient population and medical practice
- Inform individuals and families about available community resources
- Counsel parents and families on child development
- Counsel individuals and families about addictions and methods of treatment
- Provide sexual health education and family planning counseling
- Provide proper information and assistance to terminally ill patients
- Counsel and assist patients who are suffering from stress, depression, or loss
- Provide information about common medical problems and explain laboratory, diagnostic testing, referral, and surgical procedures
- Provide information on preventative measures for communicable diseases
- Provide information on healthy lifestyles and intervention/modification for at-risk behaviors.
- Informed consent

**Technical Skills**
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to perform the following technical skills:

- Venipuncture
- Intravenous (IV) catheterization
- Urinary catheterization
- Nasogastric intubation
- Aseptic techniques
- Basic wound care and closure of lacerations
- Immunizations (children and adult)
- Interpretation of laboratory and diagnostic studies
- Vision screening
- Splint and cast applications
- Instruction about prescribed medication and other therapies
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Advanced cardiac life support (ACLS)
- Mental status examination
- Administration of local anesthesia
- Tissue biopsy
**Other Skills: Assist in surgery**
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Identify and use appropriate surgical instruments
- Demonstrate appropriate operating room conduct
- Suture/Staple
- Simple wound dressing

**Other Skills: Management of emergency situations**
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to recognize and initiate appropriate management the following conditions with team referral as indicated:

- Cardiac arrest
- Respiratory distress
- Burns
- Hemorrhage
- Shock
- Anaphylaxis
- Myocardial infarction
- Burns
- Acute abdomen
- Sepsis
- Stroke

**Other Skills: Critical evaluation**
The HSU Physician Assistant graduate should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Locate and retrieve medical literature
- Discuss practice implications
- Apply ethical decision-making skills
- Apply the Physician Assistant Code of Ethics
- Read medical literature on an on-going basis
- Discuss current and controversial medical knowledge with colleagues
- Critically evaluate new medical knowledge
**Overall Synthesis Tasks:**

- Utilize a systems approach to understand the rationale for the physical examination, integrating knowledge acquired in anatomy and physiology with the findings upon examination of the patient.
- Perform initial and follow-up evaluation of patients of various age groups in diverse settings.
- Elicit a detailed and accurate history, perform an appropriate physical examination, order appropriate laboratory and special studies, and record and present pertinent data, including interpretive recommendations in a problem-solving manner.
- Perform or assist in the performance of laboratory, special and related studies relevant to patient need, and practice capabilities e.g. blood studies, urinalysis, electrocardiogram (EKG).
- Perform appropriate therapeutic procedures for the evaluation and treatment of a patient's problem in a manner delineated with the collaborating physician and that the physician assistant is competent to perform.
- Formulate treatment plans and communicate patient treatment with collaborating interprofessional teams.
- Instruct and counsel patients regarding physical and mental health, including matters such as nutrition, illness, treatment, normal growth and development, health promotion, disease prevention, and lifestyle risk factors for the patient's age and sex with an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural diversity in the patient population.
- Perform the following functions in the hospital setting: patient work-ups, patient rounds, recording patient progress notes, accurately and appropriately transcribing, transmitting or executing orders.
- Provide pre-operative evaluation and management, assist in surgery, and provide post-operative evaluation and management for inpatient and outpatient surgical problems and procedures.
- Deliver or assist in the delivery of services, including the review and monitoring of treatment and therapy plans, to patients requiring initial or continuing care in any setting with a collaborating physician to include office, hospital, nursing home, extended care facilities, etc.
- Interact with community, regional, and state medical and social services and resources to facilitate and ensure patient care and continuity of care.
- Interact with the community at large by demonstrating ongoing service to the community.
- Continue the educational process of life-long learning to include continuing medical education, interpretation of the medical literature, adaptation of advancements to practice, and the application of research techniques and designs to interpret medical and patient data.
- Demonstrate an awareness and sensitivity to the cultural and ethical issues in the modern practice of medicine, and possess a sense of responsibility to medically underserved communities.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Skill</th>
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<td>ACLS Certification</td>
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<td>Patient Safety</td>
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<td>N-95 Respirator Fit</td>
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<td>OR Scrub Technique</td>
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<td>Sharps Precautions</td>
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<td>Standard Precautions</td>
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<td>Sterile Technique</td>
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<td>Patient Evaluation/ Documents</td>
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<td>Breast Examination</td>
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<td>Comprehensive H&amp;P Note</td>
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<td>Male GU Examination</td>
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<td>Pelvic Examination</td>
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<td>Physical Examination (Adult Comprehensive)</td>
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<td>Physical Examination (Focused)</td>
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<td>Physical Examination (Pediatric)</td>
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<td>ET Tube placement (Intubation)</td>
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<td>Regional Anesthesia</td>
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<td>IM Injection/Immunization</td>
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<td>IV Placement</td>
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<td>NG Tube placement</td>
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<td>Skin Adhesive</td>
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<td>Skin Stapling</td>
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<td>Splinting</td>
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<td>SQ Injection/Immunization</td>
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<td>Suture Lab (Knots, Technique, etc.)</td>
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<td>Tissue Biopsy</td>
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<td>Urinary Catheter – Male</td>
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<td>Urinary Catheter – Female</td>
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<td>Vision Screening</td>
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**CLINICAL PHASE TECHNICAL PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS:**
*All must be completed*

**Student Name ______________________________________________________**

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<th>Competent</th>
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<td>Fundal height measurement</td>
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<td>Incision &amp; Drainage of abscess</td>
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<td>Interpret arterial blood gases</td>
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<td>Interpret Electrocardiogram</td>
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<td>Interpret PAP smear results</td>
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<td>Perform PAP smear</td>
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<td>Sterile technique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgical scrub/donning surgical PPE</td>
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<td>Wound Closure</td>
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CLINICAL YEAR STUDENT TRACKING:
Patient Encounter Logging Requirements

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<th>Patient Encounter Type:</th>
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**Care Across Lifespan:**

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<td>Infant (0-1 year)</td>
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<td>Child (2-10 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescent (11-17 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult (18-64 years)</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elderly (&gt;65 years)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Specific for Area/Specialty Setting:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty Setting</th>
<th>Minimum Number to be Logged</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women GYN</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Prenatal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-operative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intra-operative</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-operative</td>
<td>10</td>
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Patient Write-up (note/documentation) Submission Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty Setting</th>
<th>Minimum Number to be Logged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Health</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Room</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective II</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLINICAL SCHEDULES:
The clinical rotation schedule has been planned with special consideration and concentration on the needs of the students, faculty, and clinical sites. The Program adheres to its schedule after publication annually in the Summer semester; however, it is subject to change based on preceptor availability and program needs. Students selected for the Physician Assistant Program at Hardin-Simmons University must complete all didactic and clinical rotations at Program affiliated sites. All students are assigned to at least one rotation located in a rural/medically underserved practice/facility to broaden opportunities and experiences and meet the mission and goals of the HSU PA Program. During clinical rotations, students must plan for the expense of rotations away from campus (e.g., living expenses, transportation, etc.).

PRECEPTOR POLICY:
Students must not be required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Hardin-Simmons University PA Director of Clinical Education and Clinical Administrative Coordinator must coordinate clinical sites and preceptors for the Program required rotations.
COMPETENCIES FOR THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION
(Endorsed by AAPA, PAEA, ARC-PA, and NCCPA)
(Originally adopted 2005; revised 2012)

Preamble
Between 2003-2004, the National Commission on Certification of Physicians Assistant (NCCPA) led an effort with three other national PA organizations (Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), and Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) – formerly Association of Physician Assistant Programs (APAP)) to define PA competencies in response to similar efforts conducted within other healthcare professions and the growing demand for accountability and assessment in clinical practice. The resultant document, Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession, provided a foundation from which physician assistant organizations and individual physician assistants could chart a course for advancing the competencies of the PA profession.

This document was updated in 2012 and then approved in its current form by the same four organizations.

Introduction
This document serves as a map for the individual PA, the physician-PA team, and organizations committed to promoting the development and maintenance of professional competencies among physician assistants. While some competencies will be acquired during formal PA education, others will be developed and mastered as physician assistants progress through their careers. The PA profession defines the specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and educational experiences requisite for physician assistants to acquire and demonstrate these competencies.

The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. Professional competencies¹ for physician assistants include the effective and appropriate application of medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, patient care, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice.

Patient-centered, physician assistant practice reflects a number of overarching themes. These include an unwavering commitment to patient safety, cultural competence, quality healthcare, lifelong learning, and professional growth. Furthermore, the profession’s dedication to the physician-physician assistant team benefits patients and the larger community.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT COMPETENCIES

Medical Knowledge.

¹ In 1999, the Accreditation Council for Graduation Medical Education (ACGME) endorsed a list of general competencies for medical residents. NCCPA’s Eligibility Committee, with substantial input from representatives of AAPA, APAP and ARC-PA, has modified the ACMGE’s list for Physician Assistant practice, drawing from several other resources, including the work of Drs. Epstein and Hundert; research conducted by AAPA’s EVP/CEO, Dr. Steve Crane; and NCCPA’s own examination content blueprint.
Medical knowledge includes the synthesis of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion and disease prevention. Physician assistants must demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigative and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistants are expected to understand, evaluate, and apply the following to clinical scenarios:

- evidence-based medicine
- scientific principles related to patient care
- etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
- appropriate diagnostic studies
- management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities
- interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses

**Interpersonal and Communication Skills.**
Interpersonal and communication skills encompass verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic exchange of information. Physician assistants must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients’ families, physicians, professional associates, and other individuals within the healthcare system. Physician assistants are expected to:

- create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
- adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
- work effectively with physicians and other healthcare professionals as a member or leader of a healthcare team or other professional group
- demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes

**Patient Care.**
Patient care includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management. Physician assistants must demonstrate care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable. Physician assistants are expected to:

- work effectively with physicians and other healthcare professionals to provide patient-centered care
- demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families
- obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
• make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment
• develop and implement patient management plans
• counsel and educate patients and their families
• perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
• provide healthcare services and education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance
• use information technology to support patient care decisions and patient education

**Professionalism.**
Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one’s own. Physician assistants must acknowledge their professional and personal limitations. Professionalism also requires that PAs practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness. Physician assistants must demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Physician Assistants are expected to demonstrate:

• understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
• professional relationships with physician supervisors and other healthcare providers
• respect, compassion, and integrity
• accountability to patients, society, and the profession
• commitment to excellence and on-going professional development
• commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
• sensitivity and responsiveness to patients’ culture, age, gender, and abilities
• self-reflection, critical curiosity and initiative
• healthy behaviors and life balance
• commitment to the education of students and other healthcare professionals

**Practice-Based Learning and Improvement.**
Practice-based learning and improvement includes the processes through which physician assistants engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self- and practice-improvement. Physician assistants must be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Physician assistants are expected to:

• analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the healthcare delivery team
• locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients’ health
• apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
• utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
• recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others
**Systems-Based Practice.**

Systems-based practice encompasses the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which healthcare is delivered. Physician assistants must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of healthcare to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual patient. PAs should work to improve the healthcare system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:

- effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care and use the systems effectively
- practice cost-effective healthcare and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care
- advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- partner with supervising physicians, healthcare managers, and other healthcare providers to assess, coordinate, and improve the delivery and effectiveness of healthcare and patient outcomes
- accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact patient care
- apply medical information and clinical data systems to provide effective, efficient patient care
- recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to healthcare disparities
- apply the concepts of population health to patient care
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the completion of the Program, students are expected to achieve the following overall broad learning outcomes:

1) Demonstrate knowledge and skills required to integrate and apply basic medical sciences to care for patients across the lifespan in clinical settings.
2) Perform excellent histories and physical examinations to collect patient data related to health and interpret findings.
3) Demonstrate a broad, systems-based knowledge of clinical medicine in formulating differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients.
4) Create accurate and appropriate care plans and interventions for patients in preventive, acute, chronic, emergent, surgical, and end-of-life settings.
5) Interpret diagnostic and laboratory findings appropriate for primary care settings.
6) Critically appraise medical literature that is evidence-based for continuous practice quality enhancement.
7) Display understanding of historical, legal, regulatory, and policy related professional issues related to the PA profession.
8) Communicate to patients test results, care plans, and health-related findings in a culturally sensitive manner.
9) Perform basic diagnostic procedures needed for the evaluation and treatment of a patient in PA practice.
10) Demonstrate awareness of and contribute to interprofessional healthcare teams to improve patient care.
11) Apply knowledge of responsible prescribing practices for patient care and safety including display of comprehension of indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions related to pharmacologic agents.
12) Understand, evaluate, and apply information regarding disease etiology, risk factors, epidemiology, and screening methods to detect conditions in symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.
13) Serve the community through ongoing volunteer acts and leadership.
14) Demonstrate professionalism in the educational and clinical settings.

Course goals, skill evaluations, learning objectives throughout the curriculum are based on these learning outcome expectations. Syllabi throughout the curriculum reflect these learning outcomes incorporated in various components with the goal of preparation of graduates for clinical practice.
TEXTBOOKS AND EQUIPMENT:

Prices on equipment, textbooks, and supplies, are approximate and subject to change without notice. University fees, and tuition are published before the start date of each cohort and are updated regularly as changes are made by the board of trustees.

Textbooks: Each semester, the HSU Bookstore (located on campus), will have a list of required and recommended textbooks for courses. This information is also noted in the course syllabi (posted to Canvas and available on the first day of class).

Equipment and Instruments: Each student will be required to have the following basic set of equipment and supplies, in addition to bringing protective apparel to classes and rotation assignments. The vendors who visit with students on campus are an excellent resource for purchasing items because of their repair/replacement policies. If you decide to purchase “used” items from other students, remember to secure warranties with original purchase receipts. A third alternative is to utilize other companies. Please have equipment selections approved by faculty to be certain they will meet the requirements of the course of study.

Sample List of Equipment (recommended list will be given upon enrollment and matriculation):
Welch Allyn Diagnostic Set  Pocket Pen Light
Otoscope insufflator bulb  Pocket Eye Chart
Stethoscope - Littmann Cardiology IV  Percussion Hammer
Tuning Forks – 512 cps and 128 cps weighted  Bag (optional)
Sphygmomanometer

Other Required Equipment:
White Short Lab Coat with departmental patch/embroidering
*Smart Phone with Data Package
**Laptop Computer

*Refer to https://www.hsutx.edu/offices/technology-services/
**Refer to https://examsoft.force.com/emcommunity/s/article/Examplify-Minimum-System-Requirements for minimum system requirements.

