

Clinical Requirements/Required Documentation

The Clinical Requirements/Required Documentation below are items required by the PA program. All costs associated with obtaining a physical, immunizations, necessary laboratory studies, and additional health requirements as required are the responsibility of the student. Submitting proof of documentation and annual updates as relevant must be submitted to the program via CastleBranch (via WebAdmit/CASPA). Requirements are as follows:

1. Current [health insurance](#)
2. TB test results
3. Immunization records including required vaccinations and/or relevant titers (or proper medical waivers)
4. A statement of medical clearance signed by the student's primary care provider
5. Clearance of results of substance abuse test (urine drug screen)
6. Clearance from background check (BCI and FBI)
7. Technical Standards

Health Insurance

Students are expected to show proof of personal health insurance coverage before the start of the MPAS Program to the Office of the Bursar. Students are to maintain health insurance coverage throughout the entire MPAS Program.

TB Testing and Immunizations

<http://www.mercycollege.edu/background>

Required Screenings:

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening (one of the following):

- 2-step Mantoux PPD at entry followed by annual 1-step PPD
- Previous 2-step Mantoux PPD at any point and annual 1-step PPD (annual 1-step at entry and prior to second year)
- Serum T-Spot or QuantiFERON test annually
- If TB screen is positive, then a negative Chest X-ray is required (please attach negative result to paperwork) *
- In the event that a student has had the BCG vaccination, serum T-Spot or QuantiFERON test annually is the preferred method of testing as per CDC recommendations

*If CXR is not negative then the appropriate sputum collection should be performed as per primary provider and confirmation from an appropriate medical provider or Health Department representative of negative sputum results should be obtained OR proof of adequate treatment is required prior to enrollment.

Required Titers: (completed prior to start of the program)

Titers are required to be positive and demonstrate proof of immunity to:

- Mumps
- Rubeola (Measles)
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella
- Rubella (German measles)

*See below for required immunizations if titers are negative.

Required Immunizations:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis: documentation of Tdap at any point in life AND proof of adult Td booster within 10 years of anticipated graduation date OR Tdap within 10 years of anticipated graduation date
- Influenza vaccine for current year (annual)
- Others as identified above based on outcome of above titers

***If titers are Negative:**

- Hepatitis B: 3 new doses (0, 1, 6 months); anti-HBs serologic retest 1-2 months after final dose
- MMR (any negative): 2 doses (0 and at least 28 days later); no retest is necessary
- Varicella: 2 doses (0 and at least 4 weeks later); no retest is necessary

Of note, there is the potential per CDC recommendations to receive a 2-dose series of hepatitis B vaccination if serology is negative. However, to remain congruent with the majority of requirements for clinical sites, the 3-dose hepatitis B vaccination series is required. Furthermore, the CDC does not recommend annual TB testing routinely. However, given students would arguably be considered a high-risk population with consideration for high turnover rate through rotations as well as multiple specialty exposures and also to remain in compliance with the majority of clinical site requirements, students will be required to receive a TB test yearly.

Some clinical sites may have other health testing, immunization, and/or titer requirements. When aware of such requirements, the program will notify the student. If the student is assigned to such clinical rotations or requests to be placed at a specific site, the student must meet the appropriate health requirements as required by the specific site. Students are required to submit the appropriate documentation to the program. Students should also keep a copy of such documentation in the case the clinical site should require proof of completion of additional requirements at any point.

The immunization status and results of screenings are handled through CastleBranch.

Medical Contraindication/Waivers or Extensions for Required Immunizations

Students unable to receive one or more required vaccine(s) due to a temporary or permanent medical condition must request an extension or waiver, with supporting documentation. Extension/waiver requests require completion of the following steps:

1. Students must request documentation from a primary care provider (including vaccine(s) unable to receive, the reason, specific date when the student can receive the vaccination OR the provider's recommendation that the student should not receive the vaccination(s) because the reason is permanent.
2. Student must email documentation to clinicalcompliance@mercycollege.edu with a request for either an extension of the due date or a waiver for the vaccine(s).
3. The Clinical Compliance Coordinator will review the information and ask the student for any necessary clarification. For exemption requests, the student will also be required to complete the *Waiver Request and Acknowledgement* form. Forms will be forwarded to the student by the Clinical Compliance Coordinator.
4. Student must email completed form(s) to clinicalcompliance@mercycollege.edu

5. If the request is approved, the Clinical Compliance Coordinator will update the requirement(s) in the student's CastleBranch account and will communicate the student's request for an extension or waiver to the clinical coordinator. The clinical coordinator will then undergo a reasonable search to find the student a clinical placement(s) that will accept the student's approved extension or waiver. The clinical coordinator will communicate the search results to the student.

