



**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
PROGRAM MANUAL
2026-2027**

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PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF

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INTRODUCTION

The Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) Physician Assistant (PA) Program has been continuously accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) since the inception of the Program in 1998. The RRCC PA Program was approved to confer a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) from RRCC in 2015 (with the first cohort being the class of 2019) as the first and, currently, only Master's degree program in a community college in the United States.

This manual is a resource to guide PA students and preceptors through the didactic and clinical components of the Program and contains specific policies and procedures pertinent to the PA Program. These policies apply to all students in the RRCC PA program. In addition to the policies and procedures of the RRCC Student Handbook, the nature of graduate-level PA education requires additional policies and procedures that may not be applicable to non-PA students. After reading this manual thoroughly, each student will sign the Physician Assistant Student Contract during orientation to the Program to be filed in each student's official record. This manual is a living document that can be found on the RRCC PA Program website at <https://www.rrcc.edu/physician-assistant/curriculum>. The Manual will be updated annually, at minimum, and the PA Program reserves the right to make appropriate changes, as necessary. Students are expected to consult the most updated version of the manual for updates.

The RRCC PA program is committed to the education of its students and ensuring that its graduates are both clinically and professionally competent (see *Clinical and Professional Competency* section) to practice in the health care system and provide safe care to patients.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM OFFICES

The PA Program offices are located on the Arvada Campus. The mailing address is 10280 W. 55th Avenue. Arvada, CO 80002, telephone (303) 914-6039 or (303) 914-6048, fax (303) 914-6806.

The faculty has an "open-door" policy for student meetings, but an appointment is preferable to protect confidentiality and ensure the efficient operation of the Program. Students must respect and may not access the confidentiality of letters, forms, and other materials located in the PA Program offices.

The Program will not require PA students to work for the Program in any way, including functioning as instructional faculty or clinical or administrative staff. (*A3.02, A3.03 6th Standards*)

PROGRAM MISSION and GOALS

MISSION

The mission of the RRCC PA Program is to prepare physician assistants to serve all communities by practicing professional, empathetic, inclusive, team-based medicine with a focus on primary care. [Revised 12-2025]

GOALS

The goals of the RRCC PA program are to:

1. Produce competent PAs

The success of the program in meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. A first-time PANCE pass rate comparable to the national average based upon cohort size equivalency
- b. A graduation rate of greater than 90%

2. Promote the development of professionalism and professional identity

The success of the program in meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. Content and advising designed to teach, monitor, and promote professionalism
- b. Encouraging the development of professional identity as a PA through self-reflection and self-awareness
- c. Producing graduates with professionalism appropriate for the workplace

3. Deliver a primary-care focused, team-based curriculum

The success of the program in meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. Curriculum content taught by organ system with a primary-care focus
- b. Incorporating interprofessional experiences in the didactic and clinical curricula
- c. Providing clinical experiences in primary care to include family medicine, pediatrics, women's health, behavioral health, and internal medicine

4. Emphasize the underserved/rural practice of medicine

The success of the program in meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. Delivering content and assessment that examines the challenges and opportunities in underserved/rural medical practice
- b. Providing at least two underserved and/or rural clinical experiences per student

5. Serve the community

The success of the program in meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. Providing community service opportunities
- b. Service to the community as a student portfolio requirement

6. Create a climate of belonging

The success of the program meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. Delivering content that will support a deeper understanding of students' own cultures as well as others and develop skills in communicating with diverse patient populations
- b. Preparing students to provide empathic care to patients from variety of lived experiences and backgrounds

7. Provide employable PAs for the healthcare workforce

The success of the program in meeting this goal is demonstrated through:

- a. The expectation that all students meet all clinical and professional standards to become a successful practicing PA

MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

Upon matriculation to the Program, PA students are required to present:

- A student health and immunization* record. Current health verification and pertinent update of immunizations is required throughout the Program. These forms must be signed by a licensed provider and may not be signed by a faculty member or preceptor.
- Verification of health insurance (proof of coverage is required throughout the Program)
- Current basic life support (BLS) certification (acceptable BLS certification must be based on guidelines from the American Red Cross or American Heart Association)

*The Program follows CDC guidelines for healthcare workers (*A3.09a 6th Standards*). A student who declines vaccinations may be unable to participate in a supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) based upon site requirements. The inability to complete Program-required activities (SCPEs) may result in dismissal/withdrawal from the Program.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

A background investigation will be performed on all students accepted into the Program. Each accepted applicant must release the background investigation results to both RRCC Human Resources Department for initial review and report and to the PA Program for a secondary review. Prospective students who refuse to comply with the background investigation will not be allowed to matriculate into the RRCC PA Program.

An applicant will be disqualified from the RRCC PA Program based on the following guidelines:

- Any felony criminal offense
- Any criminal offense, regardless of its designation, which involved a crime of moral turpitude (prostitution, public lewdness/exposure, etc.)
- Any crime against a child

Any applicant who believes that the background investigation is inaccurate may request further review.

The RRCC Human Resources Department will supply the PA Program with one of the following after reviewing the background investigation results for each prospective student:

- Does not have any disqualifying offenses
- Does not have any disqualifying offenses but has offenses which may impact SCPE placement
- Has a disqualifying offense

Many SCPE sites used by the PA Program require a background check prior to student placement. The site may disqualify a student from participation based on the results of the background investigation and the site's specific policies. Any student who believes there may be negative findings

should disclose this information during the background check application process. A student who is disqualified from a SCPE due to a finding on a background check may be required to take a Leave of Absence (LOA) as the Program is not required to replace the SCPE on short notice.

PA students must be aware that offenses that appear on a background check may impact the ability to obtain state licensing in a particular state, based upon state law and the medical practice act, and/or Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certification to prescribe controlled substances. The RRCC PA Program is not responsible for ensuring that a student will be qualified to practice as a PA or obtain prescribing privileges based upon criminal offenses or findings on a background check.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The following technical standards have been formally adopted by the Program and apply to all candidates for admission and students throughout their enrollment in the Program. To be admitted as students in the RRCC PA Program, candidates must meet the following Technical Standards with acceptable accommodations, as appropriate and granted by the Program, without making substantial changes to the structure of the program:

1. Students must be able to observe lectures, demonstrations, experiments, computer-assisted instruction, and waveform readings and must be able to use vision, hearing, and somatic senses to accurately observe patients both near and at a distance.
2. Students must communicate effectively with faculty members, patients, preceptors, and other members of the health care team. Students must be able to communicate accurately and clearly in spoken and written formats and must be able to use speech, hearing, reading, and writing to effectively elicit patient histories, record data, and interpret data related to patient care.
3. Students must have sufficient motor and tactile skills to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. Students must be physically able to perform standard patient care activities, including but not limited to a complete physical examination (including, but not limited to examination of the genitalia of any gender and muscle strength needed to perform a complete musculoskeletal examination, the suturing of skin and other tissues, and performance of retraction and instrument usage necessary to assist the primary surgeon.
4. Students must have sufficient intellectual, conceptual, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities to assimilate and integrate historical information, physical findings, diagnostic test results, and other patient-related data to form a diagnostic impression and a therapeutic plan for patients.
5. Students must have the capacity and willingness to develop sound clinical and personal judgment, mature professional relationships, and the ability to tolerate physically and emotionally stressful situations and circumstances. Students must have and maintain a sufficient degree of physical and mental health to provide effective, compassionate, and safe health care and must be able to respond appropriately and effectively in emergency situations.
6. Students must have the capacity and willingness to recognize limitations of their skills, legal authority and authorization, and must be willing to seek appropriate supervision and direction.

7. Students must develop and demonstrate professional and ethical behaviors with respect to faculty, staff, co-workers, preceptors, patients, the families of patients, and other stakeholders in health care training and delivery.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Red Rocks Community College and the PA Program, in compliance with federal law, are committed to an equal educational opportunity by assuring otherwise qualified students with disabilities equal access to programs and activities. An otherwise qualified person with a disability is a student who meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in all PA educational programs and activities. Accommodations will be honored barring any substantial changes to the structure of the program.

Students are strongly encouraged to disclose disabilities at the beginning of their academic experience if such disabilities may require accommodation at any point in the Program. Please see the National Committee for the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) website for accommodations that are allowable for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) <http://www.nccpa.net/SpecialAccommodations?mID=133>.

To ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services at RRCC, students with disabilities must identify themselves and schedule an intake appointment with Accessibility Services (Room 1182, Learning and Resource Center, Lakewood Campus, 303-914-6733 or the Arvada campus, by appointment). Current and comprehensive documentation of the diagnosed disability must be on file prior to approval of the accommodation. If approved and student-requested each semester, an Accommodations Letter will be provided to the student and each course director.

Due to the PA Program course schedule, an accommodation of extended testing time for written assessments may necessitate the student starting earlier or finishing later than students without this accommodation. The accommodation of a distractions-reduced testing area will be provided either in the RRCC Assessment Center or another appropriate space with reduced distractions. Any additional accommodations must be approved by the Accessibility Director and PA Program Director. Lab exams and skills and skills-based assessments, including the skills portion of the Summative Exam, do not qualify for extended time accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to provide any information about accommodations or disabilities to clinical preceptors, as needed. The student is not required to disclose this information, and the Program will only disclose accommodations information as necessary (*A3.07 6th Standards*).