FACULTY HOUR MEETINGS:

This 1-hour required regularly scheduled meeting is designed for students to meet with the Program Director and Principal Faculty to receive additional content needed for successful achievement of program learning outcomes. These sessions are used to inform students about special departmental events, schedules, announcements, etc. In addition, the meetings serve as a forum for students to provide feedback to the Program about the curriculum, testing, and other
department issues, as well as, to accomplish various administrative tasks. During the clinical year, Faculty Hour Meetings are scheduled as an end of block activity after rotations.
MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY:

The Program has found that student’s progress more rapidly during the first several semesters if they have a foundational understanding of medical terminology. The Program has collaborated with Caduceus to deliver an online, computer-based, self-paced medical terminology module. Students are required to successfully complete the online module prior to matriculation. Information regarding course registration and payment will be sent to students after acceptance into the Program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1.01</td>
<td>The curriculum must be consistent with the mission and goals of the Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.02</td>
<td>The curriculum must include core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.03</td>
<td>The curriculum must be of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare the student for the clinical practice of medicine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.04</td>
<td>The curriculum design must reflect sequencing that enables students to develop the competencies necessary for current and evolving clinical practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.05</td>
<td>The curriculum must include instruction about intellectual honesty and appropriate academic and professional conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.06</td>
<td>The curriculum must include instruction to prepare students to provide medical care to patients from diverse populations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1.07</td>
<td>The curriculum must include instruction related to the development of problem solving and medical decision-making skills.</td>
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<td>B1.08</td>
<td>The curriculum must include instruction to prepare students to work collaboratively in interprofessional patient centered teams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1.09</td>
<td>For each didactic and clinical course, the Program must define and publish instructional objectives that guide student acquisition of required competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.01</td>
<td>While programs may require specific course(s) as prerequisites to enrollment, those prerequisites must not substitute for more advanced applied content within the professional component of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.02</td>
<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in the following areas of applied medical sciences and their application in clinical practice: anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics, the genetic and molecular mechanisms of health and disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.03</td>
<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in clinical medicine covering all organ systems.</td>
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<td>B2.04</td>
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<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in the provision of clinical medical care across the life span.</td>
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<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in the social and behavioral sciences as well as normal and abnormal development across the life span.</td>
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<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in health care delivery systems and health policy.</td>
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<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in concepts of public health as they relate to the role of the practicing PA.</td>
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<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction about PA licensure, credentialing and laws and regulations regarding professional practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.15</td>
<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction regarding reimbursement, documentation of care, coding, and billing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.16</td>
<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in the principles and practice of medical ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.17</td>
<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in the PA profession, its historical development and current trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3.01</td>
<td>The Program must conduct frequent, objective, and documented evaluations of students related to learning outcomes for both didactic and supervised clinical education components.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3.02</td>
<td>The Program must document student demonstration of defined professional behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3.03</td>
<td>The Program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3.04</td>
<td>The Program must conduct and document a summative evaluation of each student within the final four months of the Program to verify that each student is prepared to enter clinical practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ARC-PA STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES - CLINICAL CURRICULUM

<table>
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<td>For each didactic and clinical course, the Program must define and publish instructional objectives that guide student acquisition of required competencies.</td>
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<td>B1.11</td>
<td>The Program must assure educational equivalency of course content, student experience, and access to didactic and laboratory materials when instruction is: a) conducted at geographically separate locations and/or b) provided by different pedagogical and instructional methods or techniques for some students.</td>
</tr>
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<td>B2.02</td>
<td>The Program curriculum must include instruction in the following areas of applied medical sciences and their application in clinical practice: anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics, the genetic and molecular mechanisms of health and disease.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.01</td>
<td>PA students must be clearly identified in the clinical setting to distinguish them from Physicians, medical students, and other health profession students and graduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.02</td>
<td>Supervised clinical practice experiences must enable students to meet the program’s learning outcomes expected of students to include preventive, emergent, acute, and chronic patient encounters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.03</td>
<td>Supervised clinical practice experiences must enable all students to meet the program’s learning outcomes expected of students for patients seeking: a) medical care across the life span to include, infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly, b) women’s health (to include prenatal and gynecological care), c) care for conditions requiring surgical management, including pre-operative, intra-operative, post-operative care and d) care for behavioral and mental health conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.04</td>
<td>Supervised clinical practice experiences must occur in the following settings: a) outpatient, b) emergency department, c) inpatient and d) operating room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.05</td>
<td>Instructional faculty for the supervised clinical practice portion of the educational Program must consist primarily of practicing Physicians and PAs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### B3.06
Supervised clinical practice experiences should occur with: a) Physicians who are specialty board certified in their area of instruction, b) PAs teamed with Physicians who are specialty board certified in their area of instruction, or c) other licensed healthcare providers experienced in their area of instruction.

### B3.07
Supervised clinical practice experiences should occur with preceptors practicing in the following disciplines: a) family medicine, b) internal medicine, c) general surgery, d) pediatrics, e) ob/gyn and f) behavioral and mental healthcare.

### C3.01
The Program must conduct frequent, objective, and documented evaluations of students related to learning outcomes for both didactic and supervised clinical education components.

### C3.02
The Program must document student demonstration of defined professional behaviors.

### C3.03
The Program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation.

### C3.05
The Program must document equivalency of student evaluation methods and outcomes when instruction is: a) conducted at geographically separate locations and/or b) provided by different pedagogical and instructional methods or techniques for some students.

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### Hardin-Simmons University PA Department

#### DEGREE PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Semester Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YEAR ONE: DIDACTIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Semester: Fall</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6402  Human Anatomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6404  Medical Interview and Physical Examination</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6206  Preventive Medicine &amp; Patient Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6208  Introduction to Health Professions &amp; PA Practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6310  Physiology &amp; Pathophysiology I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6112  Medical Ethics</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6214  Clinical Medicine I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester: Spring</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6416  Clinical Medicine II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6312  Physiology &amp; Pathophysiology II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6218  Diagnostic Methods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6220  Patient Assessment I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6224  Pharmacology &amp; Medical Therapeutics I</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6228  Behavioral Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6130  Cross Cultural Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6232  Clinical Laboratory Science</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6234  Research &amp; Evidence-Based Medicine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester: Summer</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6418  Clinical Medicine III</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6226  Pharmacology &amp; Medical Therapeutics II</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6222  Patient Assessment II</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6236  Care for Special Populations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6538  Clinical Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
YEAR TWO: CLINICAL

Clinical Rotations include 5 weeks (5 credit hours each) in the following disciplines:
PA 6540 Family Medicine / PA 6542 Pediatrics / PA 6544 Women’s Health / PA 6546 Mental Health /
PA 6548 Internal Medicine / PA 6550 General Surgery / PA 6552 Emergency Medicine /
PA 6554 Elective 1 / PA 6556 Elective 2 / PA 6560 Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester: Fall</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Rotations: 1, 2, &amp; 3</td>
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<th>Semester: Spring</th>
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<table>
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<th>Semester: Summer</th>
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<td>Clinical Rotations: 7, 8, &amp; 9</td>
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<table>
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<th>Semester: Last Fall Prior to Graduation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Rotation: 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6458 Post-clinical: Professional Practice Preparation</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA 6362 Post-clinical: Capstone</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 6264 Post-clinical: Health Policy, Billing, &amp; Coding</td>
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<td>Year totals:</td>
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| Year One: Didactic Year Totals | 53 |
| Year Two: Clinical Year Totals | 50 |
| Year Two: Post-Clinical Rotations | 9 |

Total program: 112 Hours
HSU PA PROGRAM – COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

PA 6402 Human Anatomy 4 credits
Students will be given the opportunity to acquire advanced knowledge of the anatomical structures of the human body, including but not limited to the head and neck, thorax, abdomen, pelvis, and extremities. Goals include developing knowledge essential to understand how anatomy relates to function. Students will be required to identify anatomic structures, distinguish normal from abnormal structures, and appreciate the complexity of the human body. Introductory information will be provided as to clinical application of anatomic variations from normal and the means by which these variations can contribute to disease. A clinical application lab will correspond to the lecture course. Laboratory includes study of a human cadaver.

PA 6404 Medical Interview and Physical Examination 4 credits
This course is designed to introduce students to the art of medical history taking and physical examination. This encompasses the skills of medical interviewing and other forms of communication with patients, their families, and their caregivers. Students will learn the components of a complete medical history. In addition, they will learn interviewing skills that will allow them to efficiently elicit a patient history in an accurate and empathetic manner. This introductory course on physical assessment also includes instruction on performance of complete physical examination, and development of critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to assess adult patients’ mental and physical status. Assessment of common and important symptoms is covered including the relevant regions and systems of skin, head, neck, neurological system, thorax and lungs, heart, musculoskeletal system, abdominal exam, and genitourinary systems. Demonstrations and practical laboratory application reinforce the PA’s ability to perform a comprehensive physical examination. The laboratory allows the student an opportunity to practice the skills needed to perform a complete physical on the body regions covered in the lecture.

PA 6206 Preventive Medicine & Patient Education 2 credits
This course provides a broad overview to familiarize Physician Assistant students with the basic concepts of public health and preventative medicine. Epidemiological concepts include the distribution, prevalence, causation, mode of transmission, dissemination, control, and preventative countermeasures of infectious and non-communicable diseases; and environmental occupational, behavioral, and chronic disabling conditions. Patient education techniques are reviewed with emphasis on quality of care and patient safety.

PA 6208 Introduction to Health Professions & PA practice 2 credits
This course presents an introduction/overview of the Physician Assistant (PA) profession. This course addresses a variety of topics in Physician Assistant professional development including emphasizing professionalism, intellectual honesty, and the PA’s role in healthcare delivery as a member of an interdisciplinary team. Additional emphasis is placed upon the inception, history, and evolution of the PA profession throughout the fields of medicine and surgery; PA relationships with the supervising Physician, the patient; responsibilities including the concepts
of privilege, confidentiality and informed consent. The student will also explore media and medicine topics, licensing, hospital credentials/liability, malpractice insurance.

**PA 6310 Physiology & Pathophysiology I** 3 credits
This course is the first course of a two-semester sequence in which the student will build upon information learned in the basic physiology prerequisite courses. General review of physiologic concepts and systems will be undertaken. Class sessions will focus on an in-depth look at human physiology with an emphasis on cellular and subcellular mechanisms of normal and abnormal function including medical genetics. Introductory information will be provided as to clinical application of anatomic and physiologic variations from normal and the means by which these variations can contribute to disease.

**PA 6312 Physiology & Pathophysiology II** 3 credits
This course is the second course of a two-semester sequence in which the student will build upon information learned in the basic physiology prerequisite courses. General review of physiologic concepts and systems will be undertaken. Class sessions will focus on an in-depth look at human physiology with an emphasis on cellular and subcellular mechanisms of normal and abnormal function including medical genetics. Introductory information will be provided as to clinical application of anatomic and physiologic variations from normal and the means by which these variations can contribute to disease.

**PA 6112 Medical Ethics** 1 credit
This course examines, in detail, the moral, social and ethical issues Physician Assistants face and reviews the ethical dimensions in healthcare. In this course, students examine the ethical responsibilities of a medical professional and debate ethical issues. Students also discuss the Physician Assistant and patient relationship in detail, covering the importance of maintaining dignity, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, autonomy, and confidentiality. Case review will be utilized to apply learned principles. Special attention is given to care at the end of life.

**PA 6214 Clinical Medicine I** 2 credits
This course is the first in a three-course sequence and is designed to teach students clinical medicine in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The course will be primarily lecture based with supplementary case discussions. Lectures will be done in system-based sequences and include instruction in the genetic/familial patterns of disease. The sequences will discuss mechanisms of disease, clinical presentation of disease, approach to diagnosis of disease, and use of various agents used in the management of disease as well as health promotion.

**PA 6416 Clinical Medicine II** 4 credits
This course is the second in a three-course sequence and is designed to teach students clinical medicine in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The course will be primarily lecture based with supplementary case discussions. Lectures will be done in system-based sequences and include instruction in the genetic/familial patterns of disease. The sequences will discuss mechanisms of disease, clinical presentation of disease, approach to diagnosis of disease, and use of various agents used in the management of disease as well as health promotion.
(3 hour lecture + 1 hour lab)
PA 6418 Clinical Medicine III 4 credits
This course is the third in a three-course sequence and is designed to teach students clinical medicine in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. The course will be primarily lecture based with supplementary case discussions. Lectures will be done in system-based sequences and include instruction in the genetic/familial patterns of disease. The sequences will discuss mechanisms of disease, clinical presentation of disease, approach to diagnosis of disease, and use of various agents used in the management of disease as well as health promotion.
(3-hour lecture + 1 hour lab)

PA 6416 & 6418 Clinical Medicine II & III Lab 1 hour
This course allows students to meet weekly for case-based laboratories. These laboratories will be small groups facilitated by faculty group facilitators. The facilitator will have students work through case studies that correspond to current lecture sequences. The student will be given introductory information and must elicit the necessary information from the facilitator to lead to the formulation of an appropriate differential diagnosis, diagnosis, and management plan. This lab will require that students incorporate patient history, physical assessment, scientific concepts, and diagnostic studies to ultimately come to a logical differential diagnosis and final diagnosis. Students will then be required to utilize their knowledge of clinical therapeutics and disease to develop a rational plan of management. Medical decision making and logic will be a key focus in lab sessions.

PA 6218 Diagnostic Methods 2 credits
This course will provide a comprehensive overview of two basic diagnostic methods and treatments (Electrocardiogram (ECG) and Radiology). The course provides a comprehensive overview of electrocardiography with a focus on recognition of abnormalities, emphasizing the electrical system of the heart, enabling the student to identify normal/abnormal wave shape of 12 lead EKGs using a systematic approach to ECG analysis. The second component of the course focuses on radiologic imaging designed to assist Physician Assistant students to understand, appropriately select, and correctly interpret the many imaging modalities and techniques currently available for examination and treatment of patients.

PA 6220 Patient Assessment I 2 credits
This is part 1 of a 2-part course series in which students will learn how to properly document medical interviews and other patient encounters. This course on patient assessment focuses on patient communication skills, techniques of interviewing and performance of complete physical examination, development of critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to assess adult patients’ mental and physical status. It continues and builds upon assessment of common and important symptoms. Students will be put into practice initial physical examination skills and techniques as well as hone early documentation skills. This course includes critiqued presentation of patient data in both oral and written form.
PA 6222 Patient Assessment II  
2 credits  
This is part 2 of a 2-part course series in which students will learn how to properly document medical interviews and other patient encounters. The focus this term is development of comprehensive written notes including differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients. This course builds on previously learned skills in patient communication, techniques of interviewing and performance of complete physical examination, development of critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to assess adult patients’ mental and physical status. It continues and builds upon assessment of common and important symptoms. Students will practice physical examination skills and techniques as well as hone documentation skills. This course includes critiqued presentation of patient data in both oral and written form.

PA 6224 Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics I  
2 credits  
This course is the first in a two-course sequence. The course is designed to teach students pharmacology and medical therapeutics in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. This course will include an overview of the scientific principles of clinical pharmacology. Therapeutic specific lectures will be included to cover an in-depth discussion of the pharmacology and use of various agents used in the management of disease. An understanding of the actions, reactions and toxicology of the various pharmacologic agents will be emphasized.