For influenza vaccine contraindications, the *Influenza Vaccination Exemption Request* form for the active flu season is updated annually and is usually available by the end of September. Students should contact clinicalcompliance@mercycollege.edu in September to request the form for that year's active flu season. The *Influenza Vaccination Exemption Request* form must be completed each flu season.

Approval of an extension or waiver request does not guarantee clinical placement. Students must adhere to the vaccination requirements of the clinical site. If no clinical site can be reasonably found that will accept the approved extension or waiver, the student will not be able to complete the clinical rotation and may not be able to continue in the program. If there is a medical contraindication, the student must provide the appropriate documentation as listed above. A portion of the documentation is the *Waiver Request and Acknowledgement* form which requires the student to acknowledge that by not being fully vaccinated, the student is at risk of exposure and acquiring illness and waive the college's liability.

Medical Clearance

A *Certificate of Physical Examination* must be filled out by the student's primary care practitioner within the last 12 months stating the student is medically cleared. This form will be submitted via CastleBranch and is required prior to matriculation into the PA program. The form also addresses immunization status of the student and ability to meet the physical requirements for attendance.

Substance Abuse Testing

All students must successfully pass a 10-panel drug test through CastleBranch prior to matriculation into the MPAS Program and prior to beginning the MPAS Program's clinical rotations.

The student is accountable for any incurred expense in addition to that which is within CastleBranch. Students may be required to undergo substance abuse testing at least every 12 months or as required by clinical rotation placement. Positive test results are sent to a Medical Review Officer (MRO) contracted by CastleBranch for further confirmation testing. If a student tests positive for a drug for which there could be a legitimate prescription, the MRO contacts the student for prescription information and validates the information. Students who have findings in their drug test for which there is no prescription may be disciplined up to and including dismissal from the College.

Drug test results of "dilute negative" or "dilute positive" require the student to complete another drug screen at his/her expense. Results of the second test are final.

Students who are performing in an unsafe manner, and/or whose behaviors are suspect, may be subject to an assessment by a healthcare provider and may be asked to submit to an immediate screening at the student's expense.

Background Check

All PA students must complete a background check and fingerprinting prior to matriculation into the program. This must be completed through CastleBranch and is a part of the initial acceptance/application process. Students are responsible for any incurred expense of the fingerprinting and background check through CastleBranch.

The background check is generated when the student orders a CastleBranch account. The report appears automatically on the student's account when processing is complete.

Students complete FBI and Ohio fingerprinting. Results can take a month or longer to be processed, so fingerprinting should be completed as soon as possible after CastleBranch package has been ordered. Directions are as follows:

- 1) Download the *Direct Bill Registration Form* and instructions from CastleBranch account.
- 2) Follow instructions on the registration form to schedule fingerprinting appointment through Fast Fingerprints (www.fastfingerprints.com).
- 3) Take the completed registration form and driver's license/valid photo ID to the fingerprint scan session.
- 4) In CastleBranch account, confirm the date fingerprints were scanned.
- 5) Fingerprint reports will be returned to the Clinical Compliance Coordinator to be uploaded to the student's account

The intent of the background check is as follows:

1. Allow for clinical site placement due to requirements of the clinical sites and their affiliation agreements with Mercy College of Ohio and the PA Program.
2. Enhance the ability to identify those students who may not be able to meet requirements for clinical placement and/or licensure requirements in some states.
 - a. Students with criminal findings on their background check and/or fingerprinting records may not be able to complete requirements for the clinical year and consequently may not be able to graduate from the Program.
 - b. Record of some convictions may disqualify students from taking the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) and consequently keep the student from clinical practice. Any questions regarding clarification need to be directed by the student to the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) and the individual medical board in the state(s) in which the student wishes to eventually practice. In order to matriculate into the program, the student will need to obtain the appropriate eligibility for state licensure and board

certification from the NCCPA and appropriate state board as laws vary from state to state.

3. Encourage patient safety and protection of other students and individuals on campus.

The background check is confidential information. Written consent will be given by the student in order for the Program to release information to clinical sites for rotation placement. A copy of documents will also be kept on file by the Program. Inability to complete the requirements on time may result in inability for the student to matriculate into the program or dismissal from the program or other disciplinary action as indicated.

Findings on the fingerprinting or background check will result in contacting the student to provide any needed additional documentation or information of the issues found on the background check. This will result in a discussion with the student as to whether clinical placement will be affected. If a clinical site that will accept such offenses cannot be reasonably found, the student will not be able to complete or matriculate into the clinical year and may not be able to matriculate into the program. Each instance will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the appropriate College faculty and/or staff as well as clinical rotation sites as appropriate. Clinical sites have the ability to refuse students based on findings on fingerprinting and/or background checks.

If for any reason an additional background check and/or screening needs to be completed for clinical site requirements, it is the responsibility of the student to do so.