



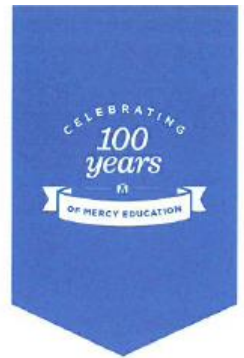
Program Handbook 2023-2024

MASTER of PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES (MPAS) STUDENT HANDBOOK

Compliance Review 10/25/2022
Updated 5/15/2023

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize the student with the policies of the MPAS Program to give direction to the PA student throughout their course of study.

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Toledo, Ohio 43604
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mercycollege.edu



Dear Family and Friends:

Congratulations to your family member or friend on their matriculation into the Mercy College of Ohio Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Program. As you likely are aware, it is extremely competitive to be accepted into a PA education program. PA school is very demanding and necessitates effort beyond a typical 40-50-hour work week. A PA program is likened to jamming three years of medical school into a PA curriculum. Your PA student's effort will require some evenings and weekends for some scheduled coursework, activities, and studying. A PA student typically forgoes pursuits outside of PA school, frequently contemplating school/study obligations in and around every day and special occasions for family and friends. Thus, I write this letter to you to ask for your understanding and support of your MPAS student.

As an example from my PA education days, one of my "survival" techniques was to fully participate in a family event during dinner (you have to eat, right?) and the clean-up (you'd like to be invited back!) but then I would need to excuse myself from the rest of the social activities to study. I was fortunate and felt supported as my hosts were very kind in providing me a space to study while others were gracious about me leaving an event early. My family and friends tried to understand how challenging it was to balance my PA student job with other events. While one needs to live the PA student experience to fully understand it, I was very fortunate to be supported on so many levels by my family and friends. If my family and friends ever felt neglected by me, they never shared that with me, even to this day. As a long-time PA educator, I know this change impacts family and friends--even mine who were so very gracious and supportive of me.

For your MPAS student, life will be different during the 7-semester, 118-credit hour curriculum. Whether your role is as a personal cheerleader, a sympathetic ear, a cook, a babysitter, or one of many other roles, your PA student will have an opportunity to focus on the rigorous PA curriculum with your understanding and support.

My best wishes to you, the family and friends of our PA student, as you support your PA student.

Kindly,



Dawn LaBarbera, PhD, PA-C
Professor and PA Program Director

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WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

WELCOME

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to Mercy College of Ohio. We hope you will find happiness and personal satisfaction while you are here. We realize that you have much to learn and many new adjustments to make in this new experience. This handbook is your guide to enhance your educational experience and relationships with fellow students, the faculty, and others with whom you will be associated during your program of study.

PROGRAM HANDBOOK POLICY/RIGHTS RESERVED

The Mercy College of Ohio Physician Assistant Program Handbook is published by the Mercy College of Ohio Health Science Division and is the program's official notification of its policies, procedures and standards of conduct applicable to students. Each student is responsible for knowledge of the policies, procedures and standards of conduct described in the Handbook; enrollment is considered acceptance of all conditions discussed in this Handbook. However, the provisions of this Handbook do not constitute a contract between any student and Mercy College of Ohio. The College reserves the right to change any of the policies, procedures and standards of conduct at any time as may be necessary in the interest of the College. The College also reserves the right to modify or discontinue any of the services, programs or activities described in this Handbook. If a material revision to a policy, procedure or standard of conduct is made and becomes effective during the academic year, students will be notified of such and will be expected to abide by the updated terms. Questions regarding this Handbook should be directed to the Program Director, Dr. Dawn LaBarbera, at (dawn.labarbera@mercycollege.edu).

COLLEGE CATALOG

In addition to this *MPAS Student Handbook* as a reference tool, the [College Catalog](#) is an important resource during your time in the MPAS Program. A PDF version of the College Catalog is available on the College's website for download: <http://www.mercycollege.edu/my-mercy/college-catalogs>.

HISTORY OF MERCY COLLEGE OF OHIO MPAS PROGRAM

Mercy College of Ohio has a rich heritage of compassionate care and excellence that began with nursing education. Mercy College of Ohio is focused on health care professions and related undergraduate preparatory education. Nursing programs led the entry into master's level education. We welcome you to the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Program, the College's first full-time on-campus master's degree.

ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITATION STATUS - COLLEGE

Mercy College of Ohio is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
230 South LaSalle St., Suite 7-500, Chicago, Illinois 60604
Phone: (800) 621-7440

Mercy College is authorized by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE),
<https://www.ohiohighered.org> Telephone 614-466-6000

ACCREDITATION STATUS - PROGRAM

The PA Program has gained ODHE authorization, HLC approval and ARC-PA Accreditation-Provisional status.

ACCREDITATION STATUS/ARC-PA STATEMENT

The ARC-PA has granted **Accreditation-Provisional** status to the **Mercy College of Ohio Master of Physician Assistant Studies** sponsored by **Mercy College of Ohio**. 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. The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at:

<http://www.arc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Accreditation-History-Mercy-College-OH.pdf>

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS OF PA (MPAS) PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mercy College of Ohio PA program provides a graduate-level learning experience that produces PA graduates who can provide competent, patient-centered medical care for diverse populations in a variety of clinical settings while also embracing service, scholarship, and leadership.

VISION STATEMENT

The Mercy College of Ohio PA program will be a premier graduate-level PA educational program in which its graduates contribute service, scholarship, and leadership to meet the medical care needs of the region, the State of Ohio, and the nation.

PA PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the successful completion of the MPAS Program, the Mercy College graduating PA student should be able to:

1. Analyze a population/public health issue that impacts patients and their communities.
2. Analyze clinical scenarios, formulate differential diagnoses, and create management plans rooted in current evidence-based and current best practice guidelines.
3. Engage in critical thinking in clinical decision making and scholarly inquiry.
4. Defend ethical decisions with respect to individual health care cases and population/public health issues using Mercy College Values.
5. Evaluate peers, interprofessional team members, and supervising professionals.
6. Create and carry out an action plan for professional growth and development.

PA PROGRAM COMPETENCY DOMAINS

The MPAS Program has implemented seven competency domains adapted from the Physician Assistant Education Association's Competencies for the new PA graduate.

1. Patient-Centered Practice and Medical Knowledge
2. Population Health and Public Health
3. Communication- Health Literacy, Interpersonal and Communication Skills
4. Interprofessional Collaborative Practice and Leadership
5. Professional and Legal Aspects of Health Care/Professionalism
6. Health Care Finance and Systems/Systems- Based Practice
7. Self-Assessment, Cultural Humility and Ongoing Professional Development

PA PROGRAM GOALS

Guided by our mission, vision, and core values, the MPAS Program of Mercy College of Ohio aspires to meet the following goals:

1. PANCE program performance at or above the national mean score for overall performance and for specialty and task areas
2. At least 95% PA placement within 12 months of graduation

3. 100% of PAS and PA faculty/staff will meet PA Program Mission annually through service, leadership, or scholarship by participating in at least two of these areas annually:
 - 3a. Service: Service to community, profession, college, and/or external stakeholders
100% of MPAS faculty and PAS participate in service annually
 - 3b. Leadership: MPAS faculty and PAS provide leadership to community, profession, college, and/or external stakeholders
 - 3c. Scholarship: MPAS faculty and PAS participate in Boyer scholarship model activities

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

CIVIL RIGHTS/NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Mercy College of Ohio is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the bases of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, marital status, military status, religion, pregnancy, genetic information, citizenship status, and any other legally-protected class in employment, admissions and other educational programs, services, and activities, in accord with applicable federal and state law. For more information about Mercy College of Ohio policies, compliance and consumer information, please visit: www.mercycollege.edu/compliance. Inquiries and complaints of discrimination may be addressed to the Director of Compliance and Risk Management at 419-251-1710, or 2221 Madison Avenue Toledo, OH 43604.

TITLE IX STATEMENT

In accordance with the Education Amendments of 1972, 34 CFR Part 106, Mercy College of Ohio has designated a Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator (Youngstown location) to ensure compliance regarding sex/gender discrimination of any type. Discrimination on the basis of sex can include pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions. Please direct questions/concerns to:

STACEY BROWN, TITLE IX COORDINATOR

419-251-1710

stacey.brown@mercycollege.edu

titleIX@mercycollege.edu

BETSY CARDWELL, DEPUTY TITLE IX COORDINATOR

330-480-2170

elizabeth.cardwell@mercycollege.edu

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE

To provide for equal access, Mercy College of Ohio is committed to making individuals with disabilities full participants in its programs, services and activities through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 for individuals who may seek accommodations.

Information for the Office of Accessibility Services can be found on Mercy College's website:

<https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/accessibility>.

Christine Miller, Director of Accessibility and Testing Services

419-251-1784

Christine.Miller1@mercycollege.edu

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE MPAS PROGRAM

To ensure patient and student safety, to meet the program competencies, and for successful completion of the objectives of each PA course, an individual admitted to the Mercy College of Ohio Physician Assistant Program must be able to independently, with or without reasonable accommodation, meet the technical standards for the PA Program. Mercy College is committed to providing equal opportunity for

participation in all programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Individuals must be able to demonstrate the following observation/sensory, psychomotor, communication, cognitive, and behavioral/social skills and abilities essential for admission, continuation, promotion, and graduation from the PA program.

Observation/Sensory

A PA student must be able to gather data from written and oral communications, observing demonstrations; studying medical illustrations, radiologic films or microscopic analysis of specimens/tissues; reading digital or analog physiologic outputs from medical instruments; performing physical examination (inspection, palpation, auscultation and percussion with ability to perceive position, pressure, movement, weight, and vibration); and performing didactic/laboratory, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Observation requires the functional use of the visual, auditory, and somatic senses, enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell and other sensory modalities.

Psychomotor

A PA student must be able to perform gross and fine motor movements required to provide clinical care to all patients across the spectrum of medical care including surgical and emergent care. Psychomotor demands include reasonable strength, stamina, precision, and equilibrium. The student must be able to sit, stand, and move within the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings for long periods of time; perform quick and precise maneuvers such as CPR and other diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers and procedures; participate in all experiments, return demonstrations, procedures; and effectively use patient care technologies, information systems, and communication devices that support safe and effective clinical practice.

Communication

A PA student must be able to communicate sensitively, accurately and effectively to others in verbal, non-verbal, and written forms of communication to a wide audience, including supervising/collaborating practitioners, peers, other members of the healthcare team, and patients and their families/guardians. This includes the ability to use and interpret facial expressions and body language; to ask questions and receive answers; and to give and receive constructive feedback. This includes the ability to speak, hear, observe, read, and understand the English language in a manner sufficient to provide safe and effective patient care.

Intellectual, Integrative, and Conceptual Cognitive Abilities

A PA student must be able to learn in the classroom and various educational settings; to synthesize knowledge, read and think critically, solve problems, exercise professional judgment, promptly complete responsibilities, and make decisions for the safe and effective care of persons across the health continuum in a variety of settings. This includes the ability to integrate relevant aspects of the patient assessment findings to determine and administer an effective treatment plan within time constraints imposed by the needs of the patient, the facility/setting, and the standards of care. The student must have the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures, as well as to measure and calculate.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

A PA student must possess the mental and emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the maintenance of patient confidentiality, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the care of patients and course assignments. The PA student must be able to communicate with, and care for, persons whose culture, spiritual beliefs, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, and/or age are different from their own. The PA student must be able to examine the entire patient, male or female, regardless of the social, cultural, or religious beliefs of the patient or of the PA student. The PA student must have the ability to show concern for others, show respect for human dignity, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and others. A PA student must also be able to tolerate rigorous

workloads, function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical situations. A student is expected to be able to adhere to academic honesty and clinical integrity requirements; recognize professional and personal limitations and when to seek guidance; accept and reflect upon appropriate suggestions and criticisms; and, if necessary, take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. A PA student should also conduct him/herself in a manner consistent with the American Academy of PAs “Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession” available at: <https://www.aapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/16-EthicalConduct.pdf>.

To be qualified for the Mercy College of Ohio PA program, individuals must be able to meet both academic standards and the technical standards listed above, with or without reasonable accommodation(s). Reasonable accommodation can be made in certain areas. However, the student must still be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner and demonstrate the requisite skills and abilities with such accommodation. The use of a trained intermediary will not be acceptable in many clinical situations because the student’s judgment is then being mediated by someone else’s power of selection and observation.

It is a student’s responsibility to request reasonable accommodations following the procedures outlined in the *Mercy College of Ohio Graduate Catalog* or on the College’s [website](#); requests for reasonable accommodations will be reviewed and considered by the College. For further information regarding services and resources for students with disabilities and/or to request accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 419-251-1784 or ADA504@mercycollege.edu.

These technical standards are not intended to deter any student who may be able to complete the requirements of the MPAS Program with reasonable accommodations.

PA TUITION AND FEES

The MPAS Program has a comprehensive cost approach. The total cost of the program is divided into the 7 semesters. The block cost covers tuition and fees to cover supplies, technology, books and subscriptions. PA students are accountable for damaged, mishandled, or lost materials (See Payment of Educational Costs.) as well as costs incurred beyond typical cohort costs such as, but not delimited to, additional tutoring, personal medical costs, and those associated with atypical drug screen results. Additional costs outside of tuition and fees typically apply.

GRADUATE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR MPAS PROGRAM

Graduate MPAS admission requirements at Mercy College of Ohio follow. Note that competitive applicants will typically have more than minimal requirements. The PA Program does not accept transfer credits into the Direct Entry or Graduate Program or credit by examination for prerequisite courses. The PA Program does not award advanced placement. The PA Program does not admit students with conditional, provisional, or special status. The PA CASPA GRE code is 47.51. Consult Program website for most current verbiage of admissions requirements, quickly summarized below.

- Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution prior to matriculation into the PA program.
- Cumulative (Overall) GPA of 3.0 as a competitive threshold.
- Prerequisite GPA of 3.0 with no course grade lower than C as a competitive threshold.
(Successfully repeated with a grade C or above will be considered.)
 - One semester of **medical terminology** (minimum 1 semester hour or equivalent quarter hours) or valid certificate of completion or equivalent
 - One semester of **psychology** (minimum 3 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours)
 - One semester of **statistics** (minimum 3 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours)
 - One semester of **genetics** (minimum 3 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours)

- One semester of **organic chemistry** (minimum 3 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours) (proper organic chemistry as prerequisite to biochemistry course)

The following prerequisite courses are **highly recommended** as upper level (science major oriented) courses as opposed to lower level or survey courses, preferably taken within the last 5 years:

- One semester of **microbiology** (minimum 3 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours)
- Equivalent of two semesters of combined (**human**) **anatomy and physiology** (minimum 6 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours), with lab preferred
- One semester of **biochemistry** (with organic chemistry prerequisite) (minimum 3 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours)
- Submit [CASPA application online](#)
- Letters of recommendation: At least two academic or professional letters of recommendation.
- GRE General test within the last 5 years
 - Preferred competitive combined verbal/quantitative score over 300
 - Preferred competitive quantitative over 150
 - Analytical Writing GRE result of 3.5 or above
- Discernment into the profession such as healthcare experience/patient contact.
- Technical Standards must be met
- Clinical Requirements must be met at time of matriculation and ongoing per program requirements.
- Must be a US citizen or legal resident.
- Preference for other relevant science courses earning a C or above.

Those applicants under active consideration for admissions will be asked to complete the CASPer situational judgement test (SJT) and Snapshot by Altus Assessments now called Altus Suite to progress to the interview stage. During the first cycle, interviews were offered prior to completion due to time constraints but were required to be completed before an acceptance offer was considered.

CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS/REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

In addition to meeting the MPAS Program's Technical Standards, there are Clinical Requirements/Required Documentation. 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*. Requirements, which are part of enrollment into the Program and with relevant updates 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

The student is responsible for any costs associated with not carefully following *CastleBranch* requirements/directions.

HEALTH INSURANCE

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

MPAS Program. The college health insurance policy is billed in the first semester as a one semester prorated fee and the college policy is billed again in the Fall for the entire coverage year.

TB TESTING AND IMMUNIZATIONS

(also available at <http://www.mercycollege.edu/background>)

The following health screenings/immunizations are required for students in College Health Programs at Mercy College of Ohio. **Requirements are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or clinical affiliation site guidelines.**

LIVE VACCINES CAN INTERFERE WITH THE TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TEST RESPONSE AND CAN RESULT IN DELAYS UP TO FOUR WEEKS IF BOTH ARE REQUIRED.

Required Screenings:

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening (one of the following, must be negative; renews annually):

- A. 2-step Mantoux PPD at entry followed by annual 1-step PPD
- B. Previous 2-step Mantoux PPD with subsequent annual 1-step PPD screenings
- C. Serum T-Spot or QuantiFERON test annually
- D. In the event that a student has had the BCG vaccination, serum T-Spot or QuantiFERON test annually

If TB screen is **positive****, the following is required:

1. Negative chest X-ray radiology report within past 5 years with negative TB AND Symptoms Review **AND** annual negative TB Symptoms Review

2. If chest X-ray is *not* negative, one of the following is required:

- a. Confirmation of appropriately collected negative sputum results

OR

- b. proof of adequate treatment and medical clearance (free from communicable diseases) with appropriate follow-up as indicated by Provider

****NOTE:** *Physician Assistant students with a positive TB test must show adequate treatment and/or medical clearance as indicated PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES*

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

1. Hepatitis B IgG Antibody Titer* - positive

- A. If titer is not positive:

- a. 3 new doses of Hepatitis B (3 dose series: 0, 1, 6 months) AND
- b. Anti-HBs serologic retest 6-8 weeks after final dose

OR

- c. 2 doses of Heplisav-BTM (HepB-CpG) Vaccine (2 dose series: 0 and 2 months) AND
- d. Anti-HBs serologic retest 6-8 weeks after final dose

2. Measles (Rubeola) IgG Antibody Titer* - positive

- A. If titer is not positive:

- a. 2 doses of MMR (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary

3. Mumps IgG Antibody Titer* - positive

- A. If titer is not positive:

- a. 2 doses of MMR (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary

4. Rubella (German Measles) IgG Antibody Titer* - positive

- A. If titer is not positive:

- a. 2 doses of MMR (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary

5. Varicella (Chickenpox) IgG Antibody Titer* - positive

- A. If titer is not positive:
 - a. 2 doses of Varicella (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary

Required Immunizations:

1. Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap) (renews every 10 years)
 - A. Documentation of Tdap during lifetime AND
 - B. Documentation of adult Td booster or Tdap within past 10 years
2. Influenza Immunization (renews annually)
3. Documentation of COVID-19 Vaccination (must include the vaccine manufacturer):
 - A. Proof of two-dose Moderna series
 - B. Proof of two-dose Pfizer series
 - C. Proof of single dose Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccination
 - a. Questions regarding COVID-19 vaccinations should be sent [here](#).
4. Others as identified above based on outcome of above titers

Requirements are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or clinical affiliation site guidelines. 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.

Important Information Regarding Additional Requirements:

Some clinical sites may have additional health testing, immunization, and/or titer requirements that are not reflected here. Program administration will notify students when aware of such additional requirements. If students are assigned to clinical rotations or request to be placed at a specific site with additional requirements, students must meet the appropriate health requirements as required by that specific site.

Documentation showing compliance with additional requirements must be provided to the program administrator to be uploaded to the administrator portal of students' accounts with Vendor. Students are advised to keep copies of such documentation in case individual clinical sites require proof of completion. Costs associated with additional requirements are the responsibility of the student.

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

Medical Contraindication/Waivers or Extensions for Required Immunizations

This information is also available at the Mercy College of Ohio [website](#) by referencing "Exemption or Due Date Extensions for Clinical Requirements." These policies are subject to change, and the most up-to-date information can be found by visiting the [website](#).

Students unable to receive vaccinations/meet other health requirements due to temporary or permanent reasons may request waivers or extensions, which may be approved or denied by clinical facilities. The College will make a reasonable attempt to find alternate clinical placements for students seeking waivers or extensions, but it is at the discretion of clinical sites whether students are permitted to participate in clinical experiences. **Waivers/Extensions are subject to approval by each clinical or practicum site each semester. If waivers/extensions are denied, it will prevent placement in clinical experiences and progression in the academic program.**

Requests for an extension/waiver and required documentation must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the due date, or processing delays could cause the student to miss clinical rotations.

Influenza and COVID-19 Exemption Request

For medical or religious exemption, contact exemptions@mercycollege.edu upon acceptance into the program and/or as far in advance of the immunization deadline as possible to request the required exemption form. The form is updated annually and must be requested each year. Continue with the steps below.

Extension and Waiver Requests

1. Obtain dated/signed Provider's note (on letterhead or prescription pad). NOTE MUST INCLUDE:
 - a. Vaccination(s)/requirement student is unable to complete
 - b. Reason (i.e., pregnancy, documented history of allergy, etc.) *Egg allergy is not an approved exemption if the egg-free version of the influenza vaccine is available.*
 - c. Specific date when student can receive the vaccination/meet requirement, *or* Provider's recommendation that the restriction is permanent
2. Email Provider's note and *Vaccination Exemption Request*, if applicable, to exemptions@mercycollege.edu with request for exemption OR extension of due date.
3. The Clinical Compliance Coordinator will review the information and request clarification or additional information, if necessary. The *Waiver for Exemption/Extension Requests* will be emailed to the student. Completed form must be returned to exemptions@mercycollege.edu.
4. **Approval is not automatic.** Student's request will be shared with the program administrator, who will make a reasonable attempt to find clinical placement for the student. The program administrator will communicate with student whether a clinical site can accommodate the request. If approved, the requirement(s) in student's *CastleBranch* account will be updated. **Waivers/Extensions are subject to approval by each clinical or practicum site each semester.**

Notes:

If student has not been released by his/her Provider to receive the vaccination(s)/meet requirement by the extended due date, an updated Provider's note with a new date must be emailed to exemptions@mercycollege.edu.

Vaccination Exemption Requests must be completed routinely as directed by the Clinical Compliance Coordinator.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

A Confirmation of Physical Examination and Clinical Requirements Clearance must be filled out by the student's primary care practitioner within the last 12 months affirming that the student has no communicable disease that would pose a danger to patient safety and the student is able to meet the program's Technical Standards and safely participate in the program, with or without reasonable accommodation. 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.

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 10-panel drug test checks for amphetamine [methamphetamine], barbiturates, benzodiazepine, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates [codeine, morphine], phencyclidine, and propoxyphene.

Students will be required to undergo substance abuse testing at matriculation and before the clinical phase or more frequently as required.

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 drug screening at the student's expense.

Up-to-date detailed information is available at the Mercy College of Ohio [website](#) by clicking on the "Drug Test Requirement" document.

BACKGROUND CHECK

All PA students must complete a background check and fingerprinting prior to matriculation into the program. This will be completed by students purchasing a package through *CastleBranch* and is a part of the initial acceptance/application process. Students are responsible for any *CastleBranch* related expenses.

Up-to-date detailed information can be found by visiting the Mercy College of Ohio [website](#) and clicking on "Background Check and Fingerprinting." Students will see additional instructions once the steps are followed to create a *CastleBranch* 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. Only confirmation of clearance will be accessible to the Program. Written consent will be given by the student for the Program to release clearance confirmation to clinical sites for rotation placement. 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 *CastleBranch* contacting the student to provide any needed additional documentation or information of the issues found on the background check. This may 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 PA Program, appropriate College administrators, and/or staff, as well as clinical rotation sites as appropriate. Clinical sites may refuse students based on findings on fingerprinting and/or background checks.

If for any reason any additional clearance (eg. background check, fingerprinting, drug test) needs to be completed for clinical site requirements, the student is responsible for the related expense.

REGISTRATION

Each semester the course schedule is available online prior to registration. Information concerning registration is distributed via Mercy College email and posted on the College digital monitors. Fall and summer registration typically begins in March. Spring registration begins in November.

Registering for courses can be completed online: <https://mercycollege.edu/empower> or through EMPOWER ME under the MY MERCY link available at the bottom of every page of the website. EMPOWER ME is the online student portal that enables students to access their academic and financial records. For questions concerning the online registration process, students may review EMPOWER ME instructions at <https://www.mercycollege.edu/my-mercy/student-records/registration-schedule>.

COURSE DELIVERY METHODS

As defined in the College Catalog under the heading of “Types of Course Delivery Methods”, the following instructional delivery methods may be implemented, as determined by the course faculty, to reach course objectives for course requirements including but not limited to clinical, laboratory, practicum, and other course requirements: Face to Face, Web-enhanced (also web-facilitated). Blended (also hybrid), Online, and/or Accelerated.

GRADUATE STUDENT and PROGRAM ORIENTATION

Students in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Program are required to complete a Graduate Student and Program Orientation. This entails off campus and on campus activities. Graduate student topics include:

- Presidential Welcome
- Financial Aid
- Paying your Bill
- Academic Advising and Tutoring
 - MPAS
- Student Records and College Policies
- Registering for Classes
- Learning Management System: Canvas
- Student Standards and Expectations
 - Student Policies and Agreements
- Student Life and Services
- Library
- The Mercy Difference

This information is available to students throughout their Program of Study.

Program specific orientation includes program and health system orientation. Program topics include specific MPAS Program Policies and Procedures and approach to PA coursework. Health System Orientation includes various Corporate Compliance courses akin to that taken by a practicing PA-C. Examples include:

- Infection Prevention & OSHA’s Bloodborne Pathogen Training.
- Responding to Emergency Situations
- New Associate Hazard Communication and GHS
- IT Security User Awareness Training
- Novel Coronavirus -COVID-19

- Seasonal Influenza
- Safety in the Workplace and Patient Care Environment
- Safety First, Safety Always

MPAS PROGRAM OF STUDY

MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The PA program is a 118-credit hour 7-semester cohort curriculum conducted over approximately 28 calendar months. It is divided into a 4-semester didactic and a 3-semester clinical phases. See the individual course descriptions for more details.

Didactic Phase (62 credit hours)

The Didactic Phase of the physician assistant (PA) program, primarily campus-based, is composed of four semesters. Students occasionally need to travel to clinical application requirements or other off-site curriculum commitments.

Summer 1 (14 weeks* – 14 credit hours)

PAS	500	PA Professional Issues and Medical Ethics (1)
PAS	505	Health Care Policy and Systems (1)
PAS	510	Basic Science Foundations (6)
PAS	520	Pharmacology (3)
PAS	531	Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills-I (2)
PAS	541	Clinical Diagnostics-I (1)

Fall 1 (17 weeks – 18 credit hours)

PAS	521	Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics-I (10)
PAS	532	Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills-II (3)
PAS	542	Clinical Diagnostics-II (2)
PAS	551	Evidence Based Practice-I (1)
PAS	561	Clinical Integration and Decision Making-I (2)

Spring 1 (17 weeks – 18 credit hours)

PAS	522	Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics-II (10)
PAS	533	Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills-III (3)
PAS	543	Clinical Diagnostics-III (2)
PAS	562	Clinical Integration and Decision Making-II (3)

Summer 2 (14 weeks* – 12 credit hours)

PAS	523	Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics-III (5)
PAS	534	Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills-IV (3)
PAS	552	Evidence Based Practice-II (1)
PAS	563	Clinical Integration and Decision Making-III (3)

*14 weeks as defined by registrar/financial aid. Students will be completing course work in 13 weeks in order for them to have a semester break.

Clinical Phase (55 credit hours)

Clinical Phase of the physician assistant (PA) program encompasses approximately three semesters organized into eight 6-week supervised clinical practice experience rotation periods. There are seven program required supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) areas and three elective (student chosen) experiences (SCPE type subject to preceptor availability). After each 6-week rotation period, there is an end of rotation (EOR) back to campus session for testing, presentations and other related coursework. Students are responsible for their own travel and housing expenses, which could include travel to distant clinical sites. As a prerequisite to the clinical phase, students must successfully complete all didactic phase courses. Concurrent with the supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs), are the Clinical Phase Seminar and Scholarly Project course series.