PA 6226 Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics II  
2 credits  
This course is the second in a two-course sequence. The course is designed to teach students pharmacology and medical therapeutics in an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. This course will include an overview of the scientific principles of clinical pharmacology. Therapeutic specific lectures will be included to cover an in-depth discussion of the pharmacology and use of various agents used in the management of disease. An understanding of the actions, reactions and toxicology of the various pharmacologic agents will be emphasized.

PA 6228 Behavioral Medicine  
2 credits  
This course explores the psychologic health of individuals and how it interacts with overall well-being. The students will be given the opportunity to identify normal physical, sexual, social, and psychological processes and distinguish these from processes due to illness and injury. The students will then be taught to clinically assess patients’ state of mental health and development and develop treatment plans. Topics covered will include the classification of common mental illnesses set forth in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and emphasis on timely recognition and the importance of appropriate referrals to collaborate with other healthcare professionals in the management of patients with mental illness.

PA 6130 Cross Cultural Health  
1 credit  
This course will explore a broad spectrum of patient types which the Physician Assistant will be providing care for in practice. Age, culture, language, lifestyle, and religion all have considerable impact on how patients access and respond to healthcare services. In addition, the Physician Assistant student’s own background and beliefs will form the basis of their attitudes and behaviors.
PA 6232 Clinical Laboratory Science  2 hours
This analytic procedures course will discuss the most recent or commonly performed techniques in the clinical laboratory. Clinical chemistry principles, ordering, and interpretation of diagnostic tests, procedures, and correlations are discussed to provide information for appropriate clinical intervention.

PA 6234 Research & Evidence-Based Medicine  2 hours
This course is to teach students how to access and interpret medical literature. As lifelong learners, Physician Assistants must be able to locate, understand and apply concepts derived from the medical literature as they relate to the treatment of their patients. This course will focus on an evidence-based medicine approach to interpreting medical literature. Students will review how to best search medical databases to efficiently locate appropriate material.

PA 6236 Care for Special Populations  2 hours
Review of care for special populations including pediatric patients, geriatric patients, obstetric, surgical patients, and patients in the emergency department. Course provides the Physician Assistant student, as a future healthcare practitioner, an excellent understanding of the expanding areas of pediatrics and geriatrics and prepares the Physician Assistant student to appropriately evaluate, diagnose, monitor, treat, counsel, and refer vulnerable patients. This course also explores various types of medical and surgical conditions that are present in a modern day emergency department and prepares the Physician Assistant student to evaluate, treat, and monitor such conditions. Students are provided mechanisms to evaluate resources that are needed and available to provide appropriate ambulatory, emergency, and tertiary care services in a hospital setting.

PA 6538 Clinical Skills  2 hours
This course provides students fundamental concepts and skills required to perform common clinical procedures based on current practice standards. Students will receive knowledge of key indications, contraindications, risks, and benefits of procedural skills often performed in various practice settings. A basic review of the appropriate anatomy and physiology will be included. The laboratory environment will provide students an opportunity to perform and practice these procedures.

YEAR TWO COURSES:
Can be taken in any sequence- 3 per semester

PA 6548 Internal Medicine  5 credits
This rotation focuses on the medicine that treats diseases in adult patients of various organ systems by other than surgical means. The emphasis is on adult illnesses and lifetime continuity of care through health promotion, disease prevention, and evidenced based medical therapy. (5-week rotation)
PA 6540 Family Medicine 5 credits
This rotation provides clinical experience with manifestations of common diseases and chronic illness. The emphasis is on providing care to patients throughout the life span, from infancy through adolescence and adulthood. The focus will include healthcare promotion and disease prevention as well as the initial and ongoing treatment of primary care disorders. (5-week rotation).

PA 6542 Pediatrics 5 credits
This rotation will expose students to pediatric problems and disease, including common illnesses of childhood, congenital and acquired disease processes, normal and pathological developmental achievements and psychosocial issues. This rotation may include care delivered in inpatient or outpatient settings. (5-week rotation).

PA 6544 Women’s Health 5 credits
This rotation will expose the student to issues in women’s health through the life span. Areas of exposure include prenatal care, reproductive endocrinology, gynecology and gynecologic oncology, family planning and other aspects of women’s health. The basic operations of obstetrics and gynecology are explored to allow a fundamental understanding of the technical procedures involved. Some rotations may include delivery participation; however, this is not required. (5-week rotation).

PA 6546 Mental Health 5 credits
This rotation provides students exposure to evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of acute and chronic psychiatric disorders. This rotation may be conducted in an inpatient or outpatient setting. (5-week rotation)

PA 6560 Professional Development 5 credits
This course is designed to prepare PA students for their futures as healthcare providers. The course will include both clinical and professional topics. The students will be given the opportunity to examine the importance of communication and interprofessional teamwork in the clinical and administrative environment. The students will then identify certification and licensure requirements for graduation and beyond and identify/discuss the PA role in the promotion and dissemination of research. Additionally, students will develop skills to foster the concept of lifelong learning, demonstrated by the development of study materials for the national board examination. (5-week rotation).
PA 6550 Surgery  5 credits
This rotation focuses on the area of medicine that deals with the manual and operative procedures for the correction of deformities, injuries and disease. The surgery rotation must include a component of inpatient surgical management, pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care. This course is designed to provide the Physician Assistant student with an introduction to the many new surgical techniques that are available. Suturing, anesthesia, major and minor surgery specific to various body regions are taught through experiences with patients. New innovations in laser therapy and laparoscopic techniques are evaluated. Pre- and postoperative evaluation and care of the patient are integrated into this course. Surgical procedures, techniques, and instruments will be explored.
(5-week rotation)

PA 6552 Emergency Medicine  5 credits
This rotation will expose the student to the diagnosis and treatment of patients presenting to the emergency department with acute health issues. In this often-critical care environment, students will be faced with problem solving and the need to rapidly assess patients with a variety of presentations. Students will be exposed to the practice of utilizing emergency departments both for ambulatory care and primary care. This course explores various types of medical and surgical conditions that are present in a modern-day emergency department and prepares the Physician Assistant student to evaluate, treat, and monitor such conditions. A generalist approach to providing emergency care along with injury prevention is explored.
(5-week rotation)

PA 6554 & 6556 Clinical Elective I & Clinical Elective II  5 credits
These rotations will provide the student an opportunity to pursue additional study in an area of particular interest to the student. This rotation may be conducted in a medical or surgical specialty. These courses are designed to increase and enhance student learning during the clinical phase of the Physician Assistant Program. These courses will provide instruction and assessment on areas of clinical practice to help enrich the graduate PA to be a competent clinician.
(Two 5-week rotations)

PA 6458 Professional Practice Preparation  4 credits
The course will include an extensive didactic review of medical topics in a system-based approach. Preparation for employment through structured activities and workshops will be undertaken. Application for licensure procedures and board-certification will be emphasized.

PA 6362 Capstone  3 credits
This course is designed to be a capstone course in the Physician Assistant curriculum. It is designed to review and evaluate knowledge and skills deemed essential for successful completion of the Program and entry into the PA profession. Evaluations will be conducted to assess knowledge, skills, critical thinking, problem solving, communication with patients, and professionalism. Students will present research findings of project started in first didactic year.
This course is designed to be an overview of health policy including public and private programs for patient access to care as well as pay systems. New guidelines for appropriate coding of care delivered and testing ordered for best patient and employer outcomes will be detailed. Penalties for inappropriate billing will be reviewed and honesty/fair-patient dealings stressed.
CURRICULUM GRAPHIC

FALL Year One (Start mid-late August)

Human Anatomy (PA 6402)

Medical Interview & Physical Examination (PA 6404)

Introduction to Health Professions & PA Practice (PA 6208)  Preventive Medicine & Patient Education (PA 6310)

Physiology & Pathophysiology I (PA 6310)

Clinical Medicine I (PA 6214)

Medical Ethics [Online, Self-Paced] (PA 6112)

HOLIDAYS:
LABOR DAY
FALL BREAK
THANKSGIVING WEEK
SPRING Year One (start mid-Jan)

- Clinical Medicine II (PA 6416)
- Physiology & Pathophysiology II (PA 6312)
- Diagnostic Methods (PA 6218)
- Patient Assessment I (PA 6220)
- Clinical Laboratory Sciences (PA 6232)
- Behavioral Medicine (PA 6228)
- Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics I (PA 6224)

MAY TERM Year One (start late Apr)

- EBM/Research [Online] (PA 6234)
- Cross Cultural Health [Online] (PA 6130)

HOLIDAYS:
- MLK Day
- Spring Break Week
- Good Friday

SUMMER Year One (start late May/early June)

- Patient Assessment II (PA 6222)
- Care for Special Populations (PA 6236)
- Clinical Medicine III (PA 6418)
- Pharmacology & Medical Therapeutics II (PA 6226)
HOLIDAYS:
MEMORIAL DAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY
FALL Year Two – (start Sept. ends mid-Dec.)

Rotation 1 → Rotation 2 → Rotation 3

HOLIDAYS:
TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE

SPRING Year Two (starts mid-Jan. ends late-Apr.)

Rotation 4 → Rotation 5 → Rotation 6

HOLIDAYS:
TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE

SUMMER Year Two (starts May, ends mid-Aug)

Rotation 7 → Rotation 8
**HOLIDAYS:**
**TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE**

**FALL Year Three (starts late Aug)**

 Rotation 9

 Rotation 10

 Professional Practice Preparation (PA 6458)

 Capstone (PA 6362)

 Health Policy, Billing, & Coding (PA 6264)

 GRADUATION Mid-December

**HOLIDAYS:**
**TO FOLLOW PRECEPTOR SCHEDULE**

 FALL BREAK

 THANKSGIVING WEEK
ADMISSIONS:

Information about admission to Hardin-Simmons University’s 27-month graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies is detailed on the Program’s website under admission guidelines at: https://www.hsutx.edu/pa

The admission requirements, frequently asked questions, Program tuition and fees, and links to the CASPA application are found on the program website. Candidates selected for admission to the Program must meet all admission requirements. Following a competitive on-campus interview process, applicants will be ranked using a comprehensive, holistic method, and only the top candidates will be offered a seat in the class. Students enter in August of each year and complete the Program as a cohort.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT:

Hardin-Simmons University PA Program does not grant advanced placement to any matriculating student.

SECURITY CLEARANCE / BACKGROUND CHECKS:

Hardin-Simmons University PA students must successfully complete multiple security background checks. The first background check must be completed prior to enrollment (no more than 60 days prior to matriculation) through a HSU contractor (link and information are provided on the HSU PA orientation information packet emailed to students). Students also must successfully complete an extended background check through a HSU contractor prior to clinical rotations. Additional background checks will be based on the student’s clinical schedule and will be coordinated by the Program. Students without clear background screenings may be excluded from admission and/or from Program completion on a case-by-case basis. Students will agree to release these results to hospitals during credentialing for clinical rotations as needed during training. All background checks are the student’s financial responsibility.

Regarding misdemeanors or felonies, even if indicated that record is expunged, the information is still discoverable during a background check. Any omission or errors are considered falsification of the application, and this could result in negative clearance and inability to enter/complete the HSU PA training program. A negative clearance, however, will not necessarily preclude matriculation; but a conviction of a felony offense may result in ineligibility to receive licensure in Texas. Cases are considered on an individual basis by the state licensing agency.
DRUG SCREENING:

Students will be screened for the use of illegal drugs/substances by an outside agency prior to matriculation and again prior to clinical rotations. Some clinical sites may require additional drug screening for rotation. Students will be required to use the Program’s screening agency. No outside agency results will be accepted in lieu of this official screening, unless specified by clinical site. Additionally, because patient safety is our priority, the program reserves the right to screen for substances of abuse/impairment at any point for cause when patient care may be impacted. Students will agree to release these results to hospitals for credentialing during clinical rotations as needed during training. Drugs of abuse screened for may include substances legal in other areas that are not currently legal to possess in our state. Drugs prescribed to the student will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may not be acceptable for use in academic, hospital or patient care areas.
TOTAL COST OF THE PROGRAM:

The PA Program makes every effort to keep costs reasonable for students. However, because the Program runs continuously for twenty-seven months, applicants must review their financial resources carefully and anticipate expenses realistically. During the clinical education phase, all students may be assigned to clinical sites outside of the immediate Abilene / Big Country area. The student is responsible for the costs related to out-of-area travel and housing, if applicable.

The total tuition and fee cost of the Program is estimated at $73,000 - $88,500, depending on year of entry into the Program. Updated accurate tuition and fee costs are published on the university web site at www.hsutx.edu/pa. This does not include living expenses, textbook or equipment costs. The estimates for these costs vary based on student choice of housing, family size, transportation/vehicle cost, and technology related costs (laptop computer, data plan, and mobile phone required). Reliable transportation is required in the clinical year for commuting to supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE).

PROGRAM TUITION & FEES:
COHORT STARTING:
2018 Fall - Graduating 2020

$9360.00/semester (block tuition) x 7 semesters + *Fees: (per Graduate Handbook)
  Departmental Examination Fee (per semester) $40.00
  Departmental Laboratory Fee (per semester) $80.00
  General Fee (per semester) $850.00
  Student Insurance Fee $20.00 per year (3 years)

*Total University Fees $990.00 x 7 semesters

*Non-University Direct Student Fees:
  Typhon Fee: $90.00 – one time
  Medical Terminology: $129.95 – one time
  American Academy of Physician Assistants: $75 – one time
  Background Checks: $64.50 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each (minimum 2 per student)
  Drug Screens: $46.00 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each, (minimum 2 per student)
  Clinical Credentialing Fees: $84.00 /semester when on rotations

Total Estimated Tuition & Fees: $73,100.00
  Same for Resident & Non-Resident

*Note –
Semester for the PA Program means three (3) per year Spring, Summer, Fall (mini-mesters included).