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Each PA student should obtain, at minimum, the following equipment as soon as possible after matriculation into the Program:

- Laptop computer with capability to update to current operating systems and browsers (a Chromebook/iPad is not compatible with RRCC testing platform)

- High-quality stethoscope (e.g. Littman, except Select or Lightweight)
- High-quality oto-ophthalmoscope (e.g. Welch-Allyn. NOT pocket size, PanOptic not necessary)
- Compatible otoscope insufflator
- Reflex hammer
- Tuning fork 512 mHz, 256 mHz
- Penlight
- Tape measure (soft, in centimeters)

Each student must implement universal precautions and use personal protective equipment (gloves, gown, protective eyewear, mask, etc.) as appropriate during clinical contact with patients. Training in universal precautions will be provided during the Program. A student who is uncertain about the proper protocol or use of such equipment should contact the course director for additional instruction prior to any further clinical experience or patient contact. Students should notify the activity advisor immediately if an off-campus service-learning or clinical site appears to have inadequate universal precaution policies, equipment, or protocols (*A3.05a 6th Standards*).

Any student with a known latex allergy or having symptoms consistent with latex allergy should notify the Program immediately. It is advised to avoid any latex product and consult a qualified allergist for evaluation, which will be at the student's expense. Any student found to be latex allergic must determine whether to remain enrolled in the Program, acknowledging the risk of becoming ill even after reasonable precautions are taken and accommodations are made. If the student elects to continue his/her education in the Program, the student must realize that he/she assumes any responsibility and risk posed by the allergy.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS/REFERENCES

The RRCC library and the PA Program provide Access Medicine as the digital media resource. Direct access is available from both RRCC campuses and remotely. In addition to the required texts, the Program recommends these references:

CURRENT Diagnosis and Treatment series* (strongly suggest purchasing hard-copy text)

Fitzpatrick's Color Atlas & Synopsis of Clinical Dermatology*

Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine* or Goldman's Cecil Medicine

Ferri's Clinical Advisor

The Harriet Lane Handbook

Physical Exam of the Spine and Extremities, Hoppenfeld

The Washington Manual of Medical Therapeutics

The Sanford Guide to Antimicrobial Therapy – provided by the PA program

Pocket Pharmacopeia, Epocrates or other medication reference

Dubin's Rapid Interpretation of EKG's

*Available on Access Medicine

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The 27-month schedule of the RRCC PA Program includes 13 months of didactic (classroom) curriculum and 14 months of clinical/capstone curriculum. All PA students are considered full-time throughout the Program and progress synchronously through the curriculum in the sequence set forth

by the PA Program. All courses and requirements must be successfully completed in the prescribed sequence to graduate with the Master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies.

The first fall and spring semesters of the Program closely follow the RRCC academic calendar while the remainder of the didactic curriculum and the clinical curriculum is independent of the RRCC academic calendar and does not observe a traditional holiday/academic break calendar. The days and dates of semester courses and other learning experiences are posted in each individual course syllabus and the PA Program semester master calendar. If the RRCC general college calendar and the PA Program dates differ, the PA dates will take precedence. PA students should expect to be present in academic activities approximately 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday, throughout the Program. Required academic activities, clinical learning experiences, and SCPE days may be scheduled on nights and/or weekends.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be punctual and present for all Program activities. For extenuating circumstances that may necessitate missing or leaving early from Program classes/activities/SCPEs, students should make an individual decision regarding participation and will be required to send an email with the extenuating circumstance and the time/courses to be missed to the advisor for the student file. Students will also need to notify the individual instructors (the Director of Clinical Training for the clinical curriculum). Remote video platform (RVP, e.g. Zoom) *MAY* be available at the instructor's discretion based upon whether: 1) RVP is feasible for the learning activity, 2) there is availability of equipment, 3) RVP is not disruptive to the learning or teaching environment, and/or 4) there is ample notification to the given instructor that doesn't disrupt the class time.

The Program does not excuse absences. Missed work cannot be made-up without a Program-approved leave of absence (LOA) and may be allowed only at the discretion of the course director for partial or full credit.

The Director of Clinical Training, via PAClinicalTeam@rrcc.edu, must be notified of any absence from a SCPE. An absence of more than one day from a SCPE without justifiable cause or Program notification may be considered a violation of Program policy and may result in failure of the SCPE (see the Clinical Manual for more information regarding a LOA during the clinical curriculum).

In case of inclement weather, please observe the policies of the College or Institution. The RRCC campus closure phone line is 303-914-6600. Students should make every effort to be present for academic activities and SCPE. However, it is the policy of the Program that each student must make an individual decision regarding his/her own personal safety.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students may request a LOA from the Program for an extenuating circumstance or one that requires an absence from academic or clinical activities of 5 or more days. The LOA request must be made in writing to the Director of the Student Assessment Committee (SAC) specifying the reason. If approved, the SAC may authorize a LOA of up to one calendar year for extenuating circumstances. Upon return to the Program, the student will resume didactic or clinical training in accordance with the policies, regulations, and requirements in effect at the time the student returns. Based upon the length of the LOA, the student may need to demonstrate ability to meet technical standards and competency of knowledge and skills prior to restarting within the curriculum. Should the student be unable to

demonstrate competency of knowledge and skills, the SAC may recommend deceleration or remediation. Failure to return to an active status within 1 year will be considered a voluntary and permanent withdrawal from the Program. The provisions of the RRCC Student Handbook and semester bulletins in effect at the time of the student's withdrawal will govern any eligibility for tuition refund.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Students must have an RRCC e-mail address throughout enrollment. This will serve as the official method of communication from the Program. The Program will not respond to official Program communication sent from a student's personal email. While on SCPE, students must keep the Clinical Team advised of their current physical address, telephone number, and any other e-mail address. Students should check the RRCC e-mail preferably every day, but at least every other day, and are responsible for knowing the content of all e-mails.

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION

DIVERSITY

The RRCC PA Program values diversity in its students, faculty, and staff. The Program considers diversity in age; geographic location, such as a rural origin; socioeconomic status; gender; gender expression; sexual orientation; race/ethnicity; cultural/spiritual beliefs; previous life experience, such as military experience or foreign residency; and significant life obstacles, such as a first-generation college student or English as a second language when considering building a cohort that provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to develop a broad perspective and appreciation of the differences among all people. The RRCC PA Program has a goal of recruiting one-third of every cohort with any of the above diversity characteristics as identified from the CASPA application to the Program and/or self-disclosure during the interview process. The Program also has a goal of maintaining one-third of the faculty with any of the above diversity characteristics.

EQUITY

The RRCC PA Program defines equity as the creation of opportunities, systems, and structures which remove barriers and close gaps in outcomes for those from disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups to create equal outcomes for all. This means creating an environment of acceptance and discouraging competition among students while providing individualized support that addresses barriers to success. RRCC and the PA Program provide this support through accommodations for students with disabilities, mentoring for students who wish to connect with a practicing provider from their same background, and clinical site matching allowing students the opportunity to work within communities they are from. Additionally, students who are struggling may receive individualized academic or professionalism attention to assist them in achieving the requirements of the Program. The Program will continuously review curriculum that could create an inequitable environment and make adjustments, as needed. The Program has an equity goal of students from disadvantaged/underrepresented backgrounds to be 100% as successful as their peers.

INCLUSION

The RRCC PA Program is dedicated to active, intentional, and ongoing efforts to create a culture of belonging where individuals feel welcome, valued, and supported. The Program curriculum will include content that promotes and encourages self-discovery and self-awareness of bias and

avoidance of bias in the treatment of patients and all people; cultural awareness and competency; empathy for and appreciation of the experiences of others, to include marginalized groups and those who are underinsured, uninsured, and/or unhoused; and empathetic, ethical, and professional treatment of colleagues, patients, and families/caregivers as a leader in the healthcare setting and the community. The RRCC PA Program has a goal of promoting and supporting inclusion through these components along with facilitating an educational environment of inclusivity.

BELONGING

The RRCC PA Program is dedicated to fostering a sense of belonging where all individuals feel welcome, safe, and valued as a member of the Program. Fostering a sense of belonging is a goal of the program that is achieved by creating a non-competitive classroom environment, faculty open-door policy, fostering mentorship opportunities, and connecting students with the RRCC Office for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

The RRCC Office for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging's vision is to "value and respect our inherent differences and endeavor to learn from each other. Our educational programs, services, and activities will reflect this commitment to diversity". The Center's website is <https://www.rrcc.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion-belonging-deib>. RRCC supports diversity through Safe Zone. This denotation in various locations around campus alert students to LGBTQ+ support.

Under no circumstances will discrimination due to gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, race/ethnicity/nationality, or any other legally protected class be tolerated. Should a PA student experience or demonstrate harassment or discrimination, the complaint may be reported to a course director, advisor, the Program Director, Instructional Dean, or Human Resources. See the RRCC Student Handbook for further information [RRCC Student Handbook](#).

PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE/EXAM ATTIRE

PA students should be aware that guest lecturers from the medical community are frequently invited to campus and attire for these lectures should be professional. For on-campus academic activities requiring specific clothing (such as casting lab or anatomy lab), faculty members will specify the appropriate attire. The nature of the PA curriculum is that students will practice examination skills on one another. This exposure will involve all areas of the body with exception of genitalia and female breasts. Students requesting excusal from these activities must contact the course director(s) and Program Director. A request to refrain from examination activities may significantly impact the student's ability to complete the requirements of the Program and may be deemed a voluntary withdraw from the program should the request impact future ability of the student to become a competent PA.

Students should always dress professionally for all off-campus academic activities. RRCC prohibits dress that is generally considered indecent, fails to meet the safety or health standards of specific classes, or that displays indecent or unacceptable language of an offensive nature. Additionally, students are required to wear their school issued ID badge, with PA-Student clearly visible, at all times within the clinic environment. School issued white coats should be kept clean, wrinkle free and be readily available while in the clinic environment should the precepting team request you wear this garment.

All students must dress in a professional manner during all encounters with patients and other medical personnel. Accordingly, all students are expected to maintain the highest standard of

personal grooming and hygiene. The Program understands and appreciates the individuality that students choose to display. However, the medical profession is conservative in nature. Students should carefully consider how hairstyles, hair color, piercings, and/or tattoos may affect perceptions of preceptors, site personnel, potential employers, and patients. It is highly recommended that facial piercings are removed and tattoos are covered.