Courses Concurrent with SCPEs (8 credits)

PAS	671	Clinical Phase Seminar-I (1)
PAS	672	Clinical Phase Seminar-II (1)
PAS	673	Clinical Phase Seminar-III (2)
PAS	651	Scholarly Inquiry-I (1)
PAS	652	Scholarly Inquiry-II (1)
PAS	653	Scholarly Inquiry-III (2)

Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE) (48 credit hours)**Fall II**

PAS	661	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 1 (6)
PAS	662	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 2 (6)
PAS	663	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 3 (6)

Spring II

PAS	664	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 4 (6)
PAS	665	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 5 (6)
PAS	666	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 6 (6)

Summer III

PAS	667	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 7 (6)
PAS	668	Supervised Clinical Practice Experience 8 (6)

Required 6-week rotations are:

- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Emergency Medicine
- General Surgery/Surgery

Additional 3-week equivalent experiences are required in:

- Women's Health
- Pediatrics
- Behavioral Health

Approximate 2.5 elective SCPEs. Student choices for elective rotation include (depending on preceptor availability):

- Additional time in a required area as above
- Orthopedics
- Plastic Surgery
- Hematology
- Genitourinary
- Gastroenterology
- Otorhinolaryngology
- Dermatology
- Cardiology
- Miscellaneous

The MPAS Program must ensure students meet program requirements for the supervised clinical practice experiences. The MPAS Program reserves the right to assign the SCPEs and supplemental activities to make certain program requirements are completed.

MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

DIDACTIC COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Semester I (Summer)

PAS 500 PA Professional Issues and Medical Ethics (1 credit hour)

This course is designed to introduce the PA student to the PA professional issues and Medical Ethics. Topics include the history of and current trends for the PA profession, its organizations, PA roles and responsibilities, professionalism, HIPAA, credentialing and licensure, as well as medical ethics.

Prerequisite: Matriculation into the PA program.

PAS 505 Health Care Policy and Systems (1 credit hour)

This course introduces the structure and function of the US health care delivery system. Topics include the US health delivery system, public health and health promotion issues, health care policies, and inequality to accessing health care.

Prerequisite: Matriculation into the PA program.

PAS 510 Basic Sciences Foundations (6 credit hours)

This course is designed to provide a foundation in the basic sciences for the structure and function of the human body covering introductory clinically relevant genetics, medical physiology, and an in-depth study of human anatomy.

Prerequisite: Matriculation into the PA program.

PAS 520 Pharmacology (3 credit hours)

This course is an introduction to the pharmacology of commonly used drugs for treating human disease with a focus on indication, mechanism of action, pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics, adverse effects, and drug interactions.

Prerequisite: Matriculation into the PA program.

PAS 531 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills I (2 credit hours)

This is the first of a series of four skills-based lecture and lab courses in which students acquire and practice various diagnostic and therapeutic clinical skills, such as performing basic and advanced health histories and physical exams, clinical procedures including suturing and splinting, and basic and advanced cardiac life support. In this first course, the emphasis is on the medical interview, the art of communication in medicine, the proper documentation of clinical encounters, and obtaining BLS certification.

Prerequisite: Matriculation into the PA program.

PAS 541 Clinical Diagnostics-I (1 credit hour)

This is the first of a series of three courses in which students learn to order and interpret commonly used diagnostic studies for the application of clinical testing in the diagnosis and treatment of common diseases encountered in Primary Care Practice. This first course covers the theory and practice of common laboratory techniques including urinalysis, hematology, and clinical chemistry panels as well as OSHA regulations.

Prerequisite: Matriculation into the PA program.

Semester II (Fall)

PAS 521 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics I (10 credit hours)

This is the first of three Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics courses for the systematic study of the diagnosis and management of common acute, emergent, rehabilitative, and chronic medical disorders

across the lifespan. This course series is designed to study the epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical manifestations signs and symptoms, diagnosis and pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic management as well as disease prevention, patient education, follow-up care, course of disease, and prognosis. The course series collectively covers all major systems: infectious diseases, dermatologic, neurologic, cardiovascular, eyes, ears, nose, and throat, hematologic, pulmonary, endocrine, gastrointestinal/nutritional, musculoskeletal psychiatry/behavioral, genitourinary, and reproductive.

Prerequisites: PAS 510 Basic Sciences Foundations, PAS 520 Pharmacology, PAS 531 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills I, PAS 541 Clinical Diagnostics-I: Diagnostic Labs

Co-Requisite: PAS 532 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills II, PAS 542 Clinical Diagnostics II

PAS 532 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills II (3 credit hours)

This is the second of a series of four skills-based courses in which students acquire and practice various diagnostic and therapeutic clinical skills, such as performing basic and advanced health histories and physical exams, clinical procedures including suturing and splinting, and basic and advanced cardiac life support. In this second course, the emphasis is on the performance and documentation of a basic “head to toe” physical examination.

Prerequisite: PAS 531 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills I

PAS 542 Clinical Diagnostics II (2 credit hours)

This is the second of a series of three courses in which students learn to order and interpret commonly used diagnostic studies for the application of clinical testing in the diagnosis and treatment of common diseases encountered in Primary Care Practice. This second course covers interpretation of 12-lead electrocardiograms and pulmonary function testing.

Prerequisite: PAS 541 Clinical Diagnostics-I: Diagnostic Labs

PAS 551 Evidence Based Practice-I

This two-course Evidence Based Practice (EBP) series provides the foundation for the development of skills for critical interpretation of medical literature to formulate answers to clinical questions related to diagnosis, therapy, prognosis, and harm and for future clinical quality improvement projects or research. Topics in EBP-I include identification of a research problem and formulation of a research question, research ethics, sampling methods and study designs. Students will initiate a scholarly inquiry project with a study proposal and literature review. The scholarly inquiry will continue in the EBP-II and Scholarly Inquiry I, II, and III courses. **Pass/Fail grade option only**

Prerequisites: PAS 531 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills-I

PAS 561 Clinical Integrations and Decision Making I (2 credit hours)

This is the first in a series of three team based learning courses in which PA students engage in problem-solving, take responsibility for professional roles, cultivate skills, and partake in reflective/self-assessment experiences. Students will utilize knowledge from previous and concurrent coursework for application to case studies, interprofessional education opportunities, preclinical patient contact, and simulation/standardized patients.

Prerequisites: PAS 510 Basic Sciences Foundations, PAS 520 Pharmacology, PAS 531 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills I, PAS 541 Clinical Diagnostics-I: Diagnostic Labs

Co-requisites: PAS 521 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics I, PAS 532 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills II, PAS 542 Clinical Diagnostics II

Semester III (Spring)

PAS 522 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics II (10 credit hours)

This is the second of three Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics courses for the systematic study of the diagnosis and management of common acute, emergent, rehabilitative, and chronic medical disorders across the lifespan. This course series is designed to study the epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical

manifestations signs and symptoms, diagnosis and pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic management as well as disease prevention, patient education, follow-up care, course of disease, and prognosis. The course series collectively covers all major systems: infectious diseases, dermatologic, neurologic, cardiovascular, eyes, ears, nose, and throat, hematologic, pulmonary, endocrine, gastrointestinal/nutritional, musculoskeletal psychiatry/behavioral, genitourinary, and reproductive.

Prerequisite: PAS 521 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics I

Co-Requisite: PAS 533 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills III, PAS 543 Clinical Diagnostics III

PAS 533 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills III (3 credit hours)

This is the third of a series of four skills-based courses in which students acquire and practice various diagnostic and therapeutic clinical skills, such as performing basic and advanced health histories and physical exams, clinical procedures including suturing and splinting, and basic and advanced cardiac life support. This third course concentrates on the performance and documentation of problem-focused medical interviews and physical examinations.

Prerequisite: PAS 532 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills II

PAS 543 Clinical Diagnostics III (2 credit hours)

This is the final of a series of three courses in which students learn to order and interpret commonly used diagnostic studies for the application of clinical testing in the diagnosis and treatment of common diseases encountered in Primary Care Practice. This third course covers ordering and interpretation of common imaging studies and pulmonary function tests.

Prerequisite: PAS 542 Clinical Diagnostics II

PAS 562 Clinical Integrations and Decision Making II (3 credit hours)

This is the second in a series of three team based learning courses in which PA students engage in problem-solving, take responsibility for professional roles, cultivate skills, and partake in reflective/self-assessment experiences. Students will utilize knowledge from previous and concurrent coursework for application to case studies, interprofessional education opportunities, preclinical patient contact, and simulation/standardized patients.

Prerequisites: PAS 561 Clinical Integrations and Decision Making I

Co-requisites: PAS 522 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics II, PAS 532 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills III, PAS 542 Clinical Diagnostics III

Semester IV (Summer)

PAS 523 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics III (5 credit hours)

This is the final of three Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics courses for the systematic study of the diagnosis and management of common acute, emergent, rehabilitative, and chronic medical disorders across the lifespan. This course series is designed to study the epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical manifestations signs and symptoms, diagnosis and pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic management as well as disease prevention, patient education, follow-up care, course of disease, and prognosis. The course series collectively covers all major systems: infectious diseases, dermatologic, neurologic, cardiovascular, eyes, ears, nose, and throat, hematologic, pulmonary, endocrine, gastrointestinal/nutritional, musculoskeletal psychiatry/behavioral, genitourinary, and reproductive.

Prerequisite: PAS 522 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics II

Co-requisites: PAS 534 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills IV

PAS 534 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills IV (3 credit hours)

This is the final of four skills-based courses in which students acquire and practice various diagnostic and therapeutic clinical skills, such as performing basic and advanced health histories and physical exams, clinical procedures including suturing and splinting, and basic and advanced cardiac life support. In this final course, the emphasis is on common diagnostic and therapeutic procedures including an orientation to

the operating room, the continuation of specialty-focused medical interviews and physical examinations across the lifespan from pediatrics to geriatrics including the unique health care needs for women, diverse patient populations, and patients with disabilities, and completion of advanced cardiac life support training.

Prerequisite: PAS 533 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills III

PAS 552 Evidence Based Practice-II

This is the second of the two-course Evidence Based Practice (EBP) series which provides the foundation for the development of skills for critical interpretation of medical literature and quality improvement or research projects. Evidence Based Practice II topics include descriptive and inferential statistics, selecting the appropriate statistical test, and hypothesis testing. Students will draft quantitative and/or qualitative analysis methods for their proposed scholarly inquiry project data collection. The scholarly inquiry will continue in the Scholarly Inquiry I, II, and III courses. **Pass/Fail grade option only**

Prerequisites: PAS 551 Evidence Based Practice I

PAS 563 Clinical Integrations and Decision Making III (3 credit hours)

This is the final in a series of three team based learning courses in which PA students engage in problem-solving, take responsibility for professional roles, cultivate skills, and partake in reflective/self-assessment experiences. Students will utilize knowledge from previous and concurrent coursework for application to case studies, preclinical patient contact, and simulation/standardized patients.

Prerequisites: PAS 562 Clinical Integrations and Decision Making II

Co-requisites: PAS 523 Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics III, PAS 533 Patient Assessment and Clinical Skills IV

MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCES (SCPE) DESCRIPTIONS

In the Clinical phase of the PA Program, students are assigned into a series of clinical experiences in a variety of settings on a rotating schedule. The clinical practice experiences are divided into 8 periods of approximately 6 weeks each. Required 6-week experiences include Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine and General Surgery/Surgery. Experiences in Women's Health, Pediatrics and Behavioral Health are required 3-week experiences that may be integrated throughout the clinical experiences. Elective rotations are available in a variety of clinical practice areas, pending preceptor/site availability and prior rotation experience. Electives can be in a new discipline or an augmentation of a required discipline. Students are to average 45 hours a week at the clinical experiences. The Program reserves the right to assign rotations or supplemental activities to ensure that students meet all Program requirements for the supervised clinical practice experiences. The following course descriptions are by supervised clinical practice experience type.

Required Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPES)

Family Medicine Clinical Experience

In this required 6-week clinical experience, under the supervision of a family medicine preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients in family medicine settings. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education, for a diverse population over the lifespan are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic diseases.

Internal Medicine Clinical Experience

In this required 6-week clinical experience, under the supervision of an internal medicine preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage adult and geriatric patients in a hospital setting or internal medicine office. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education, for a diverse population are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic diseases.

Emergency Medicine Clinical Experience

In this required 6-week clinical experience, under the supervision of an emergency medicine preceptor, PA will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients presenting to Emergency Department and urgent care settings with urgent, emergent and life-threatening conditions. Students are expected to appropriately triage and stabilize patients, interact properly with patients' families, perform rapid and accurate health histories and physical examinations, order laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies to assist in formulating diagnoses and treatment plans, and make appropriate referrals. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of patients with acute conditions and acute exacerbations of chronic conditions, for a diverse population over the lifespan.

General Surgery/Surgery Clinical Experience

In this required 6-week clinical rotation, under the supervision of a surgical preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with common acute, non-emergent, and elective surgical disorders. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to identify indications, contraindications and potential complications for surgery to determine if the patient is a surgical candidate. Students will participate in pre-operative, intra-operative (assist in surgery), and post-operative care. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education, for a diverse population over the lifespan, are incorporated into the care of the surgical patient.

Women's Health Clinical Experience

In this 3-week equivalent required clinical experience, under the supervision of a women's health preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage women's health patients with gynecological and reproductive issues and prenatal care. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans for women. There is a potential for exposure to surgical techniques and surgical assisting. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into women's health care, for a diverse population.

Pediatrics Clinical Experience

In this 3-week equivalent required clinical experience, under the supervision of a pediatric preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage neonates, infants, children, and adolescents. Students will gain experience assessing patients for normal growth and development, perform appropriate health histories and physical examinations, and order laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies to assist in formulating diagnoses and treatments for acute and chronic illnesses in children and adolescents. Patient and parent/guardian education, disease prevention, and health promotion (including immunizations) are incorporated into the care of the pediatric patient.

Behavioral Health Clinical Experience

In this 3-week equivalent required clinical experience, under the supervision of a behavioral medicine preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with behavioral health or psychiatric disorders. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories, physical examinations, and psychiatric assessments and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of patients with a psychiatric or behavioral health condition, for a diverse population over the lifespan.

Elective Clinical Experiences

In elective clinical experiences, a PA student will work with the PA Program's Clinical Coordinator to choose a new medical or surgical discipline to explore or elect to expand upon a required clinical experience. There are typically three electives- two 6-week experiences and one 3-week experience. The length and scheduling details are based upon preceptor's availability and student's supervised clinical practice schedules. Examples of some specific clinical experiences follow.

Cardiology Elective Clinical Experience

In this typically 6-week elective clinical experience, under the supervision of a cardiology preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients in a cardiology practice. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic cardiology conditions.

Dermatology Elective Clinical Experience

In this typically 3-week elective clinical experience, under the supervision of a dermatology preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with acute and chronic skin conditions in a dermatology practice. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. There is a potential for exposure to related surgical techniques. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic dermatology conditions.