Costs of books, equipment and living expenses vary based on student choice/lifestyle. Electronic book options, purchase of used books and/or equipment, or rental of textbooks may offset costs.
Estimated textbook expenses: $1200 - $4700
Estimated equipment expenses: $900.00 – $1200.00
COHORT STARTING:
2019 Fall - Graduating 2021

$9360.00/semester (block tuition) x 7 semesters + *Fees: (per Graduate Handbook)
  Departmental Examination Fee (per semester) $40.00
  Departmental Laboratory Fee (per semester) $80.00
  General Fee (per semester) $850.00
  Student Insurance Fee $20.00 per year (3 years)

*Total University Fees $990.00 x 7 semesters

*Non-University Direct Student Fees:
  EXXAT Fees:  $297.00 – one time
  Medical Terminology: $129.95 – one time
  American Academy of Physician Assistants: $75 – one time
  Background Checks: $64.50 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each (minimum 2 per student)
  Drug Screens: $46.00 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each, (minimum 2 per student)

**Total Estimated Tuition & Fees: $73,300.00.**
  Same for Resident & Non-Resident

Notes –
Semester for the PA Program means three (3) per year: Spring, Summer, Fall (mini-mesters included).
*Fees are subject to change

Costs of books, equipment and living expenses vary based on student choice/lifestyle. Electronic book options, purchase of used books and/or equipment, or rental of textbooks may offset costs.
Estimated textbook expenses: $1200 - $4700
Estimated equipment expenses: $900.00 – $1200.00
COHORT STARTING:  
2020 Fall - Graduating 2022

$9986.00/semester (block tuition) x 7 semesters + *Fees: (per Graduate Handbook)
- Departmental Examination Fee (per semester) $40.00
- Departmental Laboratory Fee (per semester) $80.00
- General Fee (will vary per semester) The estimate of the Fall 2020 fee is $1,000.00
- Student Insurance Fee $20.00 per year (3 years)

*Total University Fees $1140.00 x 7 semesters

*Non-University Direct Student Fees:
- EXXAT Fees: $297.00 – one time
- Medical Terminology: $139.95 – one time
- American Academy of Physician Assistants: $75 – one time
- Background Checks: $64.50 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each (minimum 2 per student)
- Drug Screens: $46.00 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each, (minimum 2 per student)

Total Estimated Tuition & Fees: $78,700.00
Same for Resident & Non-Resident

Notes –
Semester for the PA Program means three (3) per year Spring, Summer, Fall (mini-mesters included).
*Fees are subject to change

Costs of books, equipment and living expenses vary based on student choice/lifestyle. Electronic book options, purchase of used books and/or equipment, or rental of textbooks may offset costs.
Estimated textbook expenses: $1200 - $4700
Estimated equipment expenses: $900.00 – $1200.00
**COHORT STARTING:**

**2021 Fall - Graduating 2023**

Tuition: $79,700.00 (divided over 7 semesters) + *Fees
- Departmental Examination Fee (per semester) $40.00
- Departmental Laboratory Fee (per semester) $80.00
- General Fee (will vary per semester) The estimate of the Fall 2021 fee is $1,000.00

Student Insurance Fee $20.00 per year (3 years)

*Total University Fees $1140.00 x 7 semesters

*Non-University Direct Student Fees:
- EXXAT Fees: $297.00 – one time
- Medical Terminology: $139.95 – one time
- American Academy of Physician Assistants: $75 – one time
- Background Checks: $64.50 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each (minimum 2 per student)
- Drug Screens: $46.00 + tax (for TX and NM residents) each, (minimum 2 per student)

**Total Estimated Tuition & Fees:** $88,500.00
Same for Resident & Non-Resident

Notes –
- Semester for the PA Program means three (3) per year Spring, Summer, Fall (mini-mesters included).
- *Fees are subject to change

Costs of books, equipment and living expenses vary based on student choice/lifestyle. Electronic book options, purchase of used books and/or equipment, or rental of textbooks may offset costs.
- Estimated textbook expenses: $1200 - $4700
- Estimated equipment expenses: $900.00 – $1200.00
EMPLOYMENT:

Because of the rigor of the academic and clinical education phases of the PA Program, outside employment is strongly discouraged. In the event that a student decides to maintain employment during their training, work schedule conflicts will not be acceptable excuses for missing academic activities and clinical rotation assignments will not be scheduled to accommodate a student’s employment.

Students may not be employed by the PA Program. While a student may be invited by a faculty member to volunteer to share their expertise in a specific area with the class, a student may not substitute for or function as instructional faculty and cannot be compelled to share any previous experience with the class. Also, during supervised clinical experiences, students may not substitute for clinical or administrative staff at the clinical site or for the preceptor.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

**Tuition, Fees and Other Expenses:** The University reserves the right to change tuition and other charges at the beginning of any semester. The tuition cost for a full-time course load does not include expenses for such required items such as textbooks, medical equipment and supplies, laboratory fees, and clinical tracking software fees. PA students are not eligible for part-time enrollment unless a specific degree plan is approved as part of a remediation plan after matriculation. In-state and out-of-state tuition are the same.

**Deposit:** There is a non-refundable $500 deposit, subject to change, for those applicants accepted into the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program, which is applied to the tuition for the first semester upon enrollment. If an applicant accepted into the Program encounters circumstances that prevent their matriculation, any amount paid by the applicant to the University that is over and above the non-refundable deposit of $500.00 will be refunded based on the tuition refund policy set forth by the University and outlined in the University student catalog.

**Professional Society Membership Fees:** Students enrolling in the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program will incur a one-time fee for membership to the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA). The fee of $75 is mandatory and subject to change by the national organization. The fee covers membership for the entire duration of PA training. Membership includes a monthly subscription to the Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (JAAPA), periodic newsletters, and discounted admission to AAPA’s annual national continuing education meeting and is paid directly to the organization. Additional information can be found at: [https://www.aapa.org/student-central/student-member-resources/](https://www.aapa.org/student-central/student-member-resources/)

Students are also strongly encouraged to join the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA) for a $25 one-time fee. Additional information about TAPA can be found at: [https://www.tapa.org](https://www.tapa.org)
These two organizations provide a wealth of resources to PA students and will be worthy investments.

**Cowboy Cash:**
Cowboy Cash are funds a student loads onto their student ID to be used for residence hall laundry, the bookstore, or for food and drinks at any of our campus locations, including Gilbert’s Coffee Shop in the library. You can load any amount with a minimum of $10. These funds do carry forward as long as you are continuously enrolled at HSU. Any unused funds at the time of graduation or separation from HSU are forfeited.

See the University website for more information regarding meal plans: [https://www.hsutx.edu/offices/business/tuition-fees/](https://www.hsutx.edu/offices/business/tuition-fees/)

**REFUND POLICY**

**Tuition and Fees Refund Policy**
Separation from HSU due to suspension or expulsion are not eligible for refund.

**Individual Courses Dropped**
Registration with the University is considered a contract binding students for charges for the entire semester. No refunds will be made on individual courses dropped after the closing date of official registration each semester. Because PA students register for a block of tuition, individual courses dropped within a term will not generate a tuition refund.

**Credit Balance**
Refunds will be processed automatically throughout the semester; however, a student may request a refund from the Business Office after aid has posted and his or her total account balance indicates a credit balance.

**Withdrawal from the University (Dropping All Classes)**
The following refunds will be made upon complete withdrawal from the University. (Does not apply to “Dropping Individual Classes.”) This Refund Policy applies to TUITION ONLY. Any institutional loans or grants will be pro-rated along with the charges as seen below. Institutional Money should not exceed charges at the time of the withdrawal. A refund is not warranted if the credit is caused by any amount of institutional money within that semester. FEES WILL NOT BE REFUNDED.

**Medical Withdrawal**
HSU cares deeply about the physical and mental health of its students; therefore, health and counseling services are available on campus. See the HSU Student Handbook for policies for
medical withdrawals. If the University approves a Medical Withdrawal after the 8th day of classes, the student will receive W grades on the academic transcript.

Refund of all institutional charges are given according to the following schedule. Days indicated are class days.

**9-16 Week Course Term**

First and second day 100%
Third through eighth day 90%
Ninth through sixteenth day 70%
Seventeenth through twenty-fourth day 50%

No tuition is refunded for individual courses dropped after the eighth day of class. If a student is only taking one class, that would be considered withdrawing and the refund policy above would apply.

THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULES ARE REQUIRED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Students receiving Title IV* financial aid AND returning to HSU

Refund of all institutional charges according to the following schedule:

First class day 100%
Through eighth day 90%
Through nineteenth day 50%

Withdrawal:

A student who desires to withdraw from the University must obtain and complete the proper forms and return to the Registrar’s Office. The student must request permission from the Program Director to reenter the following year prior to completion of withdrawal process. See Withdrawal During A Semester section on page 59.

Graduate Scholarships:

Each graduate Program is allotted a number of graduate scholarships which may be awarded upon the recommendation of the Program Directors and approval of the Graduate Studies office. Graduate scholarships may be awarded to help cover tuition expenses. Inquiries about scholarships should be directed to the Program Director.

University Financial Aid Policies:

Financial assistance is awarded for one year at a time. Separate financial aid applications (FAFSA) must be filed each year. Application materials are available in October for the coming academic year. Financial assistance is committed only to students who are accepted into a degree program. Students applying for graduate fellowships and/or graduate scholarships must hold provisional or full admission to a graduate program.
All institutional aid, including departmental awards, are HSU-tuition-specific. The University cooperates in making funds provided by both the federal and state government available to students for grants, employment, and loans. HSU must administer the federal and state programs within prescribed regulations. All government programs are dependent on funding by federal and state governments. Awards are subject to funding by legislation and are not binding on the University if such programs are not funded.

All applications and requests for information regarding federal and state assistance should be directed to the Office of Enrollment Services, HSU Box 16050, Abilene, TX 79698. A student can only receive financial aid for repeat of the same course one time for a maximum of two attempts. To view HSU’s Financial Aid policies, visit www.hsutx.edu/offices/financial-aid/policies

**Veterans Benefits:**
The coordination of benefits for veterans is the responsibility of the Office of the Registrar, which offers assistance to veterans and dependents of veterans. In accordance with the laws regarding veterans in Chapters 30, 31, 34, and 1606 of Title 38 in the United States Code, assistance benefits to veterans and other eligible persons will be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward the completion of their training objectives. Students placed on probation who receive VA benefits must show academic improvement every semester they continue on probation.
ACADEMIC POLICIES:

Academic Advisors:
Students are assigned and teamed with a faculty member who serves as the student's advisor and liaison to the Program during their matriculation in the Program. Meetings will be held between each student and their advisor at least once per semester throughout the course of training in the PA Program. The purposes of the faculty advisor system are to:

- serve as a professional role model for the student
- act as a resource for both academic and personal concerns
- advise students' self-directed learning
- chart the student's progress through the Program, providing help and guidance
- assist the student in defining personal career goals

Grading System:
The Physician Assistant Program uses the following grading scale.
The final course/rotation grade will be recorded as “A”, “B”, “C”, or “F”.

A= 90%-100%
B= 80%-89%
C= 70%-79%
F = <70%

* A student who earns a course grade of a C in a didactic course will be placed on academic probation.

Rounding up of grades is only done at the end of a course, not for individual tests or assignments, and only if greater than 0.50.

REMEDIATION:
The Hardin-Simmons University PA Program will monitor and document the progress of each student in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation.

Academic advisors are assigned to each student at new student orientation and remain with the student throughout the Program. These advisors meet with students at minimum once each semester and are notified of any academic performance or professionalism concerns noted by instructors, preceptors, and faculty throughout the course of the Program. Performance <70% on any one assessment will require a meeting with the student advisor for counseling and strategizing for success in the future. Problem areas can be identified in these meetings and addressed as appropriate. Students may also be referred for counseling through the student resources on campus if personal issues are interfering with their academic performance. The
academic advisor will globally review the student’s areas of strength and weakness at the end of each semester and provide feedback and action plans as needed on a case-by-case basis.

Students are assessed on academic content through formative and summative evaluations. The goal of formative assessment is to monitor a student’s learning and provide feedback to the student to improve their understanding of the material. Formative assessments identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses and targets areas that need improvement. Additionally, formative assessment allows faculty to identify students who are struggling and who may benefit from remediation. Formative assessments are generally low stakes and examples include, but are not limited to, quizzes, concept mapping, assignments, and summary papers.

Summative assessments evaluate a student’s learning at the end of an instructional unit/module and/or course. Summative assessments are high stakes, and examples include, but are not limited to, end-of-module examinations, comprehensive final examinations, a final research project, and a research paper.

During the didactic year, if a student scores less than 80% on a formative assessment, the student is encouraged to contact the course instructor for content clarification and remediation to include identification of areas of strengths and weaknesses.

If a student scores less than 80% on a summative assessment, the student is required to meet with the course instructor for content remediation. Content remediation should be in the form of additional formative assignments to reevaluate the student’s understanding of the material. After remediation, reassessment is required to ensure the student has been remediated to competency. Reassessment methods may include retesting through a multiple-choice examination, an oral examination, or a proctored written assessment. The score earned on the reassessment must be greater than or equal to 80% to demonstrate competency. **The reassessment score will not replace the original score.**

Students requiring formal academic remediation will be identified by the faculty through progress monitoring of content areas as well as by those that do not maintain scores of 80% or higher on coursework. Globally at-risk students will be identified at the end of each semester by analysis of performance compared to peers.

**The formal academic remediation process for the DIDACTIC year is as follows:**

**Phase I –**

A) Academic counseling with Instructor for grade 70-79% on any summative assessment - first time:
This phase requires course instructors to meet with students for content remediation, study strategies, and test-taking skills for improvement on future assessments. Tutoring or other referrals may be made at this time as needed.

B) Grade 70-79% on summative assessment x 2 or more in the same course or Grade <70% on any summative assessment – first time:

In addition to meeting with the course instructor, this phase requires the student to also make an appointment with their advisor for counseling and creation of a remediation action plan to include study skills modification, learning interventions, tutoring referrals, or personal counseling referrals. Repeated failures of coursework or extremely low performances will require both the course instructor and the advisor to meet with student for action planning. This phase requires instructors to notify the Associate Program Director.

**Phase II – Overall Course performance 70%-79% – first time**

This phase requires placement of student on academic probation by the University. The Associate Program Director and student’s assigned advisor meet, and a letter is placed in the official student University file. A Remediation Action Plan will be initiated. Remediation in study skills will be mandated. More individualized content remediation may be required. Students will have the policies regarding Program dismissal reviewed with them by their advisor and the Associate Program Director or Program Director.

**Phase III – Two or more Course Performance 70-79% – or– first course performance below 70%**

Student is subject to dismissal. All Principal Faculty will review student performance in Program to-date and vote on student progression, including potential dismissal. A majority of a blinded principal faculty vote will be the deciding factor to move forward with student dismissal.

If the student is retained, mandatory remediation in multiple areas will be included in the student’s written Academic Improvement Contract (AIC). Coursework may be required to be repeated and graduation may be delayed. Analysis will be performed with results to assist in individualized goal achievement that may include all previously listed potential interventions from phase I or phase II or additional stipulations that support and encourage student success, and potential development of an individualized degree plan.