Students on SCPE should discuss questions about appropriate attire with both the Director of Clinical Training and the preceptor. In the absence of a specific clinical need or preceptor preference, students are advised to dress in clean, neat clothing that is wrinkle-free/pressed. Closed-toe shoes are mandatory with NO sandals allowed. Socks as appropriate.

Students may not wear any of the following items in any clinical setting:

- Denim jeans
- Shorts or shorts-skirt combinations
- Running shoes, sandals, or any open-toe shoes
- Excessive jewelry
- T-shirts, sweatshirts, or leggings as an outer layer of clothing.

For the sake of patients who may have allergies or sensitivities, scented products, perfumes or colognes should be avoided. Males may wear appropriately trimmed facial hair. Students must have an appropriate method to contain long hair, especially during procedures and within the operating room setting. Fingernails should be trimmed short and kept clean.

STUDENT ASSESSEMENT COMMITTEE

The Student Assessment Committee (SAC) consists of all PA Principal faculty. SAC votes will require a quorum of 50% or greater. In determinations such as recommendation for deceleration and/or dismissal, the Program Director will be excluded from voting to serve as the next level investigator. The SAC exists to regularly review the academic and professional progression of students within the Program. The SAC will review and abide by the policies and procedures of this manual with equity and fairness and free from discrimination based upon any legally protected class. The PA Program is invested in and values the success of its students but will remain conscientious of the necessity of competency in patient care (see *Clinical and Professional Competency* section), professionalism, and the ability to protect themselves, as licensed healthcare providers, and the safety of their future patients.

STUDENT ASSESSEMENT AND PROMOTION

PA students are assessed academically and professionally throughout the Program in both formative and summative assessment formats. To graduate from the RRCC PA Program with the MPAS degree, a student must meet all assessments of competency (see *Clinical and Professional Competency* section) that indicate the individual is clinically safe to practice medicine and has the ability to medicolegally function as a professional in the health care team. The SAC reviews student performance regularly. A struggling or low-performing student may be followed more frequently to determine a need for intervention or referral for resources.

COURSE CATEGORIZATION AND GRADING SCHEME

Didactic courses are categorized as Foundational or Integrational (see *Program Curriculum* section).

Course Number	Course	Foundational (F) or Integrational (I)
PAS 6001, 6002	Professional Seminar I,II	F
PAS 6041,6043	Clinical Medicine Lab I, II	I
PAS 6040, 6042	Clinical Medicine I,II	I
PAS 6050, 6051	History and Physical Exam I,II	F
PAS 6018	Psychosocial Dimensions of Primary Care	I
PAS 6014, 6015	Human Anatomy Lecture & Lab I, II	F
PAS 6006	Science Foundations	I
PAS 6047, 6021	Physiology/Pathophysiology I, II	I
PAS 6060	Evidence-based Medicine	F
PAS 6030,6031,6032	Pharmacology I, II, III	F
PAS 6034	Clinical Pharmacotherapeutics	I
PAS 6053	Advanced Practice Seminar	F
PAS 6100	Competencies for Clinical Practice	I
PAS 6105, 6106	Clinical Decision Making I, II	I
PAS 6065	Point-of-Care Ultrasound for PAs	I
PAS 6889	Master's Capstone Project	F

Competencies for Clinical Practice, Clinical Pharmacotherapeutics, Psychosocial Dimensions of Primary Care, and Point-of-Care Ultrasound for PAs

Course grading is as follows:

- A- 100-90%
- B- 89- 80%
- C- Academic Probation
 - a. 79-75% (Integrational Courses)
 - b. 79-78% (Foundational Courses)
- F- Below 75% for Integrational Courses and 78 for Foundational Courses

A C in any course (didactic or clinical) will place a student on academic probation (see *Academic Probation* section).

In its review of an individual PA student's progress, the SAC may consider any or all of the following criteria:

- Academic performance
- Professionalism (see *Codes and Standards of Professional Behaviors* section)
- The students' compliance with the requirements of this manual
- The students' standing with the RRCC Business Office
- The student's disciplinary status with the Program and the institution

After review of each student's progress, the SAC will forward one of the following findings to the Program Director: *satisfactory progress, at risk for failure to progress, failure to progress, or recommendation for dismissal*. The criteria listed below are possible actions that could be taken.

1. *Satisfactory progress*

- The student has passed all courses with a B or higher, skills exams, and/or SCPEs and has met all professional and ethical standards, and therefore, should be promoted to the next sequential semester or SCPE.

2. *At risk for failure to progress* (may include any of the following)

- The committee finds trends in the student's performance that may indicate a risk for failing a course and/or is failing to meet professional or ethical standards.
- Low passing in a course and/or consistent failure of didactic exams/quizzes/assignments
- The student earned a C in a course, placing the student on academic probation.

A determination of *at risk for failure to progress* is meant to officially notify the student of a risk for dismissal or deceleration.

3. *Failure to progress* (may include any of the following)

- The student failed one or more skills-based exams. A PA student who must undergo additional skills-based testing may be suspended from further coursework (didactic or clinical training) until these requirements have been successfully completed.

- The student failed to meet professional and/or ethical standards (see *Violations* Section under *Codes and Standards of Professional Behaviors*)
- The student failed to progress toward clinical competency (see *Clinical and Professional Competency* section) as observed by clinical preceptors and/or Program faculty
- The student failed to achieve a grade of C or higher in one or more courses
- The student failed three end of rotation exams during the clinical curriculum

The Committee may recommend a leave of absence, remediation plan, deceleration, or dismissal for any student who has failed to progress.

4. *Recommendation for dismissal* (may include any of the following)

- The student failed to obtain a grade of C or higher in one or more courses
- The student failed to demonstrate the professional and/or ethical behaviors necessary for safe and competent clinical practice
- The student repeatedly failed a required skills-based practicum
- The student refused to participate in a required activity or rotation
- The student failed to progress toward clinical competency
- The student was placed on academic probation and was unable to achieve higher than a grade of C in the following semester(s)
- The student was unable to pass the Summative exam

Findings other than *satisfactory progress* may immediately halt a student's progress in the curriculum, especially in the case of clinical competency and/or patient safety concerns and will be forwarded to the Program Director. The SAC director will issue an *at-risk of failure to progress* notification in writing. A finding of *failure to progress* or a recommendation for dismissal will require further investigation by the Program Director, which will include an interview with the student. A student who has been recommended for dismissal will not continue forward in the PA curriculum while the student's status is under investigation. The Program Director will determine whether, by clear and convincing evidence, the student has failed to progress and warrants either a LOA, deceleration, or dismissal. If such a determination is made, the Instructional Dean will be consulted, and the student will be notified of the determination.

A student has five business days from the date of notification to appeal in writing to the Instructional Dean. The Instructional Dean will consider patient safety and clinical competency when determining whether the student will be allowed to continue in the curriculum during the appeal process. The Dean shall have the discretion to determine whether further investigation is warranted or whether the matter may be concluded based upon the prior determination. Further appeals, if any, shall be made in accordance with any applicable provisions of the current *Red Rocks Community College Student Handbook*.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Academic probation is a status meant to notify a student of a deficiency that places them at high risk of subsequent higher-level SAC action, including deceleration or dismissal. There are multiple instances, or a combination of instances, in which a student may be placed on academic probation to include, but not limited to:

- A student earning a final grade of *C* in a course will be placed on academic probation for the duration of the following semester. A subsequent course grade of a *C* or lower may result in dismissal from the Program. A student may be removed from academic probation in the following semester by meeting the criteria for satisfactory progress as above.
- A student who has been decelerated will be placed on academic probation throughout the entirety of the Program (see *Deceleration* section)
- A student may be placed on academic probation for repeated or egregious violations of the Codes of Standards of Professional Behaviors that do not fully warrant recommendation for dismissal.

A remediation plan may accompany academic probation as appropriate for the deficit. The duration of the academic probation may be contingent on the magnitude of the student's academic or professional performance, the holistic performance of the student over the entirety of the Program, and/or the student's progress in successfully completing the remediation plan. Failure to demonstrate improvement in academic or professionalism performance places the student at high risk of dismissal.

A student may be removed from academic probation by demonstrating improvement in academic or professionalism performance in the following semester (except decelerated students).

DECELERATION

The Physician Assistant Program does not allow voluntary decelerations. Students may not request or elect to decelerate for personal, professional, academic, or other reasons. A deceleration is only permitted when initiated and approved by the Student Assessment Committee. *[Adopted 10-2025]*

A deceleration allows a student who has failed one or more courses, demonstrates significant concern for failure to progress secondary to low or poor performance, does not demonstrate appropriate competency for the level of training, or who has failed to achieve the professional or ethical standards of the Program to re-start the curriculum with the incoming cohort in anticipation of a higher level of success. The SAC reviews professionalism and academic/clinical performance in other courses as indicators of potential future success when determining whether to allow or recommend a deceleration rather than dismissal. The tuition cost to re-take curriculum is the responsibility of the student, and this financial impact should be considered when determining whether to accept a deceleration. All courses must be re-taken. No previous credit is offered for previously taken courses.

The decelerant will be placed on academic probation throughout the entirety of the Program, provided additional advising, if needed, and expected to make progress throughout the curriculum that is congruent with their new cohort. A determination of *failure to progress* and/or failure to demonstrate competency (see *Clinical and Professional Competency* section) after deceleration may result in dismissal from

the Program.

REMEDIATION

Remediation is a process that assists the student in improving academic performance or professional behaviors and who do not meet content or course competency expectations for program professionalism standards. This policy applies to all students enrolled in the program who do not achieve the minimum passing score on course examinations, assessments, or competency evaluation, or failure to meet professionalism standards or other evaluations as dictated by the curriculum.