Gastroenterology Elective Clinical Experience

In this elective clinical experience, under the supervision of gastroenterology preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with gastrointestinal conditions in a gastroenterology practice. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. There is a potential for exposure to related procedures. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic gastroenterology conditions.

Genitourinary Elective Clinical Experience

In this elective clinical experience, under the supervision of a genitourinary preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients in a nephrology or urology practice. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. There is a potential for exposure to related procedures. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic urologic or nephrology conditions.

Hematology/Oncology Elective Clinical Experience

In this elective clinical experience, under the supervision of a hematology/oncology preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with hematologic/oncologic disorder. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. There is a potential for exposure to related procedures. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic hematologic/oncologic conditions.

Orthopedics Elective Clinical Experience

In this 6-week elective clinical experience, under the supervision of an orthopedic preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with musculoskeletal disorders. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. There is a potential for exposure to related procedures. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education, for a diverse population are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions.

Otorhinolaryngology (Ent) Elective Clinical Experience

In this elective clinical experience, under the supervision of an ENT preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients with disorders of the ears, nose, throat and related structures in an otorhinolaryngology practice. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. There is a potential for exposure to related procedures. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education, for a diverse population are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic ENT conditions.

Plastic Surgery Elective Clinical Experience

In this elective clinical experience, under the supervision of a plastic surgery preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients undergoing cosmetic or reconstructive surgery. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to assist in pre- and post-operative patient evaluation and management. Exposure to surgical techniques and surgical assisting opportunities are included. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic plastic surgery conditions.

Other Elective Clinical Experience

In this elective clinical experience, under the supervision of a clinical site preceptor, PA students will apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills developed during the didactic phase to evaluate and manage patients in the medical or surgical practice discipline of this other elective experience not otherwise catalogued. Students will gain experience performing appropriate health histories and physical examinations and ordering and interpreting laboratory and other diagnostic tests to formulate diagnoses and effective treatment plans. Procedures may be involved as per practice discipline type. Health promotion, disease prevention, and patient education, for a diverse population are incorporated into the care of acute and chronic plastic surgery conditions over the lifespan.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

GRADING POLICY

The Instructor of Record assigns the grades in accordance with policies posted in the Mercy College Faculty and Staff Handbook, College Catalog and syllabus grading criteria. All MPAS Program syllabi contain the course's grading system. Grades become official when the MPAS Program faculty reports the grades to the Registrar.

GRADING SYSTEM

The MPAS Program grading system is as follows:

GRADE	PERCENTAGE	QUALITY POINTS
A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89.99	3.0
C	70-79.99	2.0
F	69.99 & below	0

Pass/Fail courses and assignments are defined in the course syllabi; if not specifically defined, a C is the lowest acceptable score. MPAS students should consult the scoring rubrics associated with the courses. Many courses have critical curriculum components that must be passed regardless of cumulative grade in the course. These are noted in respective course syllabi.

The MPAS Program does not perform grade rounding (up or down). Assignment and exam grades are carried out to two decimal places (hundredths of a point). The final numeric course grade will be carried out to two decimal places. The student's grade is the final numeric course grade. The final course letter grade will reflect the final numeric grade. For example, a letter grade of A = a point grade of 90-100. If Student X earns 89.99 and Student Z earns 90.00, Student X will receive a B as Student X did not attain the minimum required threshold of 90.00 for an A. Student Z will receive an A as Student Z did meet that threshold. The student's grade reflects EXACTLY the grade the student has earned.

Quiz and exam sessions for the course will be posted in the course schedule section of the syllabus. Any changes will be noted in the Canvas course and/or MPAS Program calendar. MPAS Program faculty are not obligated to remind students of previously scheduled examination times.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESSION COMMITTEE

The MPAS Programs' Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC) (appc@mercycollege.edu) is the primary oversight for PA student academic and behavioral performance at the program level. For example, MPAS Program Students earning a didactic course grade/score of less than 70% will be referred to the APPC. Similar to a didactic course failure, if a student fails a clinical rotation, they are referred to the APPC due to failure of the related clinical course. Formal remediation of didactic courses or clinical rotations is not guaranteed but may take place when a student has failed to complete a didactic course with a score of 70% or above or a P or has received an F during a clinical rotation. A failure may result in dismissal from the PA Program. The APPC considers whether the PA student is at risk or on probation in its decision-making. (Refer to Remediation)

The APPC will meet at least twice each semester to review midterm and final grades for student progression. The APPC also meets as needed to address concerns such as lack of professionalism, leave of absence, withdrawal, and dismissal. The APPC will review/investigate program level issues such as significant isolated incidents and performance/behavior patterns. The APPC may grant a Professionalism Probation Status to the PAS (See Professionalism Probation). Issues that fall within the purview of the

Student Code of Conduct and are not potential academic disciplinary matters (e.g., professionalism, academic standards) will be referred to the VPSA/Dean of Students.

GRADING APPEALS AND INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Please refer to the *Mercy College Course Catalog* for information regarding grading appeals, incomplete grade, in progress grade, and course repeat policies.

RETENTION/PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS

MPAS Program students are required to carry the full semester load and to meet the academic and other progression criteria of the MPAS Program as follows:

- Earn a grade of C or better in all courses graded A through F
- Earn a grade of P in all courses graded P (Pass) or F (Fail)
- Minimum GPA of 2.8
- Pass Clinical Readiness Evaluation
- Pass Clinical Summative Evaluation
- Uphold professionalism/behavioral standards including compliance with program and college policies and procedures (see Student Code of Conduct in the *Graduate Catalog*).

PROGRESSION THROUGH MPAS CURRICULUM

The MPAS curriculum is designed to create a logical progression of learning from foundational knowledge to increasingly complex concepts. PAS courses are offered once per year. All PAS classes must be taken sequentially. Failure to progress with the cohort may result in delayed graduation or dismissal from the MPAS Program (see related policies including Remediation).

The didactic curriculum follows an intentionally prescribed sequence. Didactic students must progress with their cohort.

Progression through the clinical phase functions slightly different than the didactic phase as the clinical curriculum may have a bit more flexibility in the sequence. A MPAS Program student however should be progressing with their cohort. If a student does not successfully complete a supervised clinical practice experience, the matter will be referred to the Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC). Should the APPC allow a student to continue in the program and repeat a supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE), the MPAS Program's Clinical Coordinator arranges the timing of the repeated SCPE in conjunction with preceptor availability. A student will be dismissed from the program if the student fails the SCPE a second time. A student will be dismissed from the program if a student fails a second SCPE.

Good Standing

At the end of each semester, a PA student must have earned a cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.8, passed all curriculum components, behavioral standards, and progression criteria to be considered in "Good Standing" and allowed to progress in the graduate degree program. MPAS Program students not in "Good Standing" are subject to Academic Performance and Progression Committee processes.

CLINICAL READINESS EVALUATION AND CLINICAL SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

The MPAS Program will give PA students (PAS) a comprehensive evaluation near the completion of each of the didactic and experiential phases of the curriculum. The comprehensive exams will evaluate hands-on skills, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, knowledge, communication, professionalism, etc., and are used to assess competency in developing the PA skills domains. The MPAS Program will use the comprehensive exams to gauge readiness for progression to the experiential phase of the curriculum and readiness for graduation.

Specifically, for the Clinical Readiness Evaluation, faculty will review all first year PAS academic standing, technical skills, and professionalism to date and perform some formal evaluations for competency to gauge readiness for progression into the clinical phase. Faculty will take noted deficiencies to the Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC). In accordance with APPC policies and procedures, the student must successfully address/remediate the deficiencies in order to move into the experiential phase of the MPAS Program.

For the Clinical Summative Evaluation, all “graduating” PAS will partake in a formal examination process near the end of the experiential phase to gauge readiness for graduation and entry into clinical practice. Clinical summative evaluation testing components include the range of testing options to assess the various PA competency domains. Testing options include multiple choice examination, case studies, and laboratory/skills stations.

Regardless of prior performance in a course or curriculum component, the MPAS Program requires successful summative evaluation for progression. If a student performs below passing, the Academic Performance and Progression Committee will analyze the student’s performance patterns and trends to consider a retake or a post-remediation retake. PAS do not have the option to retake the exam the same day it was given. If granted a retake, the MPAS Program will provide only one opportunity to re-take any component of the summative evaluation. Failing/Unsatisfactory grades will be issued in the relevant courses.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

PA students are required to follow the plan of study for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree. Students must meet all progression/retention requirements for graduation. This includes earning a grade of C or better or P in all courses, maintaining GPA minimum of 2.8, and successful completion of all necessary program requirements, including summative evaluation. Students who fail to meet the program requirements will not be approved for graduation. All MPAS degree requirements need to be completed within five years of matriculation. Also refer to the *Graduate Catalog*, Graduation Requirements including for how to submit a Graduation Application.

GRADUATION AUDIT

The Office of Student Records will send a list of PA students to the MPAS program to approve for graduation. The MPAS Program’s faculty advisors, in conjunction with the Clinical Coordinator, will verify the potential graduates (assuming continued progression) and note those who should be removed from the graduation list. The PA program will conduct its Clinical Summative Evaluation process and enter final grades. The Office of Student Records will use the final course grades in EMPOWER to issue diplomas.

GRADUATION FOR PAS

The MPAS Program cohort graduation date on the diploma is in August; those decelerating will have a later graduation date as relevant. The official commencement ceremony is the preceding May. After successful completion of all program/degree requirements and graduation audit, official diplomas will be issued to those in compliance with both the degree requirements and the College requirements (e.g. business office). Official diplomas and transcripts are held until all requirements are met.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

ACADEMIC ADVISOR/FACULTY ADVISOR

Each PA student is assigned to a member of the program faculty for advising. Each PA student must meet with his/her assigned advisor at least once during each semester. PA faculty advisors are responsible for PAS advising including the longitudinal oversight of the advisee’s *Professional Development Plan (PDP)*. Note that some courses/assignments may dictate meeting with the faculty advisor more than once

a semester. For PA students with personal or academic difficulties, the meeting frequency will be more often as dictated on a case-by-case basis. PA students are required to participate in advising/communication for review of Clinical Readiness Evaluation and Clinical Summative Evaluation, regardless of already meeting with advisor for the respective semester.

The MPAS Program uses an Excel sheet (or other electronic system) to track the advisee meeting dates. The MPAS Program has formal advising questions/forms to guide the advising discussion (ask your advisor to see the MPAS *Advising Form* template.) The Program's advising topics includes discussion on personal issues that may impact student progress in the PA Program along with a timely resultant action or plan. PA Program members are obligated to complete a timely formal referral through the College's Early Alert Referral System (EARS)

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercyCollegeofOhio&layout_id=11 if their professional assessment of a student identifies academic or personal issues that may impact student progress in the PA Program.

MPAS Program faculty advisors may individually opt to allow an advisee to preview the note during the personal advising session. To otherwise request viewing of personal advising notes, PAS are to make the request in writing with signature to see the specific advising note(s). An email from the student's Mercy College account to the faculty advisor and copied to the Program Director and/or Academic Coordinator would suffice. The PAS will book a time for viewing with faculty advisor and/or Program Director or Academic Coordinator. The Program does not provide copies of the actual notes to PAS.

Also see Student Support Services in this book for a quick overview which includes how to self-refer/access their services and the weblinks to their related comprehensive webpage.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog*.

ACADEMIC ISSUES

If a PA student is having academic challenges in a course, that student should promptly see the Instructor of Record (IOR) and MPAS Program faculty advisor. An Early Alert Referral System (EARS) is used to identify at risk students and initiate strategies to improve student success and retention. Students are connected with educational support services such as tutoring and counseling depending on their specific needs. The College provides ongoing tutoring support with writing, math, science, and program specific areas. Housed in the Student Success Center, tutoring services are available to all students and free of charge. Tutoring services are available by appointment. Tutors are equipped with video cameras to offer online tutoring services through video conferencing for distance students, such as may be needed for a student on a distant clinical rotation.

The College also offers the Pearson *Smarthinking* product to provide online tutoring services. The Office of Accessibility Services provides an array of services to meet accessibility needs of students.

ACADEMIC DIFFICULTY

At any time during a didactic course or individual rotation when a student is carrying a 'C' or below or failing, the MPAS Program considers that PA student At Risk. PA students At Risk meet with their course instructor and/or faculty advisor to formulate an improvement plan. The Instructor of Record (IOR) will monitor and discuss student performance at program meetings. PA students carrying a 'C' or below (or F) at midterm will receive a formal midterm warning letter from the Academic Performance and Progression Committee. If at the end of a semester a PA student's semester GPA has fallen below 2.8, their cumulative GPA is between 2.8-3.0, or both, the student also receives a warning letter from the APPC and an "At Risk" status will appear on their transcript for the semester. If a PA student fails a

course or clinical, the Academic Performance and Progression Committee process is engaged. Also see next section on Academic Probation.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Should the PA student who is not in good standing be allowed to progress in the MPAS program, the PA student will be placed on Academic Probation. PA students on Academic Probation are required to communicate with the Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC). As part of the communication to the APPC, PAS should identify issues that affected their performance and suggest methods to overcome those issues. The PA student must formally acknowledge the APPC plan including due dates and methods to evaluate successful remediation as relevant. For removal from probation, the PA student must not only demonstrate successful remediation of the course, curriculum component or SCPE material (per the remediation policy below) but also show improvement in academic performance in the next semester. Specifics regarding benchmarks for improvement are under the jurisdiction of the APPC. PA students unsuccessful in meeting the criteria for removal from Academic Probation are subject to dismissal from the MPAS Program.

Removal from Academic Probation

The student will be removed from Academic Probation when the cumulative grade point average in all entry into the profession graduate coursework attempted at Mercy College is 2.8 or higher and when all other academic requirements or regulations have been met. The APPC will notify the student of removal from Academic Probation.

ACADEMIC AND/OR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT PROBLEMS

For students with academic difficulty in a course, the Instructor of Record (IOR) will meet with and communicate the concern to the student's Academic Advisor. For concerns of professionalism, the faculty witnessing the issue will communicate with the student and the Academic Performance and Progression Committee. The APPC may issue a Program level "Professionalism Probation" status to the PAS to address issues. Also refer to Student Code of Conduct in the *Graduate Catalog*. Such problems will trigger an EARS alert.