**FAILURE WHILE ON ACADEMIC PROBATION**

If a student earns a final didactic course grade of <70% while on Academic Probation, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal. The Grading and Promotions Committee is made up of the Program Director, Medical Director, and all
principal faculty. This committee reviews students’ progress in committee and votes to recommend student program progression including cases of continuation, deceleration, dismissal, expulsion, etc. as needed.
Remediation Policy for Academic Year

Phase I*

<80% on any assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE I-A</th>
<th>PHASE 1-B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70-79% any summative assessment first time</td>
<td>70-79% 2 or more times or &lt;70% first time on summative assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Instructor (content remediation &amp; reassessment)</td>
<td>Must meet with advisor and instructor (content remediation &amp; reassessment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continues to score &gt;80% no further intervention needed</td>
<td>Associate Program Director notified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remediation Action Plan (RAP) initiated</td>
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</tbody>
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Phase II**

70-79% Entire Course

- Placed on Academic Probation following semester
- Meet with Associate Program Director and Advisor
  - Letter from Registrar office goes in file
    - Mandated study skills
    - Remediation Action Plan (RAP)
    - Remediation of content possible
    - Dismissal policy reviewed

Phase III**

<70% Entire course once or 70-79% in 2 or more courses

- Student subject to dismissal
- All faculty involved in decision process
- GPA considered along with global course performance
- If retained: a) develop Academic Improvement Contract (AIC)
  b) analysis of student performance with individualized goal setting/degree plan

*Phase I deals with grades in ANY individual summative assessment
**Phase II deals with final grades in ENTIRE course (overall grade)
The formal academic remediation process for the CLINICAL year is as follows:

**PRECEPTOR EVALUATIONS:**

Preceptor evaluations will be completed for each clinical rotation and must be passed with a grade of 70% or higher for students to receive credit for the rotation. If a student earns a grade of <70% on the preceptor evaluation, the student will fail the clinical rotation and will be required to repeat the course successfully with a passing preceptor evaluation and passing grades on all other rotation components, including the end of rotation examination. Failure of a preceptor evaluation will automatically place the student on Academic Probation for the next semester. Graduation may be delayed. Additionally, any student with a failing rotation evaluation by a preceptor will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education and the student’s advisor for counseling. A Remediation Action Plan on improvement of clinically related skills and proficiency will be implemented prior to the repeat rotation.

**CLINICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

During the clinical phase of training, completion of assignments will be required in each course to assist in achievement of learning outcomes. All components must be successfully completed with a grade of 70% or higher. If a student earns a grade of <70% on their clinical assignments, they will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for counseling and a Remediation Action Plan will be developed for successful completion of assignment(s) or repeat of assignment(s) prior to credit being awarded for a clinical course. Resubmitted assignments will receive a maximum score of 70%.

**OBJECTIVE STRUCTURED CLINICAL EXAMINATION (OSCE)**

OSCEs will be given at the end of each clinical semester and a summative OSCE within four months of graduation. Students are required to pass each OSCE with a grade of 70% or higher prior to progressing to the next clinical semester. Additionally, students must pass the summative OSCE with a grade of 70% or higher in order to graduate.

If a student earns a grade of <70% on an OSCE, they will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for counseling and a Remediation Action Plan will be created. Students will be allowed to remediate one OSCE only during the clinical year. If a student fails more than one OSCE, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal.
END OF ROTATION (EOR) EXAMINATIONS:

End of rotation (EOR) examinations must be passed with a grade of 70% or higher prior to student progression in the curriculum. EOR examinations are to be taken when scheduled. Alternative dates will only be offered for excused absences or in case of emergencies (see Class Attendance policy page 62).

If a student scores <70% on an EOR examination they will be required to meet with the Director of Clinical Education for counseling and a Remediation Action Plan will be created. If a student fails to receive a passing grade on the End of Rotation examination and is in good academic standing, the student will be eligible to take a repeat EOR examination within two weeks of the initial exam failure. If a student fails the repeat EOR examination, the final clinical rotation grade will be recorded as an “F”. The rotation will need to be repeated, the student will be placed on Academic Probation the following semester, an additional Remediation Action Plan will be created by the Director of Clinical Education, and graduation may be delayed.

If a student fails an additional EOR examination, the student will not be eligible to take a repeat EOR exam. Instead, the entire clinical course will be repeated and a final clinical course grade of “F” will be recorded. A student may only retake an EOR examination one time during the entire clinical year. The student is subject to dismissal for failure of a third EOR examination or failure of an EOR examination while on Academic Probation.

A student cannot repeat more than one clinical rotation during the clinical year or they will be subject to dismissal.

FAILURE WHILE ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

If a student fails an EOR examination (<70%), a preceptor evaluation (<70%), or earns an overall final clinical rotation grade <70% while on Academic Probation, they will be referred to the Grading and Promotions Committee and are subject to dismissal.

SUMMATIVE EXAMINATIONS:

Prior to completion of the program, a summative evaluation consisting of a summative written and summative practical evaluation (summative OSCE previously mentioned above) will be administered. Passage of both the summative practicum and the summative written examination are required components for successful completion of the program. Administration of the summative examinations will occur during the last four (4) months of the program. Minimum passing score for the summative written examination and summative practical examination is 70%. Failure to pass either the summative written or summative practical examination (OSCE), will result in formal remediation and graduation may be delayed.
Remediation Policy for Clinical Year

Clinical Student Not on Academic Probation

- Fails First EOR Examination (<70%)
  - Meets with DCE; Remediation Action Plan created
  - Retakes examination within 2 weeks
    - Passes
      - Passes rotation if all other components passed, no further retakes allowed
    - Fails Rotation
      - Fails Rotation

- Fails Preceptor Evaluation (<70%)
  - Meets with DCE; Remediation Action Plan created

- Fails Clinical Assignments (<70%)
  - Meets with DCE; Remediation Action Plan created; assignments resubmitted; highest score = 70%

Final grade for clinical rotation (all grading components) is <70%

- Meets with DCE; Remediation Action Plan created
  - Fails Rotation

Fails Rotation

Placed on Academic Probation; required to repeat rotation

Fails any subsequent clinical rotation examination, evaluation or requirement component

Referred to Grading and Promotions Committee, subject to dismissal after committee review
Remediation Policy for Clinical Year - OSCEs

Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)
- Administered at the end of each clinical semester
- One summative OSCE administered at the end of the program

Fails First OSCE Examination (not summative)
- Meets with DCE; Remediation Action Plan created
- Students may only remediate one OSCE during the clinical year
- Retakes OSCE Examination within 2 weeks
- Passes: Student may continue advancing in the program provided all other academic and professional requirements have been met
- Fails: Refer to Grading and Promotions Committee, subject to deceleration or dismissal after committee review

Fails Summative OSCE Examination
- Meets with DCE; Remediation Action Plan created
- Retakes Summative OSCE Examination within 2 weeks
- Passes: Student eligible for graduation provided all other requirements of graduation have been met
- Fails: Refer to Grading and Promotions Committee, subject to dismissal after committee review
PROFESSIONALISM & ETIQUETTE DURING ZOOM MEETINGS

The Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant program prides itself on developing professional healthcare providers. With the changing classroom delivery platforms, ensuring professional development and behavior is critical.

Below you will find some important guides to ensure you are developing and maintaining professional behavior during Zoom lectures. Please remember that our esteemed guest lecturers (and core faculty) work very hard to provide you with an excellent education, and many of them sacrifice time away from their work and families to teach you.

Kindly follow these important guidelines:

1. **Please do not eat meals during Zoom Sessions**
   Eating can be very distracting to other students and lecturers. Please make sure you eat beforehand. Small bite-size snacks are allowed.

2. **Please sit in a chair, do not sit in bed**
   Please make sure that you are not laying down, or in bed. Zoom sessions work best when everyone is upright and engaged.

3. **Be dressed as if you are going to class**
   Please dress as if you will be physically inside a classroom. Avoid wearing clothing that would be inappropriate for the classroom setting. While attending class in your pajama bottoms is a tempting option, you'll want to make sure that you are presenting yourself in the best possible light at least from the waist up.

4. **Keep your video on**
   Because of the nature of online interactions, we want to be able to engage as much as possible. This means that we want to see your face! Lecturers really enjoy engaging with students while being able to see their faces. It is very challenging to lecture to blank screens.

5. **Scan your environment**
   Be sure you are aware of the view from your camera display. Avoid sitting in areas that are distracting. For privacy reasons, many people like using backgrounds in Zoom. If you do use one, please make sure it is not overly distracting or inappropriate.

6. **Mute your microphone**
   Once you log in to the virtual classroom, be sure to mute your microphone (lower left-hand corner). This will help to eliminate background noise that could distract others. Remember to unmute if you have a question or comment (both of which are highly encouraged!)

7. **Chat feature**
   The Zoom chat feature is a tool to make comments and ask questions without interrupting the speaker but be aware that your comments are public and are recorded in the minutes of the session. As you most likely learned in your first face-to-face classroom back in kindergarten, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all."

8. **Be in the moment**
   Make sure that you are fully present, engaged, and listening to the lecture. Others can easily tell if your attention is elsewhere.

9. **Limit distractions**
   Turn off notifications, close or minimize running apps, and mute your smartphone during...
Zoom Meetings. Do not text or use your phone – this will infer that you are not engaged, and the behavior is distracting to others.

10. Avoid multi-tasking
You will retain the discussion better if you refrain from replying to emails or text messages during the meeting. Do not complete other assignments or study for upcoming tests until after the Zoom session ends.

11. Be prepared
Prepare for the upcoming class/discussion. Complete the required reading assignment and be ready to participate in the class with comments or questions. If you will be sharing content during the session, make sure you have the files and/or links ready to go before the meeting ends.

12. Friendly reminders
If the Zoom session is to be recorded and the Course Director/Instructor has not started the recording, please help to remind them to start the recording before the lecture begins. We recommend you take notes in case the Zoom recording fails.

Thank you for working with us to help create a positive environment for everyone!

The above has been adapted from the following sources:


LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY:

A leave of absence is a request that can be made by a student for either a personal or medical reason. Personal leave is defined as a leave for a personal nature, such as a death in the family, severe illness of a family member, or other extenuating circumstances. A medical leave is defined as a leave due to an illness as documented by a medical provider (MD/DO/PA/NP). Medical leave requires a letter from the medical provider and must include the start and end dates of the leave of absence and the expected length of time for student medical leave. A student may also take a leave of absence from their studies on a temporary basis for a justifiable reason, as approved by the Program Director.

To qualify for a leave of absence, the student must be in good academic standing without prior or current disciplinary actions. This leave ensures the student a place upon return, provided all re-entry requirements are met and space is available. Requirements may include, but are not limited to, additional academic course work, passing of a technical skill or OSCE, documentation from a healthcare provider, or any other requirements deemed appropriate by the Program Director. Note, an alternate degree plan may be created, and graduation may be delayed.

Prior to submitting for the leave of absence, the student must meet with the Program Director, Associate Program Director, Director of Clinical Education and their Academic Advisor as a group to discuss the leave of absence requirements and potential alternate degree plan options.
Upon approval of the leave of absence, the student will be withdrawn from all courses. Student privileges provided to enrolled students will cease during the period of leave.

For students on medical leave, prior to return the student must also provide a letter from a medical provider (MD/DO/PA/NP) indicating that the student is medically cleared to return to the program. The student is also required to submit a letter of intent to re-enroll 30 days prior to the stated return date. The letter should include an explanation of their readiness to re-enroll.

Due to the nature and sequence of the program, all students requesting a leave of absence may matriculate with the next entering class. A revised degree plan will be presented with the new graduation date based upon the anticipated re-enrollment date. The didactic curriculum is designed to prepare students for clinical rotations and therefore, when re-enrolling, courses already taken may have to be repeated upon re-entering the program. Courses which the student must repeat will be decided at the discretion of the program. In the event of a leave of absence during the clinical year, future clinical rotations will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis based on availability, possibly resulting in further delay of graduation.

DECELERATION POLICY:

Deceleration is an alternative mechanism that allows students to complete the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant program curriculum. Deceleration may allow students to extend their curriculum due to academic deficiencies. Reasons for deceleration can be either voluntary or mandatory.

**Voluntary Deceleration:** Students must submit a written request to the Program Director and the to voluntarily decelerate by taking a leave of absence. Voluntary deceleration is considered a proactive decision on the part of the student before experiencing academic difficulty. If voluntary deceleration occurs during the didactic training, the student will reseat in August with the incoming class and must meet all previously agreed upon conditions as outlined in the Leave of Absence Policy.

**Mandatory Deceleration:** The Grading and Promotions Committee may recommend deceleration to the Program Director as a means to remediate deficiencies, as a preventative measure to avoid further academic difficulty, or as a result of non-academic reasons as defined in the student handbook. The Committee may specify the plan for deceleration or defer to the judgment of the Program Director. Students in the decelerated curriculum must successfully complete all required courses. Upon decelerating, students may delay their graduation by no more than one year and must comply with any revisions in curriculum requirements and changes in tuition and fees of their new graduating class. A unique degree plan will be created for any decelerated student. The student will be required to audit and/or repeat courses previously passed and repeat any course(s) in which a grade of C was obtained. If the student fails any course(s) the student will be dismissed from the Program immediately. If a student earned less than a C in any course, they are not eligible to reapply.
A maximum of 4 years will be allowed to complete all aspects of the program from first matriculation date.

WITHDRAWAL DURING A SEMESTER:

A student who finds it necessary to withdraw from the University before the end of the semester must secure the proper form for withdrawal through the Office of the Registrar. The form requires approval by the Business and Financial Aid Offices. If procedure is not followed, the student is automatically assigned a grade of “F” in all courses. However, no student may withdraw after the last date of withdrawal specified in the academic calendar. See leave of absence and deceleration policies for information regarding returning to the PA Program.

At no time will the Program Director or Faculty be aware of a student’s medical condition. The documentation that validates the legitimacy of the student’s case will be contained in the Office of the Dean of Students in the area of Student Life and Counseling.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Students are expected to do their own academic work; therefore, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Faculty and students are encouraged to take an aggressive approach to combating acts of inappropriate academic behavior. Academic dishonesty occurs when a student submits the work of someone else as his/her own or has special information for use in an evaluation activity that is not available to other students in the same activity. Students who observe or become aware of violations of academic integrity are urged to report these violations to the professor in whose course the dishonest acts occur.

Examples include but may not be limited to the following:

1. Cheating on an examination:
   a) Copying from another student’s examination.
   b) Possessing or using during an examination material not authorized by the person giving the exam.
   c) Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during an exam without permission from the instructor.
   d) Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an un-administered examination.
   e) Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself to take a test.
   f) Obtaining an un-administered test or information about an un-administered test.

2. Plagiarism is the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means, another person’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it as one’s own work. This could include the failure to specifically cite sources.

Penalties
Penalties may range from dismissal from the University to a lesser penalty. If the penalty is an F for the course in which the violation occurred, the F will count in the computation of the student’s GPA even if the course is repeated.

**Procedures for Violation**

1. At the point of discovery, the instructor shall inform the student of the alleged violation of academic integrity and hear his/her explanation of the circumstances. If the instructor determines there is no violation, the case is dropped. If the instructor decides the violation is unintentional or minor, the instructor may decide to require the student to rewrite the paper in question, take a modified exam, or take some similar action. If, in the judgment of the instructor, the alleged violation is deemed to be serious and intentional, the instructor will follow the procedure outlined below in steps 2–5.

2. Before imposing a penalty for a violation, the instructor shall consult with his/her immediate supervisor and together they will agree on a penalty. The instructor shall then make a written report outlining the incident and the recommended penalty. A copy of the report shall be given to the supervisor, the head of the department and the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered, the Office of the Provost, the student and the student’s advisor. The instructor shall inform the student, in writing, of the right to appeal the charge of violating academic integrity.