Students are required to demonstrate competency by completing course specific remediation requirements outlined in each course syllabus and Program Manual. [Adopted 06-2026]

The Program utilizes a two-stage remediation process designed to provide timely and targeted support while maintaining program standards.

Focused remediation assists students in addressing a specific knowledge gap, skill deficiency, or professional lapse while allowing continued progression in the program. The plan will include, but is not limited to:

- Identification of the deficiency
- Remediation planning targeted to specific topics or skills review
- Timeline for the plan
- Monitoring and documentation

Comprehensive Remediation is a formal plan or process in which a student must correct an academic, clinical, or professional deficit in order to continue within the Program. Should a student earn a C in a course or fail a course, supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE), summative exam, or other requirement of the Program or demonstrate repeated or significant unprofessionalism, the SAC may recommend a remediation plan. This plan will be based upon individual student deficits as determined by an instructor, a preceptor/clinical site, the faculty, and/or the SAC. The plan will include, but is not limited to:

- A definition of the deficiency
- Outline of the plan to remediate the deficiency
- Timeline for the plan
- A measurable expected outcome
- Plan for re-assessment, if applicable
- Expected success in subsequent activities/curriculum, as appropriate

The timeline and progression through remediation will vary depending on the needs of each student. See Remediation Flow Sheet Appendix.

Elements of comprehensive remediation may include a referral to resources such as CPHP, RRCC Behavioral Health, Accessibility Services, a personal health care or behavioral health provider, or other academic and/or professional resources such as tutoring, seminars, coaching, or courses in areas of deficiency. The student is responsible for all costs incurred by remediation.

To provide a student with an optimal opportunity for success, a LOA from continued progress in the curriculum may be recommended or required while a student is completing comprehensive

remediation requirements so as not to place an undue burden on a student while attempting to progress in the curriculum. Formal documentation of the comprehensive remediation is part of the student's permanent record. The SAC may also place a student on academic probation as is appropriate for the degree of the deficit. Unsuccessful completion of the comprehensive remediation plan may result in deceleration or dismissal from the Program. *[Revised 03-2026]*

CODES AND STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

PA Program policies are congruent with institutional rules, regulations, and policies presented to all incoming students as outlined in the *Red Rocks Community College Student Handbook* [RRCC Student Handbook](#). It is the students' responsibility to familiarize themselves with the rules, regulations, and policies of the College and the PA Program.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is an expectation of health care providers as they treat patients in a safe and competent manner, interact with colleagues and the health care team, and hold themselves to the standards of the health care system. Along with medical competency, the demonstration of professional behaviors is imperative to practice medicine as a PA. The RRCC PA Program values the following principles of professionalism:

- Self-reflection
- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Truthfulness
- Reliability
- Responsibility
- Ethical
- Commitment
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Respect
- Humility
- Altruism
- Appropriate presentation and demeanor

PA students should progress towards competency in professionalism throughout the Program by developing a professional identity congruent with that of a PA and of a member of the health care team. These behaviors include:

- Accepting constructive criticism in a positive manner and incorporating feedback for future improvement
- Avoiding offensive speech that offers unkind comments and unfair criticisms of others
- Respecting the rights, individuality, and diversity of students, faculty, staff, and patients, and practicing inclusivity and equity
- Attending all Program activities as a reflection of commitment to learning
- Being punctual and engaged in learning
- Recognizing one's own limitations and seeking assistance as necessary
- Meeting requirements consistently, accurately, timely, and honestly
- Working collaboratively, collegially, and respectfully within a team

- Supporting colleagues with the intent of positive outcomes for all
- Volunteering one's skills and expertise
- Demonstrating adaptability, flexibility, positivity, and maturity in response to changes
- Assuming personal responsibility for decisions and actions
- Meaningfully contributing to the teaching environment
- Participating in Program activities with a positive attitude of learning
- Demonstrating respect for others
- Maintaining patient/provider relationships that do not exploit personal financial gain, privacy, or sexual advantages
- Respecting patient autonomy and informed decision making
- Reporting errors and concerns to appropriate individuals
- Committing to confidentiality
- Demonstrating compassion and empathy
- Avoiding negative interactions that could be handled in an otherwise mature, calm manner
- Communicating in a professional and timely manner with faculty, staff, patients, preceptors and all individuals involved in didactic and clinical year
- Legal, accurate, and truthful documentation
- Practicing timely, efficient, and thorough patient care
- Participating in clinical experiences with gratitude and the intention of maintaining the reputation of the student's own professional identity, the RRCC PA Program, RRCC, and the PA profession (A student whose conduct incites a clinical site or preceptor to decline an ongoing relationship with the RRCC PA Program will be further investigated and forwarded to the SAC for review. This may be considered an egregious offense.)

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

In addition to the above behaviors, PA students should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Arrive to class and return from breaks on time so as to avoid interruptions to the instructor or fellow students
- Use cell phones or digital recorders during class only if specifically allowed by the course instructor and in the manner specified by the instructor.
- Direct all comments and questions to the instructor, not classmates
- Question the course instructor/lecturer appropriately and respectfully
- Questions should be designed to gain further knowledge or clarification of the topic being discussed and should benefit the entire class.
- Questions should not include personal or identifiable information about self or others
- Questions from a student on a particular topic should be limited to one, with possible follow-up only if necessary. If further follow-up to the topic is necessary, it should be conducted outside of the class session.
- Use respectful language at all times during class sessions
- Display attitudes consistent with learning and respect at all times
- Avoid eating during class, unless allowed by the instructor
- Expectations for email:
 - Faculty and staff business hours are Monday-Friday 8am -5pm. Students can expect an email response within 3 BUSINESS days. Please be aware that many faculty also have clinical hours or are less than full-time.
 - All email communication to the Program must be sent through the RRCC student email. If emails are sent through personal email, the Program will be unable to respond.
- In testing situations, leave immediately after finishing the exam and do not re-enter the room until all students are finished

STUDENT CONDUCT IN A CLINICAL SETTING

IDENTIFICATION

PA students must always be clearly identified in the clinical setting to distinguish them from other health professions students and practitioners (*A3.04 6th Standards*).

EXAMINATION OF PATIENTS

PA students may not interview, examine, test, diagnose, treat, or counsel any patient without the consent of the preceptor and the patient or the patient's guardian. An assigned preceptor shall be on the premises of the health care facility where the patient is being seen. Students may not perform an invasive examination or perform an examination of the breasts, rectum, or genitalia of any person without the presence of the preceptor/chaperone and prior informed consent from the patient or the patient's guardian, as appropriate.

SUPERVISION

The preceptor is responsible for the evaluation and treatment of the patients in their care at all times. All PA student activities will be under the direction of a preceptor. Under no circumstances is a student to question preceptor decisions in front of the patient, patient's family, or bystanders. Students must avoid open disagreement with preceptors and other health care workers during SCPEs.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Students should avoid inappropriate familiarity with preceptors, especially in the presence of other members of the health care team, patients, and their families. A collegial or informal relationship between students and preceptors is sometimes encouraged by preceptors and can be an important and enjoyable part of the learning process. However, the use of a physician's first name, inappropriate banter with a preceptor, or other inappropriate familiarity of any type detracts from both the learning environment and the patients' therapeutic environment and should be avoided.

Students should consider addressing patients with their last name and an appropriate pronoun, especially in patients senior to the student.

MEDICATION PRESCRIBING

Students may not possess, use, or distribute sample medications for personal or family use. Students may distribute a sample medication to a patient with authorization of the preceptor. Any prescription written by a student must be cosigned by a preceptor.

PATIENT PRIVACY

PA students have an ethical and legal obligation to safeguard a patients' privacy during encounters under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Appropriate training will be provided to all students. Failure to adhere to the privacy policy or a breach of confidentiality is grounds for disciplinary action, removal from the activity or SCPE, and/or dismissal from the Program. Copies of the HIPAA rules can be obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services website at www.hhs.gov/hipaa.

VIOLATIONS

These guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive of all professionalism expectations. Violations of the Codes and Standards of Professional Behaviors may be reported and documented by faculty, staff, preceptors, site personnel, or other pertinent persons (other RRCC staff, credentialing staff of a clinical site, fellow students, etc.). A student's egregious, repetitive, consistent, or multiple violation(s) will be submitted to the SAC for review and may result in one or more of the following:

- Lowered grade in an activity, course, or SCPE

- Removal from an activity, course, or SCPE
- Failure of an activity, course, or SCPE
- A meeting with the student's advisor to discuss the concerns, which could result in an intervention (see Intervention and Remediation section).
- An official letter from the SAC, to be placed in the student's permanent file, documenting that the student is *At Risk of Failure to Progress* due to professionalism
- Recommendation of dismissal from the Program

A pattern of unprofessionalism will be reflected in the student's summative evaluation at the culmination of the Program. The summative evaluation is the student's permanent record filed with the Program for future recommendation letters, licensing, and credentialing.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE/MACHINE LEARNING

The RRCC PA Program strives to be innovative and curious in our approach to the use of new technology. Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML) can be related but not limited to: text, video, audio, images, and analysis. With our commitment to discovery and translation of new knowledge to improve health, we are responsible for approaching the use of these tools with integrity and professionalism. Any breach of this policy will result in a Student Assessment Committee and professionalism review.