DECELERATION POLICY

Deceleration occurs when a PA student's progression is interrupted such that a PA student does not advance with their cohort. There are different reasons a student may need to decelerate such as, but are not limited to, course retake/remediation that cannot be completed in a time frame which allows the PAS to progress in the curriculum, leave of absence, family/personal emergencies, and other extenuating circumstances.

Deceleration falls under the jurisdiction of the MPAS Program Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC). In many situations, the PAS may need to take a leave of absence to rejoin the MPAS Program through the cohort below and thus subject to a leave of absence.

DISMISSAL POLICY - DISMISSAL FROM PA PROGRAM

The Academic Performance and Progression Committee may dismiss a student for failure to pass a class or supervised clinical practice experience, for unprofessional behavior, for failure to meet progression criteria, for failure to clear academic probation at the end of a semester, or for more than two episodes of academic probation during the course of study.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The College supports the overall success of students, including their physical, social, and emotional well-being. When situations arise that hinder students' abilities to perform academically and/or socially within the campus community, they can request a voluntary leave of absence (LOA).

PA students who need to temporarily withdraw from the MPAS Program should consult the Program Director and their faculty advisor to explore options. Refer to [Graduate Catalog](#) for full details.

Students are not guaranteed LOA. Students may need to complete specified activities while on leave. This may include, but is not limited to, additional coursework, tutoring, and/or meeting with advisor.

A PA student who withdraws from any required course without requesting and/or receiving a leave of absence from the MPAS Program will be considered withdrawn from the MPAS Program, extenuating circumstances aside.

A prolonged LOA greater than one (1) academic year will require an extension of the original LOA. Actions are like the original LOA request. Further renewals are not guaranteed. A PA student who does not formally request a continuation of the LOA will be considered withdrawn from the MPAS Program.

REENTRY INTO THE MPAS PROGRAM

A returning PA student is expected to demonstrate, through examinations/assessments as determined by the Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC), that the student has retained the knowledge and skills base for re-entry into the new cohort (previous level of education in the curriculum). PA students planning to re-enter are responsible for any fees or expenses associated with such re-entry testing or any required remediation (such a re-take or audit of courses). A PA student may need substantial education such that they may need to start over in the MPAS Program. Costs associated with this are the sole responsibility of the student including updates related to *CastleBranch* account materials. Students who return after three semesters are required to purchase a new *CastleBranch* account to meet all current requirements, including completion of new health program assessments.

RECORDING OF STUDENT LEARNING/SKILLS TESTING

The MPAS Program and its students utilize audiovisual recordings to aid student learning as well as formative and summative evaluation for courses and the Program. The MPAS Program gives students opportunities in certain courses to record their practice activities for self and/or peer evaluation. Examples of activities typically recorded for evaluative/testing purposes include objective simulated clinical experiences (OSCEs) and technical skills testing. The MPAS Program will make efforts to record all PA students taking such an exam but at times, access to the recording equipment/resources may be limited. When there are resource limitations, the Program will triage students such that those who have been identified as having difficulty in the course or related courses will be recorded. Students undergoing retesting on such a skill will be recorded or, if recording equipment or related space is not available for a retake, an additional faculty proctor will serve for verification of student's ability to correctly perform the OSCE/technical skills.

REMEDIATION

Approach to Remediation

To help guide student remediation, the Program utilizes two levels of remediation: assessment level remediation (a required Assessment Improvement Reflection) and course/curriculum component remediation.

Assessment Level remediation- Assessment Improvement Reflection

A PAS who earns a score of less than a cut score or "at risk" score (per individual course syllabus) is required to complete an Assessment Improvement Reflection (AIR). Unless other benchmarks are stipulated in a course syllabus for this activity, a failing score on an assessment is defined as < 70% (or F in a P/F class) and "at risk" is defined as 70% to <75% (equivalent competency for courses graded P/F).

Students should be seeking out the respective IOR immediately after learning of an “at risk score” or grade below the benchmark.

The IOR (Instructor of Record) is responsible for creating, assigning (with deadlines), grading, communicating and documenting Assessment Improvement Reflection and outcomes of the reflection activity. The AIR will typically be due within one week from the time the assessment grades are posted, or another timeframe as determined by the IOR.

The goal of an Academic Improvement Reflection (AIR) is for the PA student to demonstrate competency on the assessment material. Unless the syllabus states otherwise, the AIR will be for understanding rather than for points. *Any points awarded are to meet the cut score.* This mandatory reflection is not intended for students who have already demonstrated competency such as PA students seeking to gain a higher GPA.

As determined by a syllabus, a student could be limited to reflections such as no more than one third of the total number of same type of assessments in a course. The IOR will report failing and at-risk assessments and outcomes of AIRs to the APPC. The APPC will also note if a student requires AIRs within single or multiple courses.

Guidelines for Multiple Choice Assessment Improvement Reflection:

By studying items you misunderstood/missed, students can fill in knowledge gaps. Reflection and remediation not only entails the ability to select the correct response but, more importantly, to show what you have learned through an analysis of your performance.

- Why was the question missed?
- What is the correct answer?
- Why is the correct answer correct?
- For multiple choice exams:
 - What is the knowledge base/information behind the distractor answer choices?
 - Why is each of those distractors not the correct answer?

Unless otherwise stated in course syllabus or by the IOR, the typical cut off threshold for Multiple Choice AIR competency is that 90% of all the material is correct. This means not just the answer selection itself but all the supporting rationale content for correct answer and distractors. It also means the student has addressed the reflection as to why the question was missed.

For areas of reflection outside of multiple-choice questions, the IOR will design an appropriate reflection activity for student learning.

The IOR reviews the Assessment Improvement Reflection (AIR) and provides feedback to the student, including the assessment items and answers and how to approach future assessments that are similar in nature to the remediated assessment, and briefly summarize the student’s issue(s) and improvement plan. As relevant, the IOR will submit an Early Alert Referral (EAR) to enlist support from Student Services. Subsequent measurements of understanding of the material could be ascertained if needed by performance on related questions on a cumulative midterm or final if the assessment was an exam, or by re-performing elements of the competency or the entire competency itself. If the student continues to show knowledge deficit in the area remediated, the APPC will then be engaged. No remediation will be offered for final exams or final projects. PAS may not remediate an individual assessment within a class more than once. If the AIR is not completed within the required time, it will be considered a breach of professionalism. The IOR will communicate the status of the completed AIR to the PA student.

If the PA student did not achieve competency on the Assessment Improved Reflection, the IOR will refer the student to the Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC).

If a PA student needs to present to the APPC for academic issues, the APPC considers the student's relevant academic history, including efforts and outcomes with respect to the AIR. It is in the student's best interest to put the proper attention and effort into this reflection activity. Culmination of the AIR process is gauged by the success of the PAS performance on the relevant portion of that course's cumulative final examination.

FORMAL REMEDIATION

Remediation of didactic courses, clinical rotations, or curriculum components is not guaranteed but may take place when a student has failed to complete a didactic course with a score of 70% or above, or a 'P' (or other benchmarks as per course syllabus) or has received a clinical rotation grade of an 'F.' The Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC) handles decisions regarding granting a remediation. If the APPC grants a remediation opportunity, the IOR creates the specifics of the remediation assignment/reassessment for approval by the APPC. The PAS seeks assistance from the Student Academic Support Services as the remediation plan must not only address action on the course material but identify the challenges that impacted the PA student's performance and include strategies to overcome those challenges. Failure to successfully complete the remediated course within the time allotted will result in action by the APPC which could include dismissal from the MPAS Program. The MPAS Program does not permit 'Remediation' of remediation material for a grade.

A PA student that successfully completes a remediation and/or retake of a content area/curriculum component will earn the minimum cut score for that element. Also refer to respective course syllabi for specific course expectations.

RETAKE/REPEAT OF COURSE/CURRICULUM COMPONENT

There is a rare opportunity in a cohort-based curriculum for a PA student to repeat a course or curriculum piece and remain with their cohort. The MPAS Program Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC) renders Program level decisions as to whether a PA student may retake a course, clinical rotation, or curriculum component. Deceleration Policy may apply. Also refer to *Graduate Catalog* for Course Repeat Policy. Students are responsible for associated tuition and fees.

REMEDIATION COURSES- DIDACTIC OR CLINICAL

Remediation issues are under the responsibility of the Academic Performance and Progression Committee (APPC). (Also refer to Academic Performance and Progression Committee.) Should the APPC find a student would benefit from deceleration due to a didactic course, curriculum component or the Clinical Readiness Evaluation process, there may be an opportunity to decelerate to complete a Didactic Remediation Course. Should a PA student have issues during the clinical phase, clinical curriculum component or fail the clinical summative evaluation, there may be an opportunity to decelerate to complete a Clinical Remediation Course. Decisions regarding such remediation courses are handled through the APPC processes. Availability of such courses is not guaranteed. Students are responsible for costs associated with such courses including tuition and fees.

RETESTING OF STUDENTS/SKILLS

In the event a student needs to be retested on skill set (e.g. retest or retake after remediation), the MPAS Program uses recording and a proctor to verify student performance. (Refer to Recording of Students/Skills Testing.) If recording equipment or related space is not available, two faculty proctors will serve for verification of student's ability to correctly perform the OSCE/technical skills. Ideally, proctors will be different than the proctor who found a student's skills deficient. Retesting will typically not be on the same day as the exam administration.

WITHDRAWAL

Refer to the *Graduate Catalog* Withdrawal Policies.

REFUND REQUESTS

A student may request a refund after the refund deadlines listed on the Academic Calendar (<https://mercycollege.edu/academics/academic-calendar>). A refund request may be considered in cases when a student can provide evidence of having experienced exceptional circumstances that significantly impaired their ability to complete coursework and prevented withdrawal from courses as described in the Withdrawal from a Course section in the *Graduate Catalog*.

A request for a refund will not be considered unless the student has successfully dropped or withdrawn from the course in question.

To request a refund a student must:

- Complete the administrative appeal request form
- Provide a letter that describes the extraordinary circumstances that prevented the student from submitting a withdrawal request in the appropriate time to receive a refund. So that the College is able to properly analyze the appeal, it is important that this letter gives accurate details about the circumstances resulting in the appeal, the date(s) of the emergency situation, and an account of how the situation specifically prevented the student from submitting a withdrawal request in the appropriate time to receive a refund.

Objective supporting data must also be included within the request. Different requests may require different types of required documentation. Please see the *Graduate Catalog* for further information regarding the Refund Request policy. <https://mercycollege.edu/academics/college-catalog>

PA STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM STANDARDS AND POLICIES

In addition to the expectations outlined in the *Graduate Catalog*, the MPAS Program details its expectations below. Please note that all College and MPAS Program policies apply to MPAS Program students regardless of location (e.g. off-site for Program related activities, clinical rotations).

ACTIVE LEARNING

The MPAS program utilizes active learning concepts. Learner-centered activities that may be used in the educational environment may include, but are not limited to, team-based learning (TBL), case studies, group projects, on-line interactions, role play, discussion, debate, simulation, flipped classroom, reflective journaling, student presentations, physical examination, video recording, self and peer review, and written assignments.

To take full advantage of the benefits of active learning to best prepare for future clinical practice, PA students should:

1. Actively participate in the learning activities including laboratory sessions*
2. Work as a reliable team member embracing concepts of Team Based Learning
3. Complete assigned readings prior to class time
4. Complete assignments in a timely manner
5. Review material each week
6. Meet with course faculty, and, as needed, writing tutor
7. Join a study group

PA students are not to substitute for or function as instructional faculty. This does not exclude qualified PAS from coaching/assisting peers if those PAS assisting are competency checked by IOR to do so and/or by previous experience.

*A note on laboratory sessions: it is typical for PA students to practice non-invasive skills on each other such as functioning as practice patients for peers. For example, during the practice portion of physical assessment labs, students perform the related physical examination components using each other as practice patients (except for femoral/inguinal areas, genitalia and rectal exams). Task trainers/models will be used for invasive exams. In the event that a PA student has participation concerns, the PAS should seek an Instructor of Record well before the lab of concern for mitigation strategies. See the following Statement for more details:

Statement on Utilizing Student Volunteers as Patients for Clinical Skills Practice

Mercy College of Ohio recognizes that practicing clinical skills is an integral part of clinical education. Students can benefit from course-based opportunities to observe and/or practice some basic clinical skills where fellow learners serve as volunteer “patients” for such practice. However, such clinical skills demonstration and practice must be initiated and implemented in a way that protects the volunteer student “patient’s” privacy and right to make decisions about their own body.

Certain clinical skills should never be part of facilitated peer clinical skills practice at Mercy College, including any exam or test that would involve touching of the breasts and/or genitalia, the collection or handling of blood or other body fluids, and/or the provision of radiation. Practice of these clinical skills will be facilitated in other ways as appropriate in the field (e.g., via mannequins, paid actors, or patients during clinical education/experiences).

For clinical skills that can be safely practiced on other students (e.g., obtaining vital signs, EKG technique), students will have varying levels of comfort volunteering for and submitting to such clinical skills practice. Importantly, individuals may choose not to have any skills practiced on them by their peers and/or may allow some skills to be practiced on them but not others. Students may feel comfortable and/or agree to allow a certain skill to be practiced on them but become uncomfortable during the practice and decide that the practice should stop. These choices should be respected and without penalty. No student should ever feel or be pressured to volunteer for or continue skills practice when they are not comfortable doing so. No student should ever be asked to explain why they chose not to volunteer or not to continue to serve as a “patient.”

Instructors who implement peer clinical skills practice (or facilitate skills demonstration on a volunteer student) as part of a class should give students the choice of whether to participate in the demonstration or practice prior to such demonstration or practice. Students should not be required to engage in such peer practice or demonstration, should not be asked to provide a reason for their unwillingness to participate as a “patient,” and should not be penalized for refusal to participate.

The practice of clinical skills using volunteer student “patients” should be performed in a clinical-like setting (e.g., classroom, lab, exam room), as opposed to a private setting (e.g., home, break room, public location). Where possible and agreed to by the participants, a third-party chaperone should be present for the skills practice.

Prior to having any clinical skill practiced on them, a student should be:

- Asked if they are willing to volunteer for the particular skill practice and advised that they have the right to refuse to submit to the skills practice without penalty;
- Given an explanation of the skill to be performed, including where and how the skill will be practiced and options with regard to the same (e.g., that clothing may need to be moved or removed for access or that a gown can be made available if that would be more comfortable);
- Given an explanation of any risks associated with the practice skill;

- Given an explanation of how confidentiality will be maintained during the skill practice and in connection with any diagnostic finding;
- Given the opportunity to ask any questions prior to the skill being performed; and
- Asked to expressly consent to the clinical skills being performed after all above is explained and all questions are answered.