3. From the point of discovery, and within 10 working days, the instructor shall complete the process outlined above.

4. The Office of the Provost shall maintain files of all violations of academic integrity.

5. The student has the right to appeal the charge of violating academic integrity and/or the penalty assessed in accordance with the following appeals process.
Procedure for Appeal

1. A student appealing a charge of academic integrity violation and/or a penalty must deliver a letter to the chair of the Grade Appeal and Academic Misconduct Committee, specifying the basis for the appeal, within 10 working days after receiving the instructor’s written report.

2. The chair of the committee will schedule a meeting of the committee as soon as practical, after receipt of the letter of appeal, preferably within 10 working days. The chair will notify the student and the instructor of the meeting date and time.

3. Copies of the instructor’s report and the student’s letter of appeal will be provided to all members of the committee at least two working days before the day of the meeting.

4. The committee will review the materials submitted by both the student and the instructor before the formal meeting and convene at a time convenient for all involved for the purpose of hearing the two individuals present their cases. The committee will then convene in an executive session to reach a decision in the matter. The chair of the committee will inform, in writing, the student, the student’s advisor, the instructor, the instructor’s immediate supervisor, the head of the department and the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered, and the Office of the Provost of the decision.

5. If the appeal is denied, then the charge and the penalty is upheld. If an appeal of a charge of violating academic integrity is upheld, the case is dismissed. If an appeal of a penalty is upheld, then the committee will determine an appropriate penalty. The ruling of the committee is final. Action, or failure to take action, by an instructor or the Appeals Committee does not preclude disciplinary action by the University when appropriate.

https://www.hsutx.edu/academics/academic-resources/

HSU Student Handbook
GRADE REPORTS:

Grade reports are posted on Canvas for the University and on HSU Central at the close of each semester.
CLASS ATTENDANCE:

The HSU PA Program is fast-paced and therefore students must take advantage of every learning opportunity. Faculty require students to attend classes and rotations, and to use good judgment when taking an absence. The following guidelines have been established to ensure fair and equitable provisions for student absences. Any time a student is absent from a class or rotation for any reason, they must notify faculty before the course start time or clinic time. Absences that are not reported will be considered unexcused, and notification, after the absence, is unacceptable, unless in the case of an emergency. Any absence that is not reported will be grounds for significant penalties including possible dismissal from the Program.

TARDY POLICY

If it is necessary to be late for a class session, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor prior to the start of class and the student is responsible for the missed material covered. Students should arrive 10 minutes prior to the start of class to allow time to set up computers. Every two tardies will equal one unexcused absence. A pattern of tardiness will be result in a reduction in attendance points equivalent to the unexcused absence policy. In addition, excessive tardiness will be reflected in the professionalism evaluation of student and may result in remediation of student professionalism and/or deceleration/program expulsion.

DIDACTIC STUDENTS

Excused absences:

Personal illness: A student may receive an excused absence for illness for up to three (3) days per course, per semester. A written excuse is required for each absence. To qualify as an excused absence, a healthcare provider’s note is required. The note must be provided to all course coordinators of missed courses and the student’s advisor. After three (3) excused absences, additional absences will be considered unexcused.

Death in the immediate family: Funeral leave for a death in the immediate family will be granted for up to three (3) days. Immediate family is defined as student's spouse, the student or spouse's children, stepchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren. The student must provide appropriate documentation such as an obituary, death certificate, or funeral home record. Funeral leave for other family members/friends will be considered an unexcused absence.

Approved religious holidays: Students requesting observance of religious holy days must request these within the first week of a semester to be considered for approval as excused absences. A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day will be required to take a missed examination or complete a missed assignment the first class/workday after the holy day absence. The student may be penalized if he/she fails to give prior notice of the planned absence or if the student does not satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination by the expected make-up date. This policy applies to all students in the training Program.
Approved personal appointments: Personal appointments will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the course coordinator. Request for permission of an excused absence should be submitted to the course coordinator two weeks prior to appointment, when possible. If approved, the student will be required to bring a return to work (medical appointments) or receipts (other appointments) concerning attendance at the appointment during class times. Students should use discretion when making personal appointments and arrange them at times other than scheduled class times, when possible. Notification after the fact is not acceptable except in cases of emergency.

Natural disaster and weather emergencies: Notice will be posted on the HSU website and HSU Alert system. Registration for alerts may be found on HSU Central - “HSU Alerts” (https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/campus-safety/emergency-alerts/). Students will be notified of inclement weather or delays via text message.

Unexcused Absences: The penalty for an unexcused absence is deducted from the attendance portion of the course evaluation component which is 5% of the overall course grade. The deduction is calculated by the course coordinator as follows: 20% - first occurrence, 40% - second occurrence, and 40% - third occurrence. If additional time is needed because of prolonged illness or other circumstances, it is recommended that the student apply for a leave of absence (personal or medical).

CLINICAL STUDENTS

Clinical year students are expected to keep the same schedule as the primary clinical preceptor/supervisor. When an absence occurs, the student is required to contact: (1) the Director of Clinical Education for all rotations and (2) the clinical site preceptor prior to the expected work time. Failure to contact, or contact after the workday begins, will be considered unexcused except in the case of an emergency.

Excused absences:

Personal illness: A student may receive an excused absence for up to three (3) days per semester. A written excuse is required for each absence. To qualify as an excused absence, a healthcare provider’s note (not the preceptor) is required for all personal illnesses. The note must be provided to the Director of Clinical Education. After three (3) excused absences, additional absences will be considered unexcused. If extended absence is required, please refer to the leave of absence policy.

Death in the immediate family: Funeral leave for a death in the immediate family will be granted for up to three (3) days. Immediate family is defined as student's spouse, the student or spouse's children, stepchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren. The student must provide appropriate documentation such as an obituary, death certificate, or funeral home record. Funeral leave for other family members/friends will be considered an unexcused absence.
Approved religious holidays: Students requesting observance of religious holy days must request these within the first week of a semester to be considered for approval as excused absences. A student who is absent from clinical rotations for the observance of a religious holy day will be required to take a missed examination or complete a missed assignment the first class/workday after the holy day absence. The student may be penalized if he/she fails to give prior notice of the planned absence or if the student does not satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination by the expected make-up date. This policy applies to all students in the training Program.

Approved personal appointments: Personal appointments will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the course coordinator. Request for permission of an excused absence should be submitted to the course coordinator two weeks prior to appointment, when possible. If approved, the student will be required to bring a return to work (medical appointments) or receipts (other appointments) concerning attendance at the appointment during class times. Students should use discretion when making personal appointments and arrange them at times other than scheduled class times, when possible. Any missed clinical time will be required to be made up on a 2:1 time basis for completion of the rotation.

Natural disaster and weather emergencies: The University alert system will be used to notify students and faculty of natural disaster and weather emergencies on campus. At rotation sites not in the immediate surrounding area of campus, students are asked to sign-up for local weather alerts on their phones that will notify them of emergency conditions. Student safety is the top priority of HSU and at no time should a student put their safety in jeopardy to avoid an unexcused absence. Please notify the Director of Clinical Education and site preceptor any time a potential weather emergency may impact attendance.

Job/Post-graduate training interviews: Students in the clinical year will be excused from up to three days of clinical rotation time during the entire clinical training phase (15 months) to attend job or post-graduate training interviews. Notification to and approval from the Director of Clinical Education will be required at least two weeks prior to appointment scheduling.

Students may attend the TAPA and AAPA CME conferences only if prior approval is obtained from the Director of Clinical Education. All requests must be submitted in writing.

NOTE: Preceptors may not approve time off, only program faculty.

Unexcused Absences:

The penalty for an unexcused absence is deducted from the attendance portion of the course evaluation component which is 5% of the overall course grade. The deduction will be calculated by the course coordinator as follows: 20% - first occurrence, 40% - second occurrence, and 40% - third occurrence.
Additionally, due to the critical important learning opportunities during a rotation, clinical students with unexcused absences are required to make-up time at a 2:1 time period ratio at a location to be determined by the Director of Clinical Education. The student will be required to maintain a time log to be co-signed by the supervising clinical preceptor. This log will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education to evaluate the need for additional clinical time in that area. If a rotation reschedule is required, it may be necessary for the student to be rescheduled in the next clinical year period and could result in delayed graduation. Make-up time cannot be during regular clinical rotation time. If additional time is needed because of prolonged illness or other circumstances, it is recommended that the student apply for a leave of absence (personal or medical).

**FINAL COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Completion of final course evaluations are mandatory. In addition, students are expected to complete evaluations for all guest course lecturers. Completion of the evaluations are a part of the students’ professional development. Failure to complete final course and guest evaluations will be reflected on the student’s final professionalism grade per each course where the deficiency occurs. The deduction will be calculated by the specified course coordinator(s) as follows: 20% - first occurrence, 40% - second occurrence, and 40% - third occurrence. If there are more than three occurrences, a formal remediation action plan will be initiated. Continued infractions will result in the generation of a permanent Letter of Concern.
GRADE APPEAL PROCESS / GRIEVANCE:

Grade Appeal Process
A student, who believes that the grading policy for a class has been unfairly administered, resulting in a course grade lower than expected, has the right to appeal the professor’s decision on the grade. The following process is for appealing a course grade only, not for grades on individual projects or tests.

For an appeal to be considered valid, each of the following steps must be taken in the order listed.

1. Discuss the matter with the professor. If at all possible, the matter is reconciled at this point.
2. If dissatisfied with this discussion, the student voices the concern to the program director in a conference scheduled by the student. The program director discusses the matter with the professor; another attempt is made to reconcile the matter. (If the professor is the program director, proceed to step three).
3. If the issue is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student submits a formal, written appeal to the dean of the academic area. The following must be included in the graduate student’s appeal:
   a. A cover letter requesting reconsideration of the grade.
   b. A straightforward narrative (one to three pages) detailing the circumstances surrounding the contested grades, with special emphasis given to reasons why the student believes the grade is unwarranted.
   c. All graded projects in the class (tests, essays, projects, etc.) that are in the student’s possession.
   d. The student’s personal record of attendance in the class.
4. The program director forwards a recommendation on the matter to the dean of the academic area upon notification that the student has filed a grievance.
5. In writing, the dean of the academic area formally apprises the professor of the student’s grievance and gives a summary of the points of concern.
6. The professor submits to the dean of the academic area a written response, which includes the projects in the professor’s possession, grades on all work done in the course, and a copy of the class syllabus with the contested policy highlighted.
7. The dean of the academic area will meet with each party separately and may schedule a joint appointment with the two parties in order to attempt a solution.

Petitions for exceptions to academic policies, other than for grade appeals, may only be made in writing to the dean of graduate studies. The graduate dean, in consultation with members of the Graduate Council, will make the final determination. No petitions will be considered from students on academic probation or suspension with a GPA below 3.0.

If the student feels that additional appeal is necessary, then the last line of appeal is to the Graduate Studies Grievance Committee. The grievance committee is appointed by the Graduate Council from nominations submitted to them by the dean of graduate studies.
GRADUATE STUDIES GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Membership of the Grievance Committee
The committee includes three graduate faculty professors from different academic areas with one specified to be the chair and two graduate students recruited from the Graduate Student Advisory Council. The chair of the committee will schedule meetings and preside during deliberations.

Neither the professor nor the student will have counsel at the meetings.

Duties of the Grievance Committee
The grievance committee will review all pertinent materials before the formal meeting and convene at a convenient time for the purpose of hearing the case. The grievance committee may request oral presentations by the parties. The committee will then convene in an executive session to reach a decision in the matter. The chair of the committee will inform in writing the student, faculty member, and the provost of the decision of the committee. If a grade is to be changed, the provost will see that the proper forms are filled out in the Registrar’s Office.

The ruling of this committee is final.

Procedures for Handling Student Grievances (other than grades) with Fellow Students, Faculty, or Staff

Procedure for Appeal
A student appealing a charge of an academic integrity violation and/or a penalty must deliver a letter to the chair of the Grade Appeal and Academic Misconduct Committee, specifying the basis for the appeal, within 10 working days after receiving the instructor’s written report.

The chair of the committee will schedule a meeting of the committee as soon as practical after receipt of the letter of appeal, preferably within 10 working days. The chair will notify the student and the instructor of the meeting date and time.

Copies of the instructor’s report and the student’s letter of appeal will be provided to all members of the committee at least two working days before the day of the meeting.

The committee will review the materials submitted by both the student and the instructor before the formal meeting and convene at a time convenient for all involved for the purpose of hearing the two individuals present their cases. The committee will then convene in an executive session to reach a decision in the matter. The chair of the committee will inform, in writing, the student, the student’s advisor, the instructor, the instructor’s immediate supervisor, the head of the department and the dean of the school or college in which the course is offered, and the Office of the Provost of the decision. Page 62 of 107 Updated 7.16.18 If the appeal is denied, then the charge and penalty are upheld. If an appeal of a charge of violating academic integrity is upheld, the case is dismissed. If an appeal of a penalty is upheld, then the committee will determine an appropriate penalty. The ruling of the committee is final.

Action, or failure to take action, by an instructor or the Appeals Committee does not preclude disciplinary action by the university when appropriate.

Refer to the HSU Student Handbook at HSU Student Handbook
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

**Community Service:**
Hardin-Simmons University PA Program believes that active participation in community service is important. All students will be required to log a minimum of 50 service hours completed while enrolled in the PA Program as a requirement prior to graduation, of which 20 hours must be completed by the end of the didactic year. These hours can be fulfilled in a variety of settings both locally and globally. Community service will be approved and recorded with each student advisor during enrollment as a PA student.

**Diploma Card:**
The deadline for filing diploma cards in the Office of the Registrar is listed in the academic calendar in the front of the Undergraduate Catalog. It is to the benefit of the student to file the diploma card at least one semester prior to the semester the student plans to graduate. (October 1 for May graduation, March 1 for August/December graduation)

A degree audit will be made as soon as the diploma card is received, and the student will receive a letter indicating requirements needed for graduation within a couple of weeks. The student should notify the assistant registrar one month before graduation if his/her graduation date changes. A student’s name will appear on the commencement program only once. A late fee of $25 will be charged for late diploma cards. Beginning approximately six weeks after the deadline, this late fee will increase substantially in order to add a student to the graduation list so late in the process.

For more information, refer to the HSU Student Handbook: [HSU Student Handbook](#)

**Participation in Graduation Exercises:**
All candidates for degrees are requested to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Incomplete grades must be completed by the deadlines of April 15 (May graduation) and November 15 (December graduation). Students with any graduation requirements not completed by these dates will be excluded from walking at their respective graduation ceremony.

**Financial Obligations to the University:**
Students are required to settle all accounts in a manner satisfactory to the University controller before a diploma will be awarded.
CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE:

CERTIFICATION:
To attain the PA-C designation, a candidate must be a graduate of an accredited PA training Program and successfully pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). PANCE is a multiple-choice test that assesses medical and surgical knowledge. For the most up-to-date information on certification and recertification and exam/application windows, check the web site (http://www.nccpa.net/).