GUIDELINE FOR THE USE OF AI/ML

- Each course syllabus contains the final determination on permissions vs restrictions for the use of AI in that course; if a statement is not included this policy is the guiding principle.
- It is strictly forbidden to enter patient-identifying information or protected health information (PHI) into public AI/ML third party tools.
- Never enter unpublished data, or unpublished manuscripts into AI/ML third party tools.
- Familiarize yourself with the shortcomings of various AI/ML tools such as bias or incorrect information. Critically evaluate any AI/ML generated responses with knowledge from course work and other creditable resources.
- Use of generative AI tools is prohibited for "closed book" exams, quizzes, or assignments where independent knowledge is tested, unless explicit permission is granted by faculty. Students are responsible for verifying with faculty, in advance, whether the use of generative AI tools is permissible for specific assignments. [*Adopted 01-2026*]

SOCIAL MEDIA/INTERNET UTILIZATION

PERSONAL USE AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Social media platforms can provide a positive opportunity for networking, collegial collaboration, and education in a professional manner. PA students should build a professional identity and online persona by reviewing personal posts and photos that could be available to the public on social media. Posts and photos may be visible to employers, preceptors, patients, and colleagues and could impact a student's reputation and potential employment. Because health care providers are held to a higher standard of professionalism even outside the workplace, PA students should consider how they conduct themselves in public and what is posted by them (or of them) online. While students do have the right to free speech and certain choices are legal, a behavior/statement posted online that is

perceived to be unethical, of questionable morals, or politically/philosophically divisive, may have an unintended negative professional impact on the student. Use of social media, even in a personal capacity, must comply with state and federal law concerning patient information, including but not limited to HIPAA.

REPRESENTATION OF THE RRCC PA PROGRAM

Posts or internet presence that includes or represents the RRCC PA Program and/or RRCC must be reviewed and approved prior to publishing or posted to the approved and monitored RRCC PA or RRCC social media sites. A social media ambassador for each cohort will be named, and this individual will maintain social media posts on behalf of the Program in conjunction with PA faculty.

PROPER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA/INTERNET

The Program expects that students maintain professional boundaries on social media and strongly recommends against initiating or accepting social media connections with preceptors.

Public defamation of the Program, faculty, colleagues/classmates, HIPAA violations, or other unprofessional conduct on the internet is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the Program.

Course materials and classroom videos are not to be posted on the internet for public viewing without the instructor's express permission.

Posting a photo allowing a patient to potentially be identified is a HIPAA violation and will be subject to disciplinary action and federal HIPAA rules. Posting an unidentified patient photo, such as in surgery case, may be considered unethical and unprofessional, risking disciplinary action and inciting a lack of patient trust in the health care system. Photos or any posting of donor bodies online is expressly prohibited.

Further information regarding RRCC's social media policy can be found at <https://www.rrcc.edu/marketing-communications>

STUDENT GRIEVANCE

In the event a student has a grievance against another student, faculty, or staff, the student should first attempt to resolve the dispute with that party directly. If unresolved, the student should consider reporting to the appropriate chain of command to include instructor, course director, Program Director, Instructional Dean, and Human Resources/Student Services offices. In the case of an egregious offense, the student may contact Human Resources/Student Services directly. The PA Program adheres to the student grievance policy and procedure of Red Rocks Community College. This may be found in the Student Handbook at [RRCC Student Handbook](#).

STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES

STUDENT HEALTH/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The RRCC Student Health Clinic provides primary care and behavioral health services for current students by appointment. PA students may not be treated for routine health concerns by a clinic provider associated with the PA Program. Faculty or staff associated with the PA Program do not and are not allowed to have access to PA students' health records.

COLORADO PHYSICIAN HEALTH PROGRAM

The Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP) is a nonprofit organization, independent of other medical organizations and the government (www.cphp.org). CPHP provides the peer assistance services for licensed physicians and physician assistants of Colorado. CPHP also has training program contracts to serve physician assistant students. CPHP clients are assured confidentiality as required by law or regulation. Peer assistance services aid individuals who have any problems that would affect one's health such as emotional, psychological, or medical problems. For example, CPHP assists its clients with medical and/or psychiatric conditions (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, HIV infection, depression or substance abuse) as well as psychosocial conditions (e.g. family problems or stress related to work or professional liability difficulties). CPHP provides diagnostic evaluation and treatment referral as well as treatment monitoring and support services. CPHP believes that early intervention and evaluation offer the best opportunity for a successful outcome and preventing the health condition from needlessly interfering with medical practice.

Students who are found or suspected of having emotional, psychological, medical or substance use/abuse issues will be referred to CPHP for further evaluation. Students may also self-refer to CPHP. Following an evaluation, the determination of further ability/safety to progress in the Program will be done on an individual basis by the Program Director. Any student deemed unsafe will be unable to continue Program activities and may require an LOA. An appeal of this decision must be made in writing to the RRCC Vice President of Student Success within 5 days of notification to the student (*A3.07 6th Standards*).

THE IMPAIRED STUDENT POLICY

The Program's Impaired Student Policy is meant as an adjunct to and to be congruent with the Red Rocks Community College policy. Any student who believes that either alcohol, recreational, or illicit drug use is interfering with the academic experience may self-refer to CPHP at any time for a confidential evaluation.

The Program may conduct alcohol and/or drug screens for cause (i.e. upon reasonable suspicion or as may be required by a clinical site). Many clinical sites will require drug screening prior to starting a SCPE and have a *zero-tolerance* policy of alcohol, recreational, or illicit drug use.

A student suspected of being impaired will be informed of the specific observations and may be asked to submit to testing as soon as possible. Testing will be conducted by a qualified laboratory in accordance with applicable law. Refusal to submit to testing, or attempts to alter or tamper with a test, will be treated as a positive result.

A student who is determined to be in violation of this policy, including through a positive substance screen, may:

- Be referred to CPHP
- Be immediately removed from the classroom/activity/clinical site
- Receive a failing grade for the activity/SCPE
- Be decelerated
- Be dismissed from the Program

A student who **has** been arrested or incurs any criminal charges/legal action due to substance use/abuse must notify the Program Director for determination of status in the Program. PA students must be aware that actions such as DUI's or drug charges may impact the student's/graduate's ability to obtain appropriate credentialing or licensing in a particular institution or state or a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) license to prescribe controlled substances. Additionally, it may impact future employment in the field. [*Revised 6-2026*]

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As future PAs who are responsible for the health, well-being, and privacy of patients, students are expected to uphold the highest level of integrity. Academic integrity is the expectation of honest and moral behavior that facilitates learning that is vital to competent patient care and patient outcomes.

Academic integrity is demonstrated when original work is submitted and the work of others is properly acknowledged. A student's original work includes submitting assignments that are the student's own work and completing assessments using only the student's own abilities (or resources only as allowed). Students must always uphold these standards and responsibilities. Please refer to the *Red Rocks Community College Student Handbook* for the College policies on academic integrity. Any breach of academic integrity may result in failure of an assignment to dismissal from the Program, as determined by the SAC and the Program Director. Academic dishonesty is defined as, but is not limited to:

1. Use of or providing unauthorized assistance in completing assignments, taking quizzes, tests, or examinations or the use of or sharing examinations or answer keys
2. Providing unauthorized curriculum content to other cohorts, prospective students, or online
3. Copying from another student or allowing copying in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or completing assignments
4. Plagiarism or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of published or unpublished work, or work of another person, without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes submitting examinations, reports, drawings, patient documentation, laboratory notes, undocumented quotations, or other material as one's own work when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person. It is expected that the student use their own words to perform assignments. When submitting assignments, if phrases or statements are cut and pasted from any other source or document the statement **MUST** be cited with reference to the original material (APA or AMA style).
5. Use of Artificial Intelligence in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or completing assignments unless specifically allowed.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Experience has shown that students are typically not successful in achieving the expected level of knowledge and commitment needed to complete the Program if they engage in outside employment during the PA Program curriculum. Students are strongly advised to refrain from outside employment throughout the entirety of the Program.

PROGRAM-RELATED STUDENT INJURY OR ILLNESS

A currently registered RRCC PA student who becomes ill or injured while on a SCPE may be eligible for workers' compensation coverage. See Clinical Manual for further information.

Students who become ill or injured outside of a clinical rotation but within a Program-related exercise or activity will not be covered by the state workers' compensation coverage and therefore must maintain personal health insurance for the duration of enrollment in the PA Program.

MEDICAL TREATMENT OF STUDENTS

The program director, medical director, and principal faculty must not treat any student as a patient except in an emergency. A PA student who presents to a medical facility in which a principal faculty member is practicing should be seen by another provider if possible. (*A3.06 6th Standards*)

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

Ongoing assessment of the Program is required by the ARC-PA and takes place on a regular basis by the Program faculty to assess: the curriculum; quality of courses and instructors/faculty; student outcomes; administration of the Program; and Program policies. Evaluations include but are not limited to: student opinion of instruction (SOIs); faculty evaluation of courses; preceptor evaluation of student-preparedness; Program annual reports; exam scores/performance, including didactic exams, Physician Assistant Core Knowledge Readiness Test (PACKRAT), End of Rotation (EOR) exams, Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE), Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE); preceptor evaluations; and exit interviews. Multiple sources of evaluation with analysis of data and trends are considered in Program changes.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes for the Program are derived from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistants (ARC-PA) standards, the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) blueprint, the Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession, Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) Core Tasks and Objectives, and the mission of the Program. These learning outcomes should serve as an academic outline for studies.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

All students progress through the PA curriculum as a cohort according to the sequence prescribed by the Program. All courses and academic activities are required. There is no provision for exemption of classes, part-time participation, advanced placement, or transfer of academic credit. Only those students who have been formally accepted by and matriculated into the Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant Program can take courses with the prefix of PAS.

DIDACTIC CURRICULUM

The didactic curriculum begins on campus in August of each year with two consecutive semesters of full-time coursework and academic activities, an 8-week summer block, and a 6-week fall block.

Below is a list of the required courses within the PA Program curriculum and is categorized as

Foundational or Integrational (see *Student Assessment and Promotion* section). Foundational courses are intended to provide essential foundational knowledge from which concepts expand. Integrational courses provide the opportunity to integrate knowledge from various sources and require the student to develop higher levels of learning as demonstrated in the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. The PA Program faculty is continually reviewing and evaluating the overall curriculum, individual course content, and course sequencing. Therefore, course titles, credit hours, and sequencing may be changed without notice.

Course Number	Course	Foundational (F) or Integrational (I)
PAS 6001, 6002	Professional Seminar I, II	F
PAS 6041,6043	Clinical Medicine Lab I, II	I
PAS 6040, 6042	Clinical Medicine I, II	I
PAS 6050, 6051	History and Physical Exam I, II	F
PAS 6018	Psychosocial Dimensions of Primary Care	I
PAS 6014, 6015	Human Anatomy Lecture & Lab I, II	F
PAS 6006	Science Foundations	I
PAS 6047, 6021	Physiology/Pathophysiology I, II	I
PAS 6060	Evidence-based Medicine	F
PAS 6030,6031,6032	Pharmacology I, II, III	F
PAS 6034	Clinical Pharmacotherapeutics	I
PAS 6053	Advanced Practice Seminar	F
PAS 6100	Competencies for Clinical Practice	I
PAS 6105, 6106	Clinical Decision Making I, II	I
PAS 6065	Point-of-Care Ultrasound for PAs	I
PAS 6889	Master's Capstone Project	F

CLINICAL CURRICULUM

Progression from didactic training to clinical training requires evidence that the student is competent to begin the clinical curriculum. Clinical education provides the opportunity to integrate theory and practical skills into the treatment of patients. It allows for observation of expert clinical practice, communication with patients and other members of the health care team, gathering of historical and physical examination data, determination of diagnoses by using clinical decision-making, and development of treatment plans. Clinical preceptors are the primary resource during the clinical curriculum and will reinforce didactic knowledge and technical skills and evaluate student performance. See the Clinical Manual for further information.

MASTER'S PROJECT

The RRCC PA Program Master's project serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience in which students pursue independent research on a question or problem of their choice and, with the guidance of a faculty mentor, produce a substantial paper and academic poster that reflects a deep understanding of the topic. Completion of the Master's capstone project is required to graduate from the Program.

SUMMATIVE EXAM

The Summative Exam is a comprehensive, cumulative exam that evaluates a student's readiness for clinical practice. This consists of a skills portion and a written portion, and each student must pass the Summative Exam to be recommended for graduation from the Program. **Skills Summatives** consists of case-based assessments of the student's ability to evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients along with performing medicolegally acceptable documentation. A student who performs poorly on one or both cases may be required to complete an additional case(s) or undergo a remediation plan to further assess competency. **Written Summatives** consists of a comprehensive exam of medical knowledge. Each component of the summative evaluation must be passed, demonstrating a level of competency congruent with PA students nearing graduation.

CLINICAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

A PA student is expected to progress towards competency, both clinically and professionally, through obtaining, synthesizing, and integrating knowledge and skills over the 27 months of the RRCC PA curriculum. Foundational expectations of competency include an integration of all the following:

1. Demonstration of a depth and breadth of medical knowledge appropriate to deliver safe patient care
2. Ability to obtain an organized history by asking appropriate, patient-centered, individualized questions that lead to the development of an accurate and appropriate assessment and plan
3. Performance of a physical exam that, by using proper technique, allows the student to further develop the assessment and plan
4. Ordering and interpreting labs, imaging, referrals, etc. that consider the individual patient and the risks, benefits, and costs
5. Development of a reasonable differential diagnosis
6. Reaching an appropriate assessment that is reflective of the evaluation of the patient that does not cause harm, neglect, or death
7. Development of a treatment plan that reflects the individual patient's needs and does not cause harm, neglect, or death
8. Performance of clinical skills and technical skills that are appropriate, effective, and within scope of practice
9. Education of patients and their families on wellness, disease, prevention, and treatment plans and ensuring their understanding
10. Documentation that is medicolegally truthful and sound and protects both the patient and the provider
11. Timely performance of a patient visit that is reflective of a new PA graduate and workplace expectations (15-30 minute office visits as a reference)
12. Professional behaviors and skills to include positive rapport, respectful communication, truthfulness, humility, self-reflection, implementation of constructive feedback, recognition of professional boundaries, organization, reliability, and accountability that allow the student to effectively demonstrate self-directed learning and ongoing quality improvement
13. Interpersonal skills to include collegial communication, willing acceptance of constructive feedback, active listening, empathy, self-regulation, self-awareness
14. Collegial collaboration with other members of the health care team that promotes interprofessional communication and positive patient outcomes
15. Practices that protect professional licensure and prevention of disciplinary action

such as prescribing practices and preferences and moral and ethical choices

16. Approaching all patients with an attitude of respect, inclusivity, cultural humility, and empathetic, active listening

A PA student who is deemed unsafe or not competent to practice medicine will not be allowed to graduate from the RRCC PA Program (see *Student Assessment and Promotion* section). [Revised 02-2026]

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

To graduate from the RRCC PA Program, a student must complete the following requirements as found in the Portfolio Contents document provided for each cohort:

- Pass all PAS courses (see *Student Assessment and Promotion* section)
- Satisfactorily complete the Master's Capstone Project
- Complete the Service Learning Requirement
- Present a complete patient log including all Program required populations and settings (see *Patient/ Clinical Time Logging* in Clinical Manual)
- Meet all professionalism expectations (completed by advisor; rubric in Program Final Summative Report)
- Pass Skills and Written portions of the Summative Exam
- Reach Clinical and Professional Competency (see Clinical and Professional Competency section)
- Present the Professional Development Plan document
- Perform a self-assessment analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges

The SAC committee will review overall performance from each of the Summative Exam components along with the student's professional, academic, and clinical performance throughout the Program to determine whether the student has developed sufficient competency to graduate from the Program. Any student who has deficient knowledge and/or lacks the ability to safely treat patients will be given a determination of *failure to progress* (see *Student Assessment and Promotion* section) and may be dismissed from the Program. The Program will not graduate a student who is not competent to safely treat patients. (A3.14b 6th Standards)

NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

Upon successful completion of the Program and Program Director approval, students are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE) offered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Successful completion of the PANCE is required for state licensure and medical practice.

APPENDIX: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT CONTRACT



Physician Assistant Matriculating Student Contract

_____The conduct of the student reflects upon the individual, the clinical site, Red Rocks Community College (RRCC), the RRCC Physician Assistant (PA) Program, and the PA profession. Therefore, I will conduct myself in a **professional, ethical, and inclusive** manner at all times. I will adhere to **all policies** in the RRCC PA Program Manual, the RRCC Student handbook, and any additional policies applying to service-learning and clinical sites. I understand that failure to comply with policies will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the Program.

Technical Standards

The following technical standards have been formally adopted by the Program and apply to all candidates for admission and students throughout their enrollment in the Program:

1. Students must be able to observe lectures, demonstrations, experiments, computer-assisted instruction, and waveform readings and must be able to use vision, hearing, and somatic senses with acceptable ADA accommodation, if needed, to accurately observe patients both near and at a distance.
2. Students must communicate effectively with faculty members, patients, preceptors, and other members of the health care team. Students must be able to communicate accurately and clearly in spoken and written formats and must be able to use speech, hearing, reading, and writing with acceptable ADA accommodation, if needed, to effectively elicit patient histories, record data, and interpret data related to patient care.
3. Students must have sufficient motor and tactile skills to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers with acceptable ADA accommodation, if needed. Students must be physically able to perform standard patient care activities, including but not limited to a complete physical examination (including, but not limited to examination of the genitalia of any gender and muscle strength needed to perform a complete musculoskeletal examination, the suturing of skin and other tissues, and performance of retraction and instrument usage necessary to assist the primary surgeon.)
4. Students must have sufficient intellectual, conceptual, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities to assimilate and integrate historical information, physical findings, diagnostic test results, and other patient-related data to form a diagnostic impression and a therapeutic plan for patients.
5. Students must have the capacity and willingness to develop sound clinical and personal judgment, mature professional relationships, and the ability to tolerate physically and emotionally stressful situations and circumstances. Students must have and maintain a sufficient degree of physical and mental health to provide effective, compassionate, and safe health care and must be able to respond appropriately and effectively in emergency situations.
6. Students must have the capacity and willingness to recognize limitations of their skills, legal authority and authorization, and must be willing to seek appropriate supervision and direction.

7. Students must develop and demonstrate professional, ethical, inclusive, and equitable behaviors with respect to faculty, staff, co-workers, preceptors, patients, the families of patients, and other stakeholders in health care training and delivery.

____ I attest that I meet the **Technical Standards of the Program** (as above)

____ I will uphold the highest level of **academic integrity** and ensure that I am not sharing PA program **curriculum content/cases/quizzes/exams/assignments** with other students, prospective students, or online. I understand that I must abide by the academic integrity policies of the RRCC Student Handbook and the PA Program manual. Dishonesty in any form will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the Program.

____ I understand that I must uphold the tenets of **HIPAA** at all times to protect patient privacy.

____ I authorize the Program to access, store, and transfer to clinical sites as necessary a copy of my **immunizations, TB status, and health statement form** (this does not include personal medical information (PMI) as the PA Program does not retain any student's PMI).

____ I understand and agree that I will be expected to go to any clinical or service-learning site as assigned by the Program and any **refusal** to participate in an assigned Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE, i.e. rotations) will be considered a voluntary withdrawal from the Program.

____ I understand that I will be expected to secure and finance housing for SCPEs (financial aid is available).

____ In connection with my education and clinical training at any healthcare facility associated with RRCC, I understand that a **credit report, consumer credit report and/or investigative consumer report, and collective background check report** on me is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

I understand that these background check reports may include:

1. Credit Report
2. Criminal and civil search such as criminal or driving records
3. Violent sexual offender and predatory registry search
5. Social security number verification
6. Medicare/Medicaid integrity check
7. Specially designated national registry check
8. Positive identification (SS Death Index)
9. Prior employment verifications
10. Education and licensure verifications

These background check reports may also include reasons for termination of past employment from previous employers. Further, I understand that information may be sought from various federal, state and other agencies which maintain records concerning my past activities relating to my educational/school records, driving and credit, criminal, civil and other experiences as well as claims involving me in the files of insurance companies.

I authorize RRCC to provide me with a copy of my background report so that I can hand carry it to any facility that has asked for a copy. I also authorize the Program Director and staff of the PA Program to review and maintain a copy of my report. I have read and understand my rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act. This authorization shall expire at the completion/termination of the Program. A photocopy or fax of this consent and release shall have the same binding effect as an original.

_____I understand that without proper **vaccination**, clinical sites may refuse my attendance in a given facility, therefore potentially making it impossible for me to meet Program requirements for graduation.

_____I understand that the RRCC PA Program cannot ensure that I will be able to gain **certification, state and/or DEA licensure, or employment** as a PA due to special circumstances out of the Program's control (to include, but not limited to, criminal charges/DUI acquired prior to or during the Program, mental or physical health disorders, citizenship status, an inability to meet an employer's technical standards or employment requirements, or other personal circumstances).

As a Physician Assistant student in the RRCC PA Program, I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand, and will comply with the rules, standards, and policies contained in the Program Manual. I understand that signing this agreement and complying with its terms is a requirement for my studies and enrollment in this Program.

Student Signature

Date

Printed Student Name

RRCC PA Program Witness

I authorize the use of photographs, statements, motion pictures, audiotapes, videotapes (CD and DVD) or televising, and Internet of me in any professional publication (including, but not limited to Red Rocks Community College promotional and informational materials, community newspapers, television and/or radio broadcasts, books, brochures, magazines, motion pictures, and Internet). I also agree that I will not be compensated for the use of my photograph or my likeness.

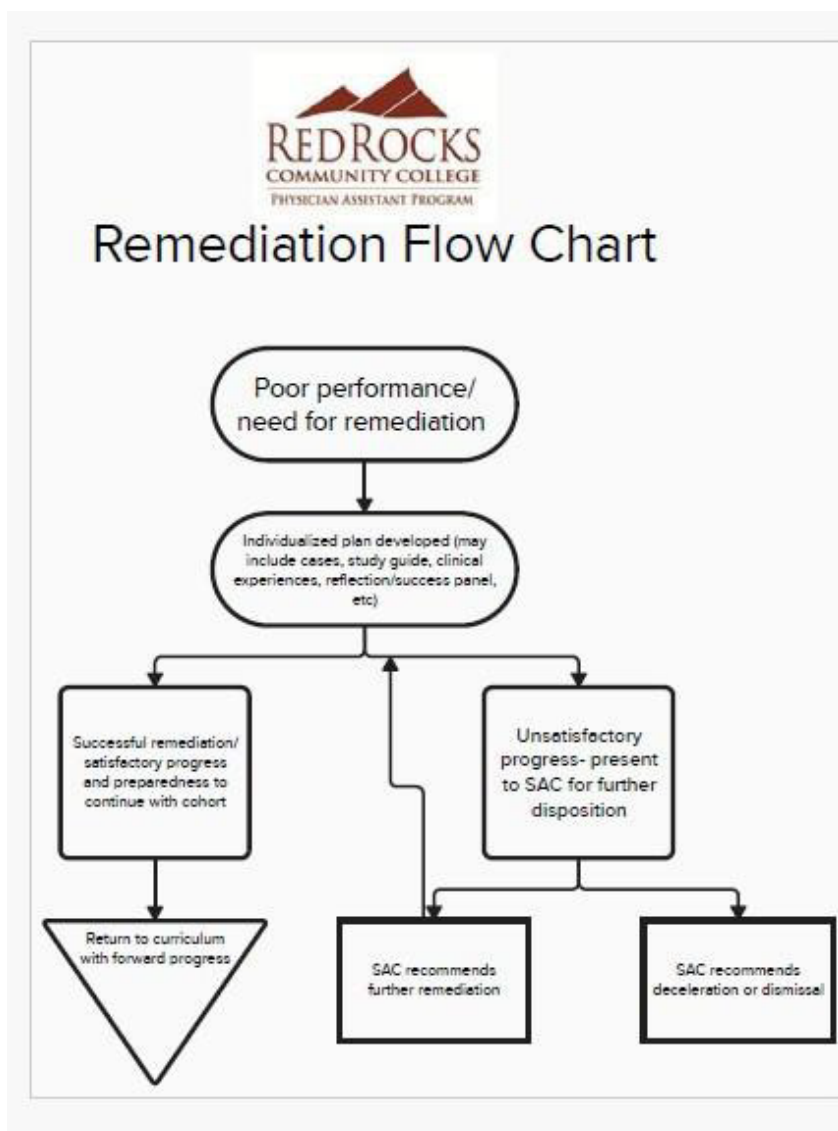
The use of publication of the materials reference above May ____May Not ____contain my name. I hereby release Red Rocks Community College from any liability in connection with the making, publication or use of such materials.

Student Signature

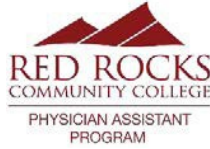
Date

Printed Student Name

APPENDIX: REMEDIATION FLOW CHART



APPENDIX: STUDENT INCIDENT REPORT



Student Incident Report

Student Name: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Type of Incident:

☐ Blood-borne pathogen exposure Source: ☐ Known ☐ Unknown

☐ Infectious exposure: _____

☐ Other work comp. injury/illness: _____

☐ Other injury/illness: _____

Student was instructed to:

- ☐ Seek treatment at appropriate facility
- ☐ Notify Human Resources at 303-914-6570

Faculty Reporting
Incident _____

Date _____

APPENDIX: BBP/ WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSTRUCTIONS



BBP/Workers' Compensation Instructions (A3.05b)

If you are injured during a SCPE or have an exposure to a contaminated or potentially contaminated instrument or other infection, please follow the step-by-step guidelines below:

1. If the injury is a threat to life or limb, **or you are not in the Denver metro area**, notify your preceptor and follow employee exposure protocols. If not available, proceed to the nearest ED.
2. If the injury is an exposure with any potential for blood-borne pathogen exposure, proceed to Concentra Medical Center or Midtown Occupational Medicine immediately. Your injury may be time sensitive.
3. Call or email Trish Arbuckle, Director of Clinical Training 303-914-6036 (trish.arbuckle@rrcc.edu) ASAP to report the injury.
4. Contact Human Resources at 303-914-6570 to file an incident report. This should be done ASAP but no later than 4 days post-injury.

Concentra Medical Centers- multiple locations along the Front Range
(check local listings for the nearest clinic)
After Hours and Weekend #- 303-370-0454

Midtown Occupational Health Services
(Downtown Denver)
2420 West 26th Ave
Denver, CO 80211
303-831-9393

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CLINICAL MANUAL



PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
CLINICAL MANUAL
2025-2026

INTRODUCTION

The Physician Assistant Clinical Manual is a resource to guide PA students and preceptors through the clinical components of the Program. This manual is adjunctive to the PA Program Manual.

CLINICAL CURRICULUM

The clinical curriculum includes supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE), Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) End of Rotation (EOR) exams, clinical assignments, skills assessments, and other EOR activities. The clinical curriculum is intended to facilitate integration of didactic knowledge into competent clinical practice. Each student is expected to demonstrate progressive levels of competency throughout the clinical curriculum, ultimately reaching the competency required to practice as a newly-graduated PA (see *Clinical and Professional Competency* section).

The clinical phase of the Program consists of 12 months of SCPEs which are divided into the following clerkships (4 weeks = 3 credits):

PAS 6700 Patient Care I	6 credits
PAS 6701 Patient Care II	3 credits
PAS 6702 Patient Care III	12 credits
PAS 6703 Patient Care IV	9 credits
PAS 6704 Patient Care V	6 credits

Clinical experiences will be provided in each of the following settings with the following populations to allow PA students to meet the requirements of the Program:

Populations:

- Infants
- Children
- Adolescents
- Adults
- Elderly
- Women seeking prenatal and gynecologic care
- Patients seeking care for pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care
- Patients seeking care for behavioral and mental health conditions

Settings:

- Outpatient
- Inpatient
- Operating room
- Emergency department

The mission of the Program will be fulfilled by placing each student in, at minimum, two frontier, rural, or urban medically-underserved settings. This may be fulfilled in any of the above rotation types and is to be determined by the Director of Clinical Training and the Clinical Coordinator.

STUDENT REGISTRATION

PA students must be registered for classes to participate in SCPEs, without exception. Malpractice insurance and worker's compensation coverage are only extended to current RRCC students, which is defined as *registered* for courses. A student who has any hold on their account must address the hold with Student Records/Business Services/Cashier to register for courses. Any student not registered for courses will not be able to participate in the clinical curriculum. Situations of this nature are reviewed by SAC and may result in the following: risk being placed on a LOA, failure of the SCPE or course, delay of graduation, or dismissal from the Program. Need for completion of any subsequent SCPE courses to meet requirements for graduation will be the financial responsibility of the student.

PATIENT/CLINICAL TIME LOGGING

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all patients seen by the student and the time spent on patient-care activities are logged correctly and truthfully in the patient logging system (EXXAT). This includes, but is not limited to numbers of patients, encounter type, population type, and setting. All patient information must be logged according to HIPAA guidelines with no identifying information.

Logs must reflect sufficient time and numbers of patient encounters across the entirety of the clinical curriculum. The student will be required to present a cumulative portfolio of logged patients to their advisor upon request and to the Program Director at Exit Interviews to graduate from the Program. Failure to log or falsify logs may result in failure of the SCPE, course failure, probation (academic and/or professionalism), delayed graduation, or dismissal from the Program.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT DURING THE CLINICAL CURRICULUM

Clinical and professional competency is evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure a student is safe to encounter patients in a clinical setting and is progressing appropriately for the student's level of training. If the Program determines that a student's competency is of concern, the student may be removed from the clinical curriculum for further evaluation, investigation, or remediation. Each student must be deemed competent in each required setting, with each required population, and holistically as a future health care provider to continue to progress in the clinical curriculum.

Components used in the assessment of students may include, but are not limited to:

- Patient/time logs
- Formal preceptor/site personnel evaluation of the student
- Informal/verbal/written feedback conveyed directly to the Program. (As necessary, feedback may be sought from previous preceptors/site personnel, such as in the case of a late notification of clinical or professionalism performance concerns.)

- EOR exam performance
- Clinical assignments
- Professional behaviors
- EOR participation
- Skills assessments

A failure of one SCPE is likely to lead to no higher than a C in the clinical course based upon the course rubric, which places a student on academic probation (see *Academic Probation* section). Failure to successfully complete the clinical and/or professional requirements of the clinical curriculum may result in any of the following:

- Loss of a SCPE request
- Repeating the SCPE post-graduation
- Remediation, with or without a LOA
- Academic probation
- Dismissal from the Program

The following may be demonstrative of a lack of clinical/professional competency and may result in dismissal from the Program:

- Failing a repeated SCPE
- Failing two SCPEs
- Failure of three EOR exams
- A failure to demonstrate competency in a setting or population

The Program takes any negative communication from a clinical site/preceptor very seriously, as this is not a common occurrence. In the instance a student causes a site/preceptor to discontinue their relationship with the Program or incites a site/preceptor to directly contact the Program with an egregious concern, the student may be removed from the clinical curriculum immediately and presented to the SAC for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from the Program.

PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS IN CLINICAL TRAINING SITES

SELECTION OF PRECEPTORS AND SITES

Clinical training sites and preceptors are selected on the basis of the following factors:

1. The willingness and ability of the individual training site and preceptor to provide a student with supervised clinical experiences leading to demonstrable competencies in accordance with clinical objectives
2. The expertise of the designated preceptor in the subject matter of the SCPE's professional competencies
3. The interest of the designated preceptor in teaching and his/her ability to teach and adequately supervise a student
4. The ability of the training site to provide an adequate number of patient contact experiences in the Program-required populations of pediatrics, women's health, behavioral health, adults, elders, and in outpatient, inpatient, operating room, and emergency department settings with

preceptors in family medicine, internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, and women's health or an appropriately-approved elective in a specialty area of medicine.

5. The ability of the training site to provide both physical space for the student to interview and examine patients and appropriate universal precautions equipment for the protection of the student and the patient
6. An understanding of the PA role
7. An understanding that the student should not be used as replacement personnel for other health care providers in the clinical setting. ARC-PA standards do not permit students to perform duties which might otherwise be performed by regular staff members unless those duties are reasonably part of the educational process and the student has been appropriately oriented and can be supervised
8. The absence of relevant adverse regulatory agency action against the training site or preceptor
9. The ability to have a fully executed affiliation agreement between both RRCC and the clinical site

STUDENT PLACEMENT

In alignment with the mission of the Program, students will be placed in at least two rural/underserved SCPEs. Students will be placed in clinical sites throughout the state of Colorado and other states where the Program has qualified preceptor availability. All travel costs are the responsibility of the student.

The Director of Clinical Training is not required to consider the personal circumstances of a student in making assignments to clinical sites. Students who decline to proceed to an assigned clinical site will be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn from the Program. Students may request an LOA from the Student Assessment Committee (SAC) for a medical or mental health need during the clinical curriculum. (see Leave of Absence section in this manual)

SCPE placement is contingent upon a completed affiliation agreement, student status in the Program, Program approval, and site requirements. Student suggestions and requests for a specific preceptor or clinical site are welcome and may be considered but are not guaranteed. Clinical training sites are formally arranged by the Program. Students are not required to contact preceptors or their office staff to arrange a SCPE (*A3.08 6th Standards*). Students may not attend a SCPE or work with a preceptor until that site/preceptor has been approved by the Director of Clinical Training. It is acceptable for a student to work with the clinician partners or associates of the designated preceptor in a group practice if the preceptor has accepted primary responsibility. It is unacceptable for a student to be supervised by persons who have not been approved in advance by the Program.

REMOVAL FROM A SCPE

A student may be removed from a SCPE at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Training, the SAC, and/or the Program Director. Reasons that a student may be removed from a SCPE include, but are not limited to:

- Failure of two EOR exams
- Competency concerns, especially if a student is to be placed in a site in which competency is of considerable concern (e.g. a surgical setting)
- Professionalism concerns
- Need for remediation of knowledge, skills, and/or professionalism

- Safety/Quality/Affiliation Agreement concerns or barriers

Outstanding SCPE requirements must be completed and may result in a delay of graduation. Program removal from a SCPE may involve a mandatory LOA, delay of graduation, and/or recommendation of dismissal from the Program.

There are rare circumstances in which a student may be justified in requesting removal from a SCPE or reassignment to a different clinical site. A student who believes they are unable to meet the requirements of an assigned SCPE must notify the clinical team within 3 days of the commencement of the SCPE. The Director of Clinical Training will investigate the circumstances and will either reassign the student, arrange for reasonable accommodation of the student within the SCPE, or deny the student's request for removal and reassignment. The student who still believes they will be unable to meet the requirements of the rotation may appeal to the Program Director. The decision of the Program Director is final.

A student who believes they have been the victim of alleged physical abuse, emotional abuse, or sexual harassment must professionally remove themselves from the threat, notify the clinical team, and their advisor immediately. The Director of Clinical Training will investigate the circumstances and will either reassign the student or deny the student's request. If denied, the student may appeal to the Program Director. The decision of the Program Director is final.

DRUG SCREENING

Health care facilities may require drug screenings prior to placement or perform a random drug screen during placement. A student with positive findings will be referred immediately to CPHP for evaluation and may be at risk for a mandatory LOA due to delay or denial of a SCPE. Depending on the situation the following may occur per SAC recommendation: failure of the SCPE/course, deceleration, or dismissal from the Program (see *The Impaired Student Policy* section).

Prior to the start of clinical curriculum, to avoid the risk of delay or denial of a SCPE, students who may test positive on a drug screen due to prescription medications or other medical conditions must notify the Clinical Team no later than February of the spring didactic semester. The student is not required to disclose any diagnoses or medications, only that there is a need to be seen at CPHP. This early notification should allow adequate time for CPHP to perform a full evaluation and provide clearance to participate in the clinical curriculum. The CPHP team seeks to validate the appropriateness of medication(s), other adjunctive medication or substance use, behavioral health concerns, or other evaluation as needed to deem the student, as a future health care provider and prescriber, safe to provide appropriate self-care and patient care. The cost to the CPHP clinical year clearance process, including associated drug screen, is the responsibility of the student and is likely to be less than \$100 unless extenuating circumstances require additional screening, evaluation, or treatment.

THE ROLE OF THE PRECEPTOR

The clinical preceptor facilitates a student's transition from the classroom to a patient care setting through teaching, mentoring, and providing constructive feedback. In the clinical setting, the preceptor must be a physician, PA, nurse practitioner, or other licensed health care provider experienced in their area of instruction. The clinical preceptor serves as a student advocate and role model for professional practice. The preceptor should have strong clinical skills, teaching ability, working knowledge of the scope of practice, and demonstrate professionalism.

The preceptor should facilitate progress toward clinical and professional competency by:

- Providing modeling, feedback, coaching, and mentoring of the student's history-taking and physical exam skills and communication with patients and the medical team
- Encouraging the progressive development of patient-centered, individualized differential diagnoses, assessments, and plans
- Teaching and coaching technical skills
- Providing insight into the critical thinking of a provider and facilitating the student's development of this skill
- Modeling and reinforcing appropriate professional behavior/actions and correcting inappropriate behavior/actions in a timely manner
- Assessing student performance
- Supporting the student in the learning process with compassion and patience

The Program's instructional objectives and learning outcomes for clinical experiences are posted in each clinical course syllabus. Students are responsible for sharing syllabi with their preceptor and designing a plan for achieving as many of these objectives as possible under the guidance of the preceptor and the clinical team. The student must demonstrate intellectual curiosity and take initiative to improve their ability to gain exposure to certain patients or skills.

The Director of Clinical Training is responsible for ensuring that student objectives are clear to both students and preceptors, monitoring student progress, and troubleshooting during the SCPE.

CLINICAL SCHEDULES AND ABSENCES

SCPE days and work hours are governed by the schedule of the training site or preceptor. Students are anticipated to receive, on average, a minimum of 36 hours of clinical exposure during each week of the SCPE. Students are not to work more than an average of 70 hours per week during the entirety of the SCPE. Students must notify the Clinical Team and their advisor ASAP if anticipated hours fall outside these expectations.

Students should be present during each required day of the SCPE. In the event of a preceptor illness or absence, arrangements should be made to work with another preceptor within the facility or make up for the time missed. The Director of Clinical Training must be contacted if alternative arrangements cannot be made.

Students may request an LOA from the Program for exceptional circumstances. The request must be made in writing to the Chair of the SAC specifying the reason. The SAC may authorize a leave of up to one calendar year. Upon return to the Program, the student may be required to pass a skills and/or written assessment prior to clinical placement and will be governed by policies, regulations and requirements in effect at the time the student returns. Failure to return to an active status within one year will be considered a voluntary and permanent withdrawal from the Program. The provisions of the Red Rocks