For any questions regarding student volunteers serving as “patients” as envisioned above, please contact: the course Instructor of Record.

ASSESSMENT

Mercy College is committed to providing quality educational experiences for its students. The information gathered through the assessment process provides information for continual improvement of programs. As part of the assessment process, MPAS Program students are asked to reply to surveys such as end of course/clinical rotation evaluations as well as other surveys.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance in all aspects (including tardiness or excessive breaks) of any class/mandated program activity including, but not limited to labs, lectures, group discussions, assessments, clinical rotations, or any other assigned experiences is mandatory unless the PAS is absent because of documented illness or an otherwise approved reason. Unexcused absences may be subject to disciplinary actions as determined by the Academic Performance and Progression Committee.

In the event of any absence (including illness) during the didactic year, the PAS should report it, using your college e-mail, immediately/as soon as feasible to the Academic Coordinator and appropriate Instructor(s). Absences during the clinical year should be reported to the Clinical Coordinator, clinical site, and SPCE Instructor of Record. Absences will be logged by the appropriate IORs and/or respective phase coordinator. Issues with respect to absences, will be vetted by the Academic Performance and Progression Committee.

Additional Guidelines/Caveats

1. Approval of absences may require appropriate documentation.
2. The student will still be held accountable for all content and requirements regardless of if absence is approved or unexcused.
3. Absences do not necessitate faculty review of the missed material with the student.
4. Faculty are not required to give make-up examinations for missed testing from an absence.
5. Unexcused absences may automatically lower the final class grade as noted in the respective course syllabus.
6. Three episodes of tardiness and/or unexcused absence will be considered “unprofessional behavior” and is subject to disciplinary action within the Physician Assistant Program.
7. Any examinations, presentations, check offs or assignments missed because of an approved absence must be rescheduled for make-up testing as scheduled by the IORs and/or respective coordinator.

ANTICIPATED ABSENCE REQUEST GUIDELINES:

If a PA student is seeking approval for an anticipated absence that is beyond the scope of the above attendance policy, the following also applies:

- For requests for planned absences, PAS are to submit as soon as such is considered; any requests made less than three weeks prior to the requested date of absence may not be considered. Any incoming PAS should submit potential absences upon acceptance into the PA Program.

Submit a written absence request using official Mercy College student email address to:

APPC@mercycollege.edu.

Subject line: "Absence Request"

Body of the request: Include reason, specific date(s), course number(s), course name(s) and IOR(s) for each affected course.

In the instance of a last-minute absence, this email request should also be copied to the relevant IORs.

- Requests for absence during the clinical year must be requested through the Clinical Coordinator following the same criteria, with last-minute absences also communicated to the clinical site prior to the missed day as indicated.
 - Appropriateness of the absences will be determined by the Clinical Coordinator and/or Academic Performance and Progression Committee.
 - Approved absences cannot exceed three occurrences during the clinical year, with a maximum of one absence permitted per rotation.
 - All weekly hours must be fulfilled prior to the expected and approved absence.

BEHAVIOR/PROFESSIONAL IMAGE FOR PA STUDENTS

PA Students (PAS), as on-campus graduate students, are expected to be role models for all other students at the College. Please also refer to the *Graduate Catalog* Student Code of Conduct for additional expectations for student behavior and professional image. If a student is unsure of the honesty of a behavior (self or others) they should talk to the PA program faculty or staff about their concerns.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PA PROGRAM- EXPECTATIONS OF MPAS STUDENTS

For email communications, PA students are to communicate with the College and MPAS Program using their official Mercy College email accounts. PAS are to check their Mercy College emails at least daily (i.e. within every 24 hours, except on weekends or breaks in the didactic phase of the program). If the PA student knows the program is working on urgent matters for them, more frequent checking is imperative including over weekends or breaks.

PAS are expected to respond directly to MPAS Program's individual emails within 24 hours, even with a simple acknowledgement that the email was received or reply to response read. As appropriate, a student can reply that a formal response will be forthcoming by a certain time. For program emails that are more "mass" delivered, individual replies are not necessary unless the email directs such a response. Policy on faculty communication with students per the PA Program Syllabi under the topic of "Instructional Help & Instructor Feedback" notes that:

PA faculty will respond to Mercy College student emails within **24 hours on business days**. One could expect emails after the business week to be answered the first business day after the weekend. To this end, be sure that routine communications are sent early and carboned to another relevant faculty/staff member. When communicating with the PA Program by email, put the following in the subject line of the email:

course title – subject of the email (e.g., PAS 500 – Quiz 2 Question)

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PAS

When engaged in clinical functions, the student must do so within legally prescribed bounds and is accountable for his/her own actions. The student has the obligation to adhere to the standards of ethical practice and conduct which are stated by the American Academy of PAs.

American Academy of PAs Code of Ethics

<https://www.aapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/16-EthicalConduct.pdf>

DRESS AND HYGIENE FOR PA STUDENTS

MPAS students should dress professionally when representing the program on or off campus. Professional dress includes but is not limited to:

1. Classroom and Clinicals
 - Business casual clothing or more professional. (Exceptions are labs)
 - Clothing should cover body parts appropriately (no cleavage or stomach exposure).
 - Professional shirts such as open collared shirt or polo. No graphics or offensive messages or language. Tie optional.
 - Dresses or skirts no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.
 - Slacks or khakis; denim and shorts not appropriate. (shorts appropriate in PE lab)
 - No rips or holes.
 - No hats at clinicals or in labs.
2. Lab Attire (details as relevant in respective syllabi)
 - Scrubs are permitted in the lab area and should be kept as a change of clothes within the student's locker.
 - PE lab attire should allow for moving easily and appropriate visualization of the necessary body area.
 - Closed toed shoes with a shoe back should be worn for all lab activities.
3. Hair, including facial hair, clean and tidy within a naturally occurring color range. Long hair pulled back and off the face in labs.
4. Nails well-trimmed, not extending past fingertip length. Acrylic nails are not permitted.
5. Underclothing covered completely.
6. No strong scented perfumes, colognes, or hygiene products.
7. All tattoos should be covered and any visible body piercings other than simple ear piercings should be discussed with MPAS Program faculty for appropriateness/compliance.

Faculty and staff reserve the right to ask students to change attire or remove scented products at any point should they feel students are not dressed appropriately. Students who do not follow the appropriate dress code will not be allowed to participate in the affected parts of class/rotation and will be given an unexcused absence.

Additionally, while on clinical rotation either during the didactic or clinical phase or representing the program at outside events, PA students are also required to:

- Wear their Mercy College of Ohio PA student nametag to identify themselves at all times.
- Wear their short white coat with Mercy College of Ohio emblem over professional clothing.
- Introduce themselves as a Mercy College PA student to patients, IPE team members, faculty, staff, and preceptors.

Non-adherence to the dress code is a professionalism violation. Continued failure to observe the dress code and maintain professional hygiene and/or dress may result in review by faculty/staff and could ultimately result in probation or other courses of action including but not limited to eventual dismissal from the program.

INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (IPE)

The MPAS Program participates in the Mercy College of Ohio formal IPE activities per the MPAS Program schedule to prepare PA students for interprofessional collaborative practice for optimal patient-centered care. Faculty are also expected to participate in the IPE events as facilitators, faculty, or staff.

LOST RECORDS/PROGRAM MATERIALS REPLACEMENT FEE

MPAS students are required to keep their own copies of records including but not limited to immunization records, ACLS and BLS certifications, and HIPAA and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training completion. These documents may be requested from the student by the clinical sites. If the student is unable to locate these copies and requests them from the MPAS Program, the Program may require a fee for providing such information. The fee may range from \$5.00-\$25.00 depending on the extent of records. The Program may also assess a fee for replacement of other Program provided materials such as keys, name badges, etc.

PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY/SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONICS/NETWORKING

MPAS students should abide by ethical and professional standards as outlined below as well as those within the *Graduate Catalog* and as presented in the American Academy of Physician Assistant Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession. This includes all platforms of communication including online activity. Mercy College of Ohio MPAS students must abide by the following principles:

1. MPAS students should bring information that may negatively affect a patient's rights or privacy to the attention of the appropriate individuals.
2. MPAS students should report a breach in privacy immediately.
3. MPAS students should abide by ethical principles regarding patient-provider restrictions.
4. MPAS students should avoid placing identifiable patient information online in any format, discussing in public forums, or otherwise breaking HIPAA regulations.
5. MPAS students should avoid making unfavorable comments (verbal, written, social media), even if the individual or institution is not identifiable, about the College, faculty and staff, patients, preceptors, members of the healthcare team, and all others. (This does not apply to proper professional feedback/communication channels such as advisee meetings, course evaluations, and surveys.)
6. MPAS students should not use the College's name when promoting any specific religious views, political endeavors, products, etc.
7. MPAS students should avoid using the College's name when in reference to comments, social media references, etc., that should be alleged as illegal, unprofessional, unethical, disparaging, or otherwise not in alignment with the College's and/or the Program's Mission and Vision.
8. MPAS students should remember and understand that the public, including patients and possible future employers may be able to view objects in online forums. It is likely that any posts are permanently connected to the student through archives.
9. MPAS students should avoid using personal devices to obtain photos or videos for patient documentation or post any data, including photos or videos, obtained through the provider-patient relationship.
10. MPAS students should typically avoid social media contact with patients in attempts to keep the integrity of professional boundaries.
11. MPAS students should be very cautious in online platforms and remember to take advantage of privacy setting opportunities as well as keep boundaries between private and professional material. Libel laws still apply even with private accounts.
12. MPAS students are responsible to bring any offensive or unprofessional content that is posted by a peer to the offender's attention so that the content can be addressed, or the appropriate action can be executed. If the situation is not resolved, the student who intervenes should bring the content to the attention of an MPAS faculty or staff member.
13. MPAS students should have all electronic devices turned off, silenced, or turned to vibration mode while in class or at clinical rotation as to limit disruption. Some extenuating circumstances

may apply and should be discussed directly with the class instructor or preceptor as indicated. If these circumstances apply, students should still make every effort to limit class disruption such as sitting near an exit for ease of stepping out of class.

14. MPAS students should only use electronic devices within the classroom and on rotation for note-taking and looking up clinical questions/materials as directed by preceptors unless otherwise noted.
15. MPAS students should not have any electronic communication device(s) within testing spaces.

Consequences for breach in the above principles may include but are not limited to verbal warnings, removal from class resulting in an unexcused absence, and potential review by the Academic Performance and Progression Committee for further repercussions.

PROFESSIONAL IMAGE DIFFICULTIES

Below is a list of examples which is not exhaustive of potential professional image issues. If students are unable to maintain a professional image during the didactic or clinical years, have difficulty with actively engaging with MPAS Program faculty and/or staff, preceptors, or patients, the situation will be reviewed by the Academic Performance and Progression Committee. Potential repercussions may include but are not limited to failure of a course and/or dismissal from the MPAS Program. For additional further information on professional image conduct which students are expected to maintain, please see Code of Conduct section below.

Professional image difficulties may include but are not limited to:

1. Significant and recurrent issues with hygiene that affect interaction with others.
2. Private issues that inhibit the student's capability to function at clinical rotation or in the classroom.
3. Problems with persistent inappropriate mood and affect shown by extremely isolated personality, violent and/or angry mannerisms.
4. Persistent neglect to follow the dress code which causes disruption to the student learning atmosphere and is not consistent with professional standards within the MPAS program and the PA profession.
5. Argumentative communications (tone, tenor, intent) with faculty, staff, or students. Students may have professional conversations advocating for self and others or iterating academic concepts.

PI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY

(adapted from PAEA website: <https://paeaonline.org/pi-alpha-honor-society/>)

Pi Alpha Honor Society is the national Physician Assistant honor society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. Membership signifies the inductees' significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community/professional service, and other related activities. The society also encourages a high standard of character among students and graduates.

Pi Alpha Honor Society was organized in 2004 by the Association of Physician Assistant Programs (APAP) for the promotion and recognition of significant academic achievement, leadership, research, community/professional service, and the encouragement of a high standard of character and conduct among physician assistant (PA) students and graduates.

The motto of Pi Alpha is "Scholarship, Service, Leadership." The organization is committed to lifelong learning and participation in intellectual life.

The society operates as part of PAEA and as such is a non-profit educational organization. Administrative support is supplied by PAEA.

The requirements for eligibility for Pi Alpha are:

- Current students of PA programs accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) with chapter status through Pi Alpha (student membership requires a minimum GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and demonstrates excellence in research, publishing, community/professional service, or leadership activities).
- Full time PA faculty who have three years' experience with a PA program and who have fulfilled the criteria of distinguished scholarship, as well as leadership or service to a physician assistant program or the profession.
- Alumni who have met current criteria for induction.
- Individuals who have rendered distinguished scholarship, as well as leadership or professional service to the PA profession, such as clinical preceptors, and those who are not eligible for election through other means, may be considered for honorary status.

PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION

Students can participate professionally in the PA Program through its MPAS Program Advisory Committee, Student Society, or as an Admissions volunteer.

Mercy College of Ohio SAAAPA Chapter of AAPA

The AAPA is the United States national professional organization. The AAPA has many member benefits as both a professional Physician Assistant and as a student. AAPA offers multiple opportunities for involvement of students including the National AAPA conference which students are encouraged to attend if feasible based on schedule. Also See *Extra Curricular Activities* for further information.

Each PA cohort is to review/revise the Mercy College of Ohio's SAAAPA bylaws, elect required positions, and submit relevant documents to the AAPA, so the PAS organization can continue formal recognition by the Student Academy of the American Academy of PAs (SAAAPA). For more information on SAAAPA, students can visit the website at <https://www.aapa.org/about/aapa-governance-leadership/student-academy/>. When feasible, the PA Program will assist with SAAAPA conference registration fees for those students representing the Mercy College of Ohio in a formal capacity. The PA Program is not responsible for fees beyond what was directly communicated with participating students, nor is the Program responsible for covering associated costs that are not reimbursable by SAAAPA/AAPA.

Physician Assistant Studies Advisory Committee

The MPAS Advisory Committee meets twice a year for providing direction for PA program development. The Advisory Committee members include internal and external stakeholders, and external PA-Cs/PA educators. If you are interested in representing your cohort on this committee you are encouraged to inform the MPAS Program Student Society Faculty Advisor for consideration of this request.