TEXAS LICENSURE:
Texas is a regulatory state with responsibility for governance of Physician Assistants coming under the Texas State Board of Physician Assistant Examiners as provided for by the Medical Practice Act. The Board issues rules and regulations regarding the practice of Physician Assistants and according to the rules, maintains Physician applications for supervision of Physician Assistants. Please refer to the following web sites, www.tmb.state.tx.us for more information. Conviction of a felony offense may result in ineligibility to receive licensure in Texas. Each case is considered on an individual basis by the state licensing agency.

OUT OF STATE LICENSURE:
Students seeking out of state licensure are responsible for researching that state’s rules and regulations. It is the student’s responsibility to provide any necessary paperwork to the program.

UNIVERSITY OFFICES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES:

Campus Map. Campus map is located at https://www.hsutx.edu/about/map/

Physician Assistant Building: Departmental faculty, staff offices, classrooms, Physical Exam Lab, Anatomy Lab, and computer testing lab are located on the HSU campus in Mabee Hall (located at the corner of Vogel and Hickory).

Parking: Students must display a parking decal. All decals are numbered and color-coded for parking restrictions. Residents will receive purple decals and Commuters will receive gold decals. The first decal is free to all students. Any additional decal will be at the cost of $5 each. PA Students are allowed to park at Mabee Hall or on the HSU campus in designated areas. Additional information regarding parking and traffic regulations can be found at: https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/campus-safety/parking-and-traffic-regulations/

HSU Library: The main Hardin-Simmons University library is named the Richardson Library. Their website is https://library.hsutx.edu. A reciprocal agreement among Abilene libraries makes it possible for patrons, at any university in town, to use the resources of the others.
The Richardson Library at Hardin-Simmons University is three stories tall with 42,632 square feet of space, approximately ¾ of that footage is public space for the collection and patron use. There are a total of 418 seats for users. Of those seats, 37 are lab computers with internet access, Microsoft Office, and other software. The library also has wireless service, printers, and 4 rooms for group study.

HSU libraries’ holdings (FY 2018) include over 381,662 items in the online catalog: 201,619 print books; 86,942 federal documents (all formats); 41,773 electronic resources; 13,074 bound journals; 4,172 DVDs, various other media pieces and software; 10,957 scores; 6,813 LPs; 8,277 CDs; as well as microforms and other miscellaneous materials. Subscription resources include 183 paper journal subscriptions and access to 67,899 electronic full-text journal subscriptions.

In addition to its own holdings, the HSU libraries provide access to over 1.8 million items as a member of the Abilene Library Consortium (ALC). The consortium provides one integrated online catalog for HSU, Abilene Christian University, McMurry University, Howard Payne University, and the Abilene Public Library. Access is facilitated by a weekday courier operated by ALC. HSU is also a member of the TexShare library card program which enables faculty, students, and staff to use the library collections of 700 institutions in the state. HSU also participates in the statewide courier Texpress to speed delivery of materials requested across the state. The students may also use interlibrary loan services to request materials from other libraries around the world.”

Additionally, HSU library hosts a LibGuide for the PA program. This unique webpage, http://libguides.hsutx.edu/PA, hosts resources including Access Medicine, ProQuest’s Nursing and Allied Health Source, Prescriber’s Letter, JAAPA, Merck Manuals, PubMed, PubMed Central, and UpToDate. This page is also home to the Physician Assistant Research Roundup! which allows researchers to search a myriad of databases in one search. Most notably, there is a 3 part video series on how to conduct Ethically Sound Research.

The library is available to all students at HSU. Hours of operation can be found at https://www.hsutx.edu/library/

The Physician Assistant department has a dedicated library home page where students can access research databases, online textbooks, and other resources. The dedicated library page can be found at http://libguides.hsutx.edu/PA

**Department Library:** The HSU PA department maintains a limited library for student and faculty use. It is located in the PA Building. Library books are either donated or bought through departmental funds. Use of the library is on the “honor system”.

**HSU Bookstore:** The University Bookstore supplies the needs of the students for all academic materials. In addition to textbooks and school supplies, the store also offers many convenience and personal needs items and souvenirs. Credit terms for students are available for academic items only. All other sales must be cash or credit card. The bookstore is located on the first floor of the
Residence Life: HSU hosts residence halls and multiple apartments and homes on campus. Hardin-Simmons University Residence Life is committed to providing safe, comfortable, and fun living for students deciding to live on campus.

Graduate and married students may seek housing from among a number of options. Housing options include residence halls, apartments, and some University-owned houses. Space is limited. The housing license agreement can be accessed via the Residence software found at:

https://www.hsux.edu/student-life/living-on-campus/residence-life/

Housing rates, reservations and questions email the Residence Life office at: residencclife@hsux.edu

Disability Services:
Hardin-Simmons University is committed to providing equal access for all students to all educational programs and campus activities. This commitment to all students includes those who take courses online or via affiliated distance education programs. The Office of Disability Services recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and embraces access as an opportunity for hospitality, equity, and social justice. The office works to create inclusive and sustainable learning and engagement through universally designed environments and to facilitate access, discourse, collaboration, training, and innovative programming. For the development of an access plan (accommodations) because of a diagnosed disability, please visit the Office for Students with Disabilities online at https://www.hsux.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-services/ or contact us at (325) 670-5842.

HSU will provide services to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities. However, HSU does not offer separate degree plans for a program of remedial instruction designed for students with disabilities. Any person who has been accepted for admission to the University and who wishes to disclose his or her disability should request accommodation through the Disability Services Office.

A student who makes a disclosure of a disability has the legal responsibility to request any special accommodations in a timely manner, allowing reasonable time for the University to respond. The student has the additional responsibility to provide the institution with appropriate current (within a three-year period) documentation of the disabling condition. Completion of the required documentation is necessary in order to allow the University to determine reasonable accommodation of needs. The Disability Services Office is located in Sandefer Memorial, Room 107, inside the Academic Advising Office. Information about these services can be found at: https://www.hsux.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-services/

In addition, the physician assistant profession has many essential functions. Testing in these realms, in many cases, will not be eligible for modifications and/or accommodations. This will be reviewed by the Disability Coordinator on a case-by-case basis. This may include but are not limited to practical examinations, OSCEs, etc.
Career Services:
The office of Career Services provides current students and alumni with career development opportunities beginning their first year at Hardin-Simmons University. Career Services offers a wide variety of workshops, events, and services to promote career readiness. Workshops and events range from Job Search Strategies workshops to events such as job fairs and networking events with alumni. Services offered include resume review, interview practice, and a host of assessments. Administration and interpretation of assessments are given to provide students opportunities to develop a career plan. Additionally, access to an online job board is provided to students and alumni to search for part-time jobs, full-time employment, and internships. Educational programs related to career readiness are presented to courses over the course of the academic year on almost a weekly basis. The office is staffed with a full time director and graduate interns. The Career Services Office is located on the second floor of Moody Center. Additional information can be found at: https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/career-services/

Internet Access:
All current HSU students enjoy access to the network resources provided by Technology Services. These resources include access to PCs in labs, HSU Central, Canvas, and email. Student access to HSU Central is created upon acceptance to HSU. If the student is pre-registered for classes, then all other network services are activated one week prior to their start term. Otherwise, access to all services is granted when the student enrolls during the regular registration period. After the 8th class day of the first long semester (Fall/Spring) with non-enrollment, the student will only be able to access HSU Central and email while all other access will be revoked. Next, after the 8th class day of the second long semester with non-enrollment the student’s account will be disabled. Two weeks following this time, the student’s account will be deleted from the system.

Students agree to abide by the Internet Code of Ethics which can be found in the HSU Student Handbook at:

HSU Student Handbook

A University fee is assessed each semester for the service; this fee is included in the general fee.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic Calendar and Holidays:
University Holidays are listed on the HSU website under this link:

https://events.hsutx.edu/search/events?search=holidays
https://www.hsutx.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-calendar/

During the clinical year, students are expected to keep the same schedule as the primary clinical preceptor. HSU PA holidays may differ from University holiday scheduled. Curriculum graphics with specified dates will be given to students upon matriculation.

Harassment:
In order to promote a safe and comfortable learning environment for all members of the Hardin-Simmons University community, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects concern for others in the environment. Examples of behaviors that are unacceptable include but are not limited to theft, vandalism, acts of violence, sexual harassment, and disrespect for personal and University property. If a student has been the recipient of behaviors that may be construed as harassment and is unable or uncomfortable addressing the behavior directly with the involved person(s), the student is encouraged to discuss the situation with their faculty advisor or the Program Director for support and guidance in navigating through Department or University harassment policies and procedures.

Hardin-Simmons University takes the health and safety of our students seriously. If you, or someone you know, believe you have been a victim of sexual misconduct, contact HSU’s Title IX Coordinator. 325-670-1495, office is located on the second floor of the Moody Student Center.

A special note on sexual harassment: Because of the personal nature of patient-provider interactions and the close working relationship of PAs with other members of the healthcare team, it is vital that PAs have a strong working understanding of the behaviors that may be construed as sexual harassment and clearly avoid them.

For more information, see the HSU Student Handbook; at this link: HSU Student Handbook
POLICY REGARDING FACULTY HEALTHCARE:

PA Program Principal Faculty, the Program Director, and the Medical Director will not participate as healthcare providers for students in the Program. It is acceptable for healthcare to be provided in an emergency situation only until licensed emergency personnel arrives.

Medical Services:
Student health services are not available at the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program nor on the main campus of Hardin-Simmons University for any HSU students. PA Students are required to have health insurance upon matriculation and must maintain active health insurance during their enrollment at Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program. Hendrick Medical Center is two blocks from campus and is available should an emergency arise. Hardin-Simmons University is not responsible for medical bills and does not supply prescription drugs or personal nursing/medical care.

Students are required to show proof of their own private personal health insurance policy coverage prior to matriculation and again prior to beginning clinical rotations.

Personal Issues/Counseling:
The Office of Student Life offers free counseling services to students. No referral is necessary. Information about these services can be found at the following website:

https://www.hsutx.edu/student-life/student-services/counseling-services/

Suicide hotlines are available 24 hours a day to students and links are made through these services to local providers on campus for interventions when needed. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline phone number is (800) 273-TALK (8255).

HEALTH, IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH INSURANCE:

As part of the matriculation process into the PA Program, the Department of Physician Assistant Studies requires all students to meet the health and immunization requirements listed in Appendix B of this document. **If a student chooses not to be vaccinated or tested, they will forfeit their seat in the program.** Immunizations will not be required if the student has a specific medical contraindication to the required vaccine(s). Students must provide documentation from their healthcare provider of any adverse reaction or contraindication to a required vaccine(s).
Hardin-Simmons University PA Program immunization policy is aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Immunization of Health-Care Personnel: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Prior to matriculation in the Program, all students must complete the Hardin-Simmons University PA Program Immunization Verification Document and Health Clearance Form (located at the end of this handbook, Appendix B & C), have a physical examination by a healthcare provider, and have them complete the attestation form of fitness to proceed in the PA Program. Additionally, proof of personal health insurance must be provided prior to matriculation.

The Hardin-Simmons PA program’s clinical sites all require the immunizations listed on the Immunization Verification Document. Unless there is a documented medical contraindication, all students must have these vaccines in order to complete the program. Immunizations will not be required if the student has a specific medical contraindication to the vaccines listed. Students must provide documentation of any adverse reaction or contraindication to a vaccine required.

Various clinical training sites may require additional immunizations, evidence of testing, or titers prior to rotations. Fulfillment of these requirements will be the student’s responsibility. If students choose not to be vaccinated or tested, they will not be allowed to rotate at clinical sites that require the additional immunization(s). Inability to rotate at clinical sites due to noncompliance with required immunizations is not the responsibility of the program. If the student is voluntarily non-compliant with rotation site policies for screening/immunizations on all rotations, graduation will be delayed, or the student may be ineligible for graduation from the PA Program. Immunizations will not be required if the student has a specific medical contraindication to the vaccines listed. Students must provide documentation from a healthcare provider of any adverse reaction or contraindication to a vaccine required.

PA student health records are confidential and will not be accessible to, or reviewed by, Program, Principal Faculty, instructional faculty, Medical Director, or staff except for immunization and tuberculosis screening results which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student.

Recommendations may vary for pregnant women and those with health conditions or allergies. Please refer to your healthcare provider or CDC website for updates and clarifications regarding specific immunization requirements.
### SUMMARY OF IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

**Disorder** | **Requirement**
--- | ---
Hepatitis B | anti-HBs titer showing immunity
AND/OR-
Evidence of two attempts at completed regimen with no seroconversion
*If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.*
*If serologic testing does not show protection for HEP B, please consult with your healthcare provider to restart series.*

Influenza | Annual Influenza Vaccination (Injection)

MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) | Serologic evidence of immunity
*If serologic testing does not show protection for MMR, please consult with your healthcare provider to restart series.*
*If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required*

Varicella | Serologic evidence of immunity
*If serologic testing does not show protection for Varicella, please consult with your healthcare provider to restart series.*
*If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required*

TB (Tuberculosis) | One of the following:
a.) Negative IGRA blood test
b.) Annual Negative Tuberculin Skin Test
c.) If prior exposure & treatment/vaccination:
   evidence of negative Chest X-Ray annually

Meningococcal | One vaccination dose documented within 5 years if under age 22

Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis) | Tdap documented once and Td booster every 10 years

Recommendations may vary for pregnant women and those with health conditions/allergies.

Please contact your health care provider and/or refer to CDC websites below for updates and clarifications regarding specific immunization requirements.

**International Mission Immunization Requirements:**

In addition to the above health and immunization requirements for all HSU PA students, there will be supplementary immunization and health requirements for students going to international missions. This will include any routine and required immunizations and health recommendations for the country as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Travel Medicine website at: [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/vaccinations.htm](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/vaccinations.htm) Students traveling abroad will also be instructed to follow safety precautions for the country of interest which are available through the US Department of State website: [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html)
LIABILITY INSURANCE:

Hardin-Simmons University PA students will be provided professional liability insurance by Hardin-Simmons University throughout enrollment in the Program. Coverage will be $1,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000.00 aggregate. Proof of insurance will be provided to clinical sites where students are assigned. Coverage will be in effect for Program-assigned clinical rotations and experiences, but will not be in effect for students working in a clinical setting not affiliated with the Program, such as that occurring during outside employment or in the case of volunteer work during a break, unless it is Program-related.

Students are required to show proof of their own private personal health insurance policy coverage prior to matriculation and again prior to beginning clinical rotations.

INFECTION DISEASE / ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE:

The Hardin-Simmons University Department of Physician Assistant Studies has a commitment to protect the health and well-being of students, faculty, staff, and patients. As part of their training, students may encounter exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. This may include being exposed to human donors and preservative chemicals such as formalin in the anatomy lab, latex or other products such as gloves that may contain allergens, and exposure to communicable infectious disease which may be transferred in the clinical setting. While the risk of transmission is small, the Program has a number of policies and procedures in place to minimize risk.

It is the policy of the Hardin-Simmons University, Physician Assistant Program to follow the guidelines and recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regarding standard precautions. Before beginning clinical education experiences through the HSU Physician Assistant Program, students will receive training regarding CDC standard precautions as well as OSHA training.

**Standard Precautions**
Standard Precautions combine the major features of Universal Precautions and Body Substance Isolation and are based on the principle that all blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes may contain transmissible infectious agents.

Standard Precautions include a group of infection prevention practices that apply to all patients, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status, in any setting in which healthcare is delivered. These practices include:

1. Hand hygiene
2. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

In addition to Standard Precautions, students will receive training in the three categories of Transmission-Based Precautions:
1. Contact Precautions
2. Droplet Precautions
3. Airborne Precautions

Transmission-Based Precautions are used when the route(s) of transmission is (are) not completely interrupted using Standard Precautions alone.

Students may access details of this information at any time at the following website:

**Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens:**
Strict adherence to standard precautions and other infection control measures should prevent a student’s exposure to blood borne pathogens. Should a student sustain a possible exposure (including a needlestick injury) to blood borne pathogens during a clinical training experience, the student is responsible for immediately notifying their supervisor, instructor, preceptor, or department manager. The student should then follow the steps outlined in the section titled “Post-Exposure Procedure” and “Student Injuries or Exposures”. Exposure is defined as a demonstrated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Follow this protocol **IMMEDIATELY** if you are experience a needlestick injury or are exposed to blood/bodily fluids while on your rotations:

1. **Aggressive local wound care** to the site of exposure should be initiated immediately. The site should be cleansed thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes using a surgical hand brush when possible. It may be beneficial to use an antiseptic such as chlorhexidine gluconate (Foam Carer CHG), an iodophor (EZ Scrub, Betadine), or Dakins solution (dilute 1:9 buffered sodium hypochlorite). Difficult to scrub areas should be soaked in chlorhexidine gluconate (Foam Carer CHG) or other antiseptic. Non-intact skin should be cleansed with soap and water for at least 15 minutes. It may be beneficial to use an antiseptic as described above. Mucous membrane exposures (e.g., eye splashes) should be irrigated thoroughly for at least 15 minutes with saline or tap water using the nearest eye washing station (or faucet if none available).

2. **The incident MUST be reported immediately** to the preceptor and/or department manager.

3. Student should seek immediate medical care at the nearest Emergency Room. Do not wait until the end of your shift. Students are responsible for all medical expenses related to a bodily fluid exposure.

4. Finally, the student must notify the Director of Clinical Education or if unavailable, the Clinical Administrative Coordinator or Program Director. In addition, the HSU Physician Assistant Program incident form must be completed and sent to the Program. (This form is located at the back of the handbook; Appendix D).
Student Injuries

Incidents involving an injury to a student (such as a fall, or other accidental injury) during a clinical education experience will follow a similar protocol.

1. The injury should be reported to the student’s supervisor or clinical preceptor.
2. Students should report to the nearest Emergency Department for treatment.
3. The Program should be notified as soon as it is possible to do so. The student must notify the Director of Clinical Education or the Clinical Administrative Coordinator.
4. In addition, the HSU Physician Assistant Program incident form, must be completed and sent to the Director of Clinical Education. Do not send copies of medical records.

If a potentially infectious exposure occurs, do not allow feelings of embarrassment, a large workload, or misplaced peer pressures prevent you from reporting the event immediately. Needle sticks and other exposures can be life-threatening. Responsible healthcare providers recognize that unintentional injuries and occupational exposures may occur and must be evaluated by competent, objective, and experienced medical professionals.

IMPORTANT:

All charges incurred by PA students for healthcare visits, diagnostic studies, and prescribed medications related to an injury, needle stick, blood, or body fluid exposures are the student’s responsibility. Students must maintain health insurance throughout their educational experience at the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program. All medical or healthcare services (emergency or otherwise) that the student receives or requires are the student’s responsibility and are at the student’s expense.

STUDENT RECORDS:

Hardin-Simmons University PA students will not have access to the academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty. All student and faculty files are kept securely in a locked and security monitored building. Student files are kept in locked drawers. Students do not have access to secure file storage areas and will not be permitted to enter those areas without accompaniment by a faculty or staff member who is authorized to be in the space.

PA Program files kept by the Program will include documentation that the student has met requirements for Program completions. Similar to the checklist for Program admission/matriculation, the student file will contain a checklist of required competencies, skills, and learning outcomes achieved through successive completion of Programmatic components. Each faculty member will be required to sign off on Program competencies of students in their area of instruction prior to student progression through Program and Program completion.

As professional, adult students, it is solely the student's responsibility to communicate with the program regarding all aspects of the educational experience during graduate school. Hardin-Simmons University PA Program will NOT communicate with any family member, significant other, or outside party about any aspect of the student's grading, educational, health, or other
personal/professional matters except in cases of emergencies and as appropriate for clinical rotation coordination with student permissions.

While the Program will not communicate with outside parties, the University will release completed official records through the registrar's office if the student releasing said information to others completes the correct FERPA documentation.

**Transfer and Credit:**
All PA students must complete the entire PA curriculum. No advanced placement or advanced standing is granted, nor is transfer credit or credit for experiential learning accepted in lieu of PA courses.

**DRESS CODE:**

PA students should be aware that the image they project is very important to both the Department of Physician Assistant Studies and the PA profession. PA students are expected to dress in a manner that is professional. Business casual attire is preferred during class; clothing that is revealing in nature is not acceptable. When guest lecturers or other guests are present during a class or lab, students should be mindful that they are representing the Program in the community and should convey a professional image. Mini-skirts, shorts, strapless tops, tank tops, excessive jewelry, facial piercings, and flip-flops are not appropriate. Students are also expected to follow these guidelines when they are representing the Program in any setting that requires them to interact with the University community, the professional medical community, or the general public. Faculty reserve the right to remove students from the classroom or ask them to alter their appearance if they feel they are not achieving this standard.

Attire during anatomy laboratory will be: scrubs, closed toed sneakers or shoes, and lab coat (optional). No one will be permitted in the anatomy laboratory without safe footwear.

Attire during physical examination labs will be shorts, jog/sports bras for women, tee shirts for men and women, socks, and sneakers. Anatomy, physical examination, and clinical skills lab attire must be worn in the lab area only. Locker room facilities are provided for changing into appropriate clothing for a given class.

In the **clinical setting**, business professional attire, name / ID badge, along with a short white lab coat embroidered with the HSU PA logo is required to be worn at all times, unless otherwise directed by the site. For example, men should wear a shirt, tie, dress slacks and dress shoes. Women should wear a dress blouse and dress slacks. Closed toe shoes must be worn at all times.

Failure to adhere to the dress code standards may be considered a violation of Standards for Professional Conduct and students may be subject to disciplinary actions or dismissal for repeated infractions.
IDENTIFICATION:

All students will be provided with a University identification badge, including name and photo, clearly identifying each student as a Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant (PA) student. Students are required to wear these badges at all times when participating in PA professional functions such as a health fair or when in patient care areas. In clinical practice settings, students must identify themselves as PA students to patients and healthcare practitioners. This badge must be returned to the Program upon graduation or after withdrawal from the Department of Physician Assistant Studies. The first ID badge is free. Replacement badge is $15.00.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Students must apprise the PA Administrative Assistant of changes in name, address, telephone number or emergency contact information as soon as the change occurs. In addition, changes must be updated in Typhon and reported to the Hardin-Simmons University Office of the Registrar.

See the Registrar’s website for necessary forms at: https://www.hsutx.edu/offices/registrar/

EARLY CONCERN NOTE / LETTERS OF CONCERN:

The program utilizes the system of early concern notes and letters of concern for documenting deficiencies and concerns relevant to PA student performance.

The first Early Concern Note will be completed by the student’s Advisor or instructor documenting a deficiency or issue noted by the advisor, instructor, and/or staff. The first letter will not be a part of the student’s permanent record. This letter will serve to make the student and faculty aware that a problem exists in the student's behavior, basic scientific knowledge, clinical skills, and/or similar areas important to the performance of a PA student. Following the receipt of this first letter, recommendations may be made to the student on ways to improve the deficiency.

The second Early Concern Note will be completed by the student’s Advisor and co-signed by either the Associate Program Director or Director of Clinical Education (depending on program phase) documenting the student’s deficiency or issue that has occurred. The second letter will not be part of the student’s permanent record. This second letter will serve to provide the same feedback mechanism as the first letter.

A third early concern note will automatically become a permanent Letter of Concern, completed by the student’s Advisor and Program Director. This letter will become a part of the student’s permanent record and must be reported to the Texas Medical Board upon graduation.
A permanent Letter of Concern can be initiated and completed at any time for more egregious conduct violations /professionalism infractions without receiving an Early Concern Note depending on the behavior or issue documented. A permanent Letter of Concern serves as grounds for any of the following:

(a) automatic remediation,
(b) clinical rotation rescheduling,
(c) deceleration,
(d) dismissal, and/or
(e) other appropriate program, University, or legal action.

**RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION:**

Per Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program policy, no information will be released to family, friends or acquaintances of any Hardin-Simmons Physician Assistant student, except in the case of an emergency. Students are expected to maintain open communication with the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program at all times. While students may discuss information with their family or friends, the Program will not discuss or answer any questions with the students’ family or friends; all communication will only be conducted with the student.

**TEACHING OUT POLICY:**

In accordance with the SACSCOC requirements, that is, those of the University’s regional accreditor, specific people at Hardin-Simmons University have been charged with responsibility for developing a teach-out plan for currently matriculated students in the event of program closure or loss of accreditation. The Program Director and Dean will work with the University’s SACSCOC liaison to develop a teach-out plan; a written plan to provide for the equitable treatment of students who have not yet completed their program of study. If necessary, to achieve that goal, the teach-out plan may include a teach-out agreement between institutions.

To review compliance with A1.03h, the teach-out plan will be submitted to SACSCOC for approval in advance of implementation. Any teach-out plan will include the following information:

- The date of closure (date when new students will no longer be admitted);
- An explanation of how affected parties (students, faculty, staff) will be informed of the impending closure;
- An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption;
- An indication as to whether the teach-out plan will incur additional charges/expenses to the students and, if so, how the students will be notified;
- Copies of signed teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any; and
• How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment.
Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program
Student Handbook Acknowledgement

I, ________________________________, have read the information contained within the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook.

I understand my obligation to successfully complete all didactic requirements in the outlined time frame. I fully understand this information and hereby agree to abide by the Physician Assistant Program policies and procedures contained within the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook. Additionally, I agree to abide by all rules and regulations as set forth in the Hardin-Simmons University catalog.

I understand the outlined requirements for graduation from the Hardin-Simmons University Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. The Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program reserves the right to modify curriculum requirements as necessary to ensure the academic integrity of the Program. Students will be notified of any changes in curriculum or Program requirements prior to implementation in accordance with ARC-PA standards.

Printed Name: ________________________________ Date: __________________

Student Signature: ________________________________

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## APPENDIX B

### STANDARD MINIMUM IMMUNIZATION VERIFICATION DOCUMENT

**Printed Student Name:** _____________________________________

**DOB:** __________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tuberculin Skin Test (PPD) OR IGRA</strong></th>
<th>Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPD Results: __________ mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Please provide actual measurement of induration.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGRA Results: Positive Negative _______</td>
<td>(Health care provider initials)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis Vaccination (Tdap)</strong></th>
<th>Tdap Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Tdap Date Initials</th>
<th>Td Booster Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Td Booster Date Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Td Booster**

Get a onetime dose of Tdap if you have not received Tdap previously (regardless of when previous dose of Td was received). Get Td boosters every 10 years thereafter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hepatitis B Vaccination</strong></th>
<th>Vaccine # 1 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Vaccine # 2 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Vaccine # 3 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Date of Serologic testing:_____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ant-HBs: (circle one) Reactive / Nonreactive</td>
<td>_______ (Health care provider initials)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE-* If serology does NOT show protection from HEP B, please consult with your healthcare provider to restart series and provide documentation of repeat series in progress.

If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Influenza Vaccination</strong></th>
<th>Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>_______ (Health care provider initials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Meningococcal</strong></th>
<th>Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>_______ (Health care provider initials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Only required if age is <22 years old.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) Vaccinations</strong></th>
<th>Vaccine #1 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Vaccine #2 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Date of Serology testing:_____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measles:</strong> Positive / Negative <strong>Mumps:</strong> Positive / Negative <strong>Rubella:</strong> Positive / Negative</td>
<td>Anti-Measles: Reactive / Nonreactive Anti-Mumps: Reactive / Nonreactive Anti-Rubella: Reactive / Nonreactive</td>
<td>_______ (Health care provider initials)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Varicella Vaccination</strong></th>
<th>Vaccine #1 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Vaccine #2 Date____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
<th>Date of Serology testing:_____/<strong><strong>/</strong></strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reactive/Non-Reactive</strong></td>
<td>Anti-Varicella: Reactive / Nonreactive</td>
<td>_______ (Health care provider initials)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If serologic testing shows immunity, no vaccines required.

All immunization dates above are hereby certified by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthcare Provider Signature: __________________________</th>
<th>Date: __________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthcare Provider Name Printed: __________________________</th>
<th>Telephone Number: __________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address: __________________________</th>
<th>City: __________________________</th>
<th>State: ______</th>
<th>Zip Code: __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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By signing this statement, the student provides a waiver for the Hardin-Simmons University Physician Assistant Program faculty and staff to maintain and release immunization and tuberculosis screening results.

Student Signature: ______________________ Date: ______________________

*USE THIS FORM TO DOCUMENT IMMUNIZATIONS. IF MULTIPLE PROVIDERS GAVE IMMUNIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, GATHER ALL IMMUNIZATION RECORDS AND TAKE THEM WITH YOU WHEN YOU SEE YOUR PROVIDER TO COMPLETE THIS FORM.*

DO NOT SEND MEDICAL RECORDS!

APPENDIX C

HEALTH CLEARANCE FORM

Based upon standard history and physical exam findings, this applicant is able to provide patient care services required of a Physician Assistant student. Medical records of this applicant are on file at the provider’s office:

Healthcare Provider Signature: ________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________________________________

Healthcare Provider Printed Name: ______________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________

City: _____________________________ Zip: ___________________

Telephone Number: ( ) _
STUDENT INCIDENT FORM

Student Name: _________________________________  ID#__________________

Incident Date: ______________________________  Time: ___________ AM/PM

Location of Incident: _________________________________________________

Nature of Injury: _________________________________________________

Incident Cause: ____________________________________________________

Give brief description of incident, including predominating and contributing causes:

____________________________________________________________________

State corrective action taken to prevent recurrence. Indicate if further investigation is warranted:

____________________________________________________________________

Did you seek medical care?  □ Yes  □ No
Was clinical preceptor notified?  □ Yes  □ No  Name: ______________________________

Date/Time of Report: ________________________________________________

Date/Time/Method PA Program Notified: ________________________________