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Students may be permitted during the didactic year to attend professional conferences at the discretion of the MPAS faculty. Decisions will be made on an individual basis also considering the Program schedule. If the student is excused for a professional conference, they should assume that they will be expected to pay for all incurred expenses. If a student would like to attend a professional conference during the clinical year, the student must submit a written document requesting approval a month prior to the conference date. If the professional conference is approved, the student will typically be required to show proof of registration and attendance. The student will also be required to make up any missed assignments while absent.

PROFESSIONALISM PROBATION

PA students will function under a professionalism contract pledge. When violations of professionalism appear to occur, the APPC convenes. The Program's Academic Performance and Progression Committee may deem a PA Student's behavior as such that it is considered a major issue leading to a program level status of Professionalism Probation. The APPC will communicate this status to the PA Student and document such in student file. This is a continued notification status/warning that the behaviors/combination of behaviors are such that continued issues or new behavioral incidents added to this status are possible grounds for dismissal from the MPAS Program. Once a student is placed on Professionalism Probation, the status remains in effect for the duration of the program. College notifications and actions may also apply.

SHARING OF PA CURRICULUM MATERIALS

The MPAS Program materials distributed to the PA student are the property of Mercy College of Ohio and cannot be freely re-distributed or re-distributed for profit. Similarly, PA student generated materials are for professional education purposes only and must have expressed written consent of faculty member to obtain. PA students cannot generate unauthorized recordings such as photographs and video. Also refer to the "Recording of Classroom Presentations" policy in the *Graduate Catalog*.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION UPDATES

Every student is required to provide and update demographic information through EMPOWER for College files. EMPOWER access is granted at time of enrollment. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the EMPOWER information updated. While information is required by the College, students may opt out of having their information published in the College directory. Refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for more information.

CLINICAL YEAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE CLINICAL PHASE

There are many individuals involved in the education of PA students (PAS) during the Clinical Phase. The MPAS Program Director and Clinical Coordinator reserve the right to adjust assignments as needed including to ensure the site is providing appropriate opportunities for the PAS to meet learning outcomes/instructional objectives.

Clinical Coordinator

A principal PA faculty member with a dual role of teaching as well as coordinating PA students' clinical education within the curriculum. The Clinical Coordinator obtains, develops, and coordinates clinical sites, including the assignment of students to sites. The Clinical Coordinator works with the instructor of record to oversee sites and address issues while students are on clinical rotations. The Clinical Coordinator will provide aggregate feedback data to preceptors/site regarding the clinical year as appropriate. The Clinical Coordinator serves as the clinical PA student's first point of contact regarding a rotation, including requesting of absences and vetting student/site issues.

Clinical Sites

A setting in which clinical learning occurs through active engagement with preceptors and patients for MPAS students. A setting can be an outpatient clinic, inpatient hospital setting, or other setting that is under contractual affiliation agreement with Mercy College of Ohio.

Instructor of Record (IOR) for SCPEs

A MPAS Program clinician faculty (e.g. PA, physician) is assigned as a co-instructor of record (IOR) along with the Clinical Coordinator for each supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE or clinical rotation) type that has a "clinical" grading component. The IORs for each

SCPE type grade medical documentation and monitor the competency of PA students to meet program expectations in conjunction with the Clinical Coordinator. SCPE IOR responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Evaluating assignments using rubrics to objectify the assignment grading
 - Medical Documentation
 - Assignments/Presentations

Physician Assistant Students

During the clinical phase of the Program, the PA student can perform responsibilities that further their education as directed by the student's preceptor. PA students should be actively engaged in the different parts of patient care including but not limited to taking histories, performing physical exams, creating differential diagnoses, ordering labs/imaging studies, documentation, and patient education as well as performing procedures as indicated. PA students must not substitute for clinical or administrative staff.

Patients

PA students should view patients as another teacher. Preceptors will assign students to work with various patients as permitted by the patient. Patients can refuse student involvement in their care at any time without hinderance to their overall care and risk to rights.

Preceptor of Record

Individuals who are usually physicians, nurse practitioners, or physician assistants who are board certified or licensed healthcare professionals that volunteer to educate students clinically. Preceptors fill out the *Preceptor Evaluation of Student* as a method to assess and communicate the competency of each PA student's skills. The preceptors will communicate with members of the MPAS Program, such as the Clinical Coordinator or designee, as necessary to discuss how the student is performing specifically if there is an issue with the student on rotation. While ongoing feedback is preferred, preceptors will also formally communicate with the student regarding progress and critique at least at mid-point and end of rotation. Details are in the course materials. Part of a precepting team could include others than the Preceptor of Record. The Preceptor of Record can consider feedback from members of the collaborating team and will weigh and synthesize the feedback accordingly when completing the *Preceptor Evaluation of Student* form.

PROBLEMS DURING ROTATION

If at any point during clinical rotation, the PA student has any problems, it is expected that they will contact the Clinical Coordinator. Issues may include but are not limited to:

- Harassment
- Needle stick and/or injury
- Issues with attendance
- Any form of emergency
- Unexpected change in location of rotation
- Dangerous and/or uncomfortable environment

The MPAS Program will explore the issue, discuss with student and preceptor as appropriate, and review with APPC for action plan as indicated. Actions may include, but are not limited to, reassessment after intervention or removing the PAS from the site.

STUDENT INITIATED PRECEPTOR/SITE

PA students are not required to solicit preceptors/sites for their clinical experiences but may initiate a request for a clinical site through the Clinical Coordinator. Students can provide information to the MPAS Program Clinical Coordinator for exploration/feasibility by completing the *Student Initiated SCPE* form.

The Clinical Coordinator will evaluate the site in terms of conflict of interest for the student and to minimize potential conflict of interest should the site otherwise be suitable. The PA student must give the Clinical Coordinator at least six-months lead time, though nine months is preferred. Students must not engage with clinical sites in attempt to negotiate or secure clinical affiliation agreements or engage in other preceptor/site recruitment efforts beyond the scope of the Student Initiated SCPE process.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Clinical Coordinator shall not assign PA students to clinical sites at which real or perceived conflict of interest (COI) may affect the clinical educational experience. Students must disclose any potential COI in their clinical rotation schedule to the Clinical Coordinator, Instructor of Record, and Program Director. Failure of the student to disclose COI prior to the clinical rotation is a violation of integrity and is handled by the Academic Performance and Progression Committee. Examples of actions could include termination of the COI clinical experience, repetition of the clinical experience, or even dismissal from the MPAS Program.

CLINICAL ATTENDANCE AND DRESS

Clinical rotation attendance is mandatory. The clinical work schedule will be assigned by the Clinical Faculty and/or supervising preceptor for the rotation. Each student is expected to spend 40 to 60 hours per week at rotation which may include night shifts, weekends, and on-call time. Students should not be expected to be at rotation more than 60-hours per week as time is needed for working on other courses and to study.

For further information on clinical rotation dress expectations, please see *Dress and Hygiene for PA Students* discussed earlier.

TRAVEL AND LIVING EXPENSES- CLINICAL PHASE

Students should expect to travel to different SCPE locations throughout the Toledo area, geographic region, and the United States. While many of the clinical affiliations are within driving distance from Toledo, not all placements are guaranteed to be local. To that end, all students should expect to travel outside of the Toledo area. Expenses related to SCPE sites are the student's responsibility including the expense of travel, temporary housing, and other living expenses. The Program does not arrange housing or other temporary living arrangements for students assigned to non-local SCPE. Students are advised to prepare in advance for these related expenses and logistics.

STUDENT SAFETY AND HEALTH

SAFETY AND SECURITY DURING YOUR PA EDUCATION

PAS orientation/onboarding to the Bon Secours Mercy Health (BSMH) System (the parent system to Mercy College of Ohio) includes typical annual compliance training expected of a practicing PA and other BSMH employees. This training includes HIPAA and safety and security measures in alignment with The Joint Commission (TJC) including what to do in the case of an active shooter. The BSMH compliance training, first introduced in the didactic phase, is repeated before students enter the clinical phase of the MPAS Program. The topics in the BSMH training have transference to other clinical sites.

PA students should follow the safety and security policies and procedures of the clinical rotation site. Preceptors/Site are to provide an orientation to its students which includes the topics of safety and security.

In general:

- Call 911 for urgent/emergent issues
- Call site security
- Notify preceptor/site

- Follow site specific incident reporting processes
- Notify the MPAS Program's Clinical Coordinator
- Follow College's incident reporting processes

For example, for important but not urgent issues for clinicals within the College building (Gandy Clinic), St. Vincent's Medical Center, St. Charles, and St. Anne's, call Campus Safety immediately at 419-251-4444. Next notify your preceptor/site (as feasible) and, when urgent matters cease, notify the MPAS Program's Clinical Coordinator.

Should students encounter non-urgent issues at the clinical site, contact the Program's Clinical Coordinator and/or Instructor of Record.

In today's current environment, examples could include perceiving issues of racial injustice, health care worker violence, using students inappropriately during a pandemic, or not providing proper personal protective equipment.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The following topics contain excerpts from the Mercy College of Ohio Emergency Response Plan (ERP), specifically Appendix A of the ERP, the campus emergency response quick reference guide.

Please refer to the ERP for details.

Call 911 in the event of an emergency and Mercy Public Safety 419-251-4444, or on an on-campus phone 1-4444.

Active Shooter/Hostage Situation (Code Silver)

- Alert-Notify law enforcement (Safety and Security)
- Lockdown—lock all doors preventing entry
- Inform—Use real-time info. (cell phones, hand signals, etc.)
- Counter—Use aggressive actions as a means of distraction
- Evacuate—Leave the scene quickly and immediately

Bomb/Bomb Threat (Code Black)

- Don't hang up
- Gather as much information as possible
- Contact 911 or Mercy Public Safety (off campus: 419-251-1444) (on campus 1-4444)

Fire (Code Red)

- Activate the nearest fire alarm immediately.
- Dial 1-4444 (or 911) for fire/smell of/visible smoke. State the emergency and location.
- Evacuate the building and, if possible, assist those who may who may be in immediate danger.
- Do Not use elevator.
- Meet at least 500 ft. from the building and follow instructions from emergency personnel.

RACE

- Rescue—Get people out!
- Activate—Pull the alarm
- Contain—Shut windows and doors
- Extinguish – Evacuate: GET OUT!

PASS—for utilization of a fire extinguisher

- Pull pin
- Aim nozzle
- Squeeze handles
- Sweep base of fire

Hazardous Material Spill/Release (Code Orange)

- Restrict access to area
- Close and lock all windows, exterior doors, and any opening to the outside, seal bottom of doors with (wet if possible) towels or clothes (and windows, if possible).
- If possible, move to an interior room above ground floor with fewest windows, close vents or turn off A/C, restrict access to area.
- Do not leave building until authorized by Mercy Public Safety or Toledo/Lucas County Public Safety officials.

Tornado/Severe Weather (Code Gray)

If the All Hazards Sirens are activated, or you are notified of a warning:

- Immediately seek shelter in nearest facility (or if no shelter is available, lie flat in a ditch facedown covering your face)
- Proceed to lowest level, if basement is not available
- Seek an interior hallway or small interior room on lowest level, away from windows and doors
- Updates will be provided through the RAVE Notification system. DO NOT LEAVE UNTIL THE ALL CLEAR IS GIVEN!

RAVE Notification System

- All new students, faculty and staff are enrolled in the system and select notification preferences, which may include email, text messages, phone calls and/or voicemails
- In an emergency, notification will happen via this system in the previously mentioned ways on campus

Also refer to EMERGENCY PROCEDURES at the end of this Handbook as a quick way to access such information. Quick reference numbers include:

- 911
- Campus Safety at 419-251-4444

OTHER PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Elevator Use

When using the elevator, the Program suggests carrying your cell phone with you. If the elevator emergently malfunctions, call campus safety immediately at 419-251-4444.

Grievance/ Harassment

Mercy College of Ohio has established a Civil Rights/Nondiscrimination Policy (applies to employees, students, volunteers) and a Sexual Harassment Policy to address instances of grievance/harassment on and off campus. Please refer to these sections in the *Graduate Catalog* for further information.

Reporting a Concern or Complaint

<https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/concern-complaint>

Procedures for Reporting Sexual Harassment

<https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/title-ix/reporting-an-incident>

Other College related policies include: Hazing Policy (Policy 503) and the Pregnant Student Policy (Policy 523).

Mistreatment of MPAS Program Student

The Program does not tolerate mistreatment of PA students by any Program or instructional faculty, staff, or other students. Examples of student mistreatment include, but are not limited to, uncomfortable working conditions on clinical rotations, physical facilities on campus. Issues of perceived mistreatment should be communicated to the respective Coordinator and/or Program Director for investigation and resultant action.

Health Conditions/Change in Health Status

If a student has a change in health status, they should refer to policies within the *Graduate Catalog* under the appropriate category such as *Title IX* or *Pregnancy*. Students should also contact the Office of Compliance, Academic Advisor, and/or Student Services as indicated to learn how to best proceed.

Health Risks and Injury of a Student

The MPAS Program will inform its students of health risks that they may encounter throughout the educational program. Students will follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and standard precautions. Students will sign a document acknowledging receipt and awareness of all content in the Student Handbook. This document indicates their agreement in abiding by the Handbook policies and procedures including acknowledgement that there could be some health risks associated with the education of a Physician Assistant student.

In the event of any MPAS student injury at either clinical rotation and/or in the classroom, the overseeing personnel will simply evaluate the student and discuss with them whether they may stay within the clinical or classroom area.

- Depending on the severity of injury, the student may not be permitted to participate in class/clinical rotation.
- If the student would like to obtain medical care, the indicated faculty, staff, and/or clinical staff are permitted to help the injured student acquire appropriate care.
- The Medical Director, Program Director, and Clinical Faculty are not permitted to provide medical care for students except in the event of an emergency.
- The student is accountable for all inquired costs for the injury when obtaining medical care.
- Follow up care after the injury should be through the patient's own provider as indicated. The student and appropriate personnel should fill out a concern and complaint form <https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/concern-complaint> within 24 hours. This should then be given to the Program Director.

Injury During Clinical Rotation

- Students should inform the IOR and/or Clinical Coordinator as indicated as soon as possible of the injury.
- The student and/or appropriate faculty should complete the required paperwork by the rotation site as well as the appropriate Mercy College of Ohio concern and complaint form <https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/concern-complaint> as soon as possible.
- If injury occurs from sharps and/or there is a mucous membrane exposure, the student should:
 - Follow current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.
 - Remove contacts and/or other clothing that may be saturated with blood or bodily fluids as appropriate. Clean the area immediately according to CDC guidelines
 - Use soap and water to irrigate skin
 - Flush mouth, nose, and/or skin with water

- Irrigate eyes with appropriate saline and/or clean water
- Follow other appropriate guidelines as directed by the clinical rotation site
- In the event of an injury from a non-contaminated sharp, typically, the exposure is treated at the clinical site.
- For further information regarding Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/guidelines.html>.

Laboratory, Classroom, and Clinical Safety Protocol

The safety of all students (and patients) is of utmost importance to the MPAS program. In order to limit potential causes of injury, the following precautions should be followed by all students to prevent accidents, exposures, and/or injuries:

1. Students should arrive and leave in groups of at least two, if possible, when traveling before or after dark.
2. Students should leave all spaces clean and organized.
3. Students should follow standard safety protocols to prevent accidents and injuries such as avoiding recapping of needles and using proper disposal of sharps.
4. Students should practice various skills with supervision/classmates so that there is a checking mechanism for one another to limit accident or injury.
5. Students should only use equipment associated with current or past skills or as approved by faculty as indicated.
6. Students should not provide any form of treatment to peers, themselves, or others.
7. Patients and mock patients should be “spotted” and monitored carefully during physical examination and procedures (e.g., Romberg for unsteadiness/fall risk; prevent infants from rolling off exam table).
8. Any other concessions should be reviewed with and approved by the appropriate faculty member and the Program Director.

For the safety of students, disciplinary action including but not limited to possible dismissal from the MPAS program may be taken if students fail to abide by the Protocol above.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

College staff members support students in several major divisions: President’s Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management. Enrollment Management: admissions, financial aid, administrative specialists. Other areas include Simulation/Interprofessional Education. Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for specifics about Student Support Services. A few highlights are noted next.

Any of the PA Program members or members of the College administration, faculty or staff must complete a timely formal referral through the College’s Early Alert Referral System (EARS) (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercyCollegeofOhio&layout_id=11) if their professional assessment of a student identifies academic or personal issues that may impact student progress in the PA Program. The EARS process initiates timely action by the College’s Campus Assessment Response and Evaluation (CARE) team to develop strategies to improve student success and retention. For example, students are connected with educational support services such as tutoring and counseling depending on their specific needs. Referred students should remain in contact with their faculty and academic advisor to develop an Academic Success Plan (educational plan) for a successful semester. More information on the Mercy College Student Success Center is available at: <http://www.mercycollege.edu/success>.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

The Student Success Center includes [academic advising](#), [tutoring](#), and [counseling and wellness services](#).

- Access to academic support services (study skills strategies, guidance, workshops, software).

- Tutoring in composition, math, science, nursing, and online via [Smarthinking](#)
- Accessibility and Testing Services including:
 - Testing services for accommodations, make-up exams, placement tests, credit by examination, and distance education proctor verification.
- Student Life including Campus Ministry and Service Learning:
 - Co-curricular programming, professional and leadership development opportunities, e.g., Student Government Association (SGA), Leader Scholar Program, Student Leader Retreat, etc. Of note, the Mercy College PA Student Society Chapter of the Student Academy of the American Academy of PAs, would be part of SGA.
 - A dedicated Student Engagement Suite for SGA and other student groups.
- Diversity and Inclusion programs and resources (e.g. the Multicultural Center, Pathway to Success Scholarship Program, Mercy Dialogues, heritage month programming, etc.).
- Career Resources, including assistance with Cover Letter and Resume writing as well as Interview Preparation via Smarthinking, [Career Resources page](#), and Student Success Center course in Canvas. Employment opportunities posted regularly in Student Success Center Course in Canvas.

Help and Student Resources are available to all students via Canvas.

THE OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The Office of Compliance and Risk Management includes the Title IX Coordinator, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator, and the Clinical Compliance Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is available for any issues regarding sex-based harassment and discrimination, including pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions.

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS SERVICES

Counseling and Wellness Services detail an array of options for growth and wellness spanning items such as confidential and group counseling services, crisis response and campus programming. Licensed professional Clinical Counselors are available to provide confidential, mental health counseling services to Mercy College of Ohio students. Students are encouraged to seek counseling for mental health and/or personal issues. Programming is provided by Counseling and Wellness Services on an annual basis to educate students on safety, suicide prevention, healthy relationships, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and overall wellness.

More specifically, if a PA student needs mental health assistance, Mercy College of Ohio has mental health counselors who offer a “walk-in” option. Additional information can be found on the <https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/student-success/counseling-wellness> which takes the PAS to *Helping Students in Distress* section which includes after-hour emergency phone numbers and an electronic non-urgent counseling appointment request form.

Additionally, students can self-refer into any of these services and processes avoiding any potential delay and/or maintaining confidentiality from the MPAS Program. Confidentiality is maintained by Student Support Services as feasible/appropriate.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion strives to create an inclusive environment where the greater community of faculty, staff, and students are respected and embraced regardless of variations in thoughts, experiences, values, and identities.

SPIRITUAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Spiritual and Community Engagement serves students, faculty, and staff. The ministry is rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition but is designed to serve all regardless of faith or denomination. Through various prayer services and Catholic Masses, Spiritual Engagement assists the College community in spiritual growth. The Director of Spiritual and Community Engagement provides opportunities for spiritual growth through individual direction and personal or group prayer.

COMPUTER LABORATORIES

The Toledo campus has five computer laboratories with approximately 150 computers. The computers and printers are also available in the Library and student study areas of the College. College supported computers have Internet access, email, and the Microsoft Office Suite.

COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CANVAS) SUPPORT

Mercy College of Ohio uses the Canvas Learning Management System.

The Office of Distance Education provides the campus community with support for the use of the Canvas learning management system. Common training sessions cover many basic aspects of Canvas. The Distance Education office also aids with instructional design, course evaluations, group and one-on-one training, and teaching and learning resource support to faculty. The Mercy Teaching and Learning Center (MTaLC), housed in Canvas, contains modules to assist with effective course design, pedagogy, and use of the learning management system Canvas. Support help by phone can be reached by calling the Director of Distance Education and Teaching Resources and/or Instructional Designer.

Canvas technical support is available 24 hours a day at 1-844-358-6881 or through Live Chat found on the Help button on your Canvas interface.

To complete any online course work, you will need to have access to a computer with a browser. Although Canvas does have a phone app, class assignments require a computer for completion. Missed or late assignments due to phone app issues will not be accepted.

Canvas and its hosting infrastructure are designed for maximum compatibility and minimal requirements as follows:

Screen Size

Canvas is best viewed at a minimum resolution of 800x600. If you want to view Canvas on a device with a smaller screen, we recommend using the Canvas mobile app.

Operating Systems

- Windows 7 and newer
- Mac OSX 10.10 and newer
- Linux - chromeOS

Mobile Operating System Native App Support

As of January 5, 2019, Android apps require version 5.0 or later and iOS apps require version 11 or later. All Android and iOS both support the two most recent versions of their respective operating systems.

Computer Speed and Processor

- Use a computer 5 years old or newer when possible
- 1GB of RAM
- 2GHz processor

Internet Speed

- Along with compatibility and web standards, Canvas has been carefully crafted to accommodate low bandwidth environments.
- Minimum of 512kbps

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The College employs a Director of Information Technology Services (IT) and three IT support staff. The IT staff provides support to faculty, staff, and students including needs related to hardware, software, information security, system communication, and email. All students, faculty, and staff are provided with email accounts that are used for all official communications of the College.

EMPOWER is the student information system used throughout the College.

INTERNET

Internet access is available for all students and faculty. The MPAS Program is housed in a Wi-Fi enabled building. All students will use their assigned Mercy College email address for program emails.

LIBRARY

The Mercy College of Ohio Library maintains a collection of books, audiovisuals, print journals, and online resources where students can search academic databases and locate electronic journal articles, e-books, and videos. These resources are available 24 hours, 7 days a week, from on or off-campus and can be accessed through the Library Resource Bookshelf in Canvas and through the Library Proxy Page. In addition, the Toledo Lucas County Public Library is available for student use.

Students are introduced to information literacy at (Student Orientation and Registration) SOAR. Detailed sessions are embedded into introductory courses in some programs where they learn to identify, locate, evaluate, organize, and share information.

Refer to the Mercy College of Ohio library website www.mercycollege.edu/my-mercy/library for additional details on the library.

RETENTION AND SUCCESS STRATEGIES

The Office of Retention and Success Strategies coordinates the College's retention and completion initiatives through collaboration with all departments within the College. This includes a variety of initiatives, such as: maintaining an Early Alert System, developing, and monitoring Academic Success Plans, and predictive analysis for at-risk students. The office also assists with enrollment management through collaboration with the Academic Advisors and outreach efforts to ensure students are retained.

STUDENT LOUNGE

The College's student lounge has computers, comfortable seating, kitchen facilities, and vending machines for all students' use. There is also dedicated space for MPAS Program students.

TUTORING

The College provides ongoing tutoring support with writing, math, science, and program specific areas. Housed in the Student Success Center, tutoring services are available to all students, regardless of location at no additional cost. Tutoring services are available by appointment. Tutors are equipped with video cameras to offer online tutoring services through video conferencing for distance students. Student tutoring surveys are deployed at the end of each semester. Pearson *Smarthinking* provides online tutoring services. If a PA student needs tutoring beyond that offered by the College, the student is responsible for the expense.

OTHER POLICIES

ACCESS TO PRIVATE INFORMATION

Mercy College of Ohio adheres to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in its dealings with confidential information of

students and patients. Students will not be able to access information belonging to other students either electronically or hard copy. Students will only have access to their own electronic personal and academic information via EMPOWER and *CastleBranch*. Students need to be cognizant about what personal information of their own they may print on community printers. If PA students need to access their physical MPAS Program records, MPAS Program personnel must be present.

COMPLAINTS

The MPAS Program appreciates the importance of receiving and being open to the constructive feedback of any complaint made against the program, the students, and faculty and/or staff, with the goal of providing a high-quality educational experience. Student complaints involving grades, inequitable treatment, or other situations will be handled by the institution as indicated in the *Graduate Catalog*. Complaints concerning any violation of Title IX should refer to the following in the *Graduate Catalog* or students can fill out the concern and complaint form found at <https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/concern-complaint>.

Any complaints of sexual harassment must be handled in accordance with the College's Sexual Harassment policy found in the *Graduate Catalog*. Complaints can be made via the concern and complaint form found at <https://mercycollege.edu/student-affairs/concern-complaint>.

Complaint about the Program Quality to ARC-PA

The ARC-PA will:

- investigate complaints regarding a PA program only if the complaint contains facts or allegations that, if substantiated, may indicate that the program is not following established ARC-PA policies or does not comply with the *Standards*,
- consider only written and signed complaints,
- not take any action based on an anonymous complaint,
- handle all investigations confidentially,
- not intervene on behalf of an individual complainant regarding program or institutional issues,
- not mediate or determine the results of disputes between students or faculty and the PA program or institution; this must be handled at the College level.

ARC-PA can be reached at:

Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.
3325 Paddocks Parkway
Suite 345
Suwanee, GA 30024
(703) 476-1224

CONTINGENCY LEARNING PLAN

In the case of unexpected school closure and/or delay during the didactic year for any reason, students will still be responsible for any assigned work as directed by the MPAS Program faculty/staff.

CPR AND ACLS CERTIFICATION

All entry-level students in the MPAS program are required to obtain certification in CPR Life Support for the Healthcare Provider from the American Heart Association as part of the curriculum.

Students are not allowed to participate in any clinical or patient-related activity without current CPR certification. Students non-compliant with CPR (and any other clinical requirements) are subject to penalty including dismissal from the enrolled course.

PA students must keep personal copies of CPR (and other clinical compliance) documentation as each clinical site reserves the right to require a student to provide proof of compliance at any time. The PA

student is responsible for submitting subsequent recertification documentation to the Program prior to the expiration date of the previously submitted document.

Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) will be taught at the end of the didactic phase and is required for clinical phase participation.

EMPLOYMENT DURING THE MPAS PROGRAM (PA STUDENTS)

The MPAS Program is a full-time responsibility and employment during the program is not endorsed. Due to the rigorous academics, time-intensive studies, and clinical nature of this program, employment of any kind is discouraged. The MPAS educational program may require occasional evening and/or Saturday classes or events. Missing classes for employment is not acceptable. MPAS students are not permitted to be employed through the MPAS program as staff or faculty members.

If a MPAS student chooses to work within a health care setting during the program, the following standards should be followed and understood:

1. MPAS students should not identify themselves in any form as a Mercy College of Ohio MPAS student or as representatives of the program.
2. MPAS students should understand that any events performed outside of the Program (e.g. outside of classroom, clinical activities, service learning) are not covered by the College's liability insurance.
3. MPAS students should carefully read and understand the job description in which they are working and not work outside of the scope of their practice prior to licensure as a PA.
4. MPAS students should not classify themselves as having a degree of expert knowledge as a PA.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students should keep in mind the rigor of the MPAS program and are encouraged to consider this when participating in non-professional activities that may tax the student's time and hinder the student's ability to accomplish their school studies.

HOLIDAYS AND BREAKS

During the didactic phase of the MPAS program, the PA student schedule follows the College's major holidays and semester breaks but NOT spring break. During the clinical phase, the PA students follow the schedule of the PA Program and its clinical sites to which they are assigned. This schedule does not provide for semester breaks or for holidays except for the Program's winter break. For example, a PAS could be scheduled for an emergency room shift on Thanksgiving.

PAYMENT OF EDUCATIONAL COSTS

Mercy College of Ohio students are expected to pay their bills on time. Failure to adhere to payments may place the students on a business hold such that a student may not be able to register for classes or receive grades or transcript. Refer to *Graduate Catalog* "Payment of Accounts, Failure to Make Payment" and "Return of Title IV Aid, When a Student Fails to Begin Attendance".

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Mercy College of Ohio has policies and procedures that govern the release of information from student academic records to ensure compliance with the federal government's Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA Policy: <https://mercycollege.edu/academics/student-records/ferpa>.

PA students must sign a release as required by clinical sites such as for dissemination of immunization records (current form is 530-A Informed Consent). The MPAS Program releases student "head shot"

photos and student authored biosketch for faculty and preceptor/clinical site use. The biosketch includes information such as previous education and work/volunteer service. PA students will also sign for this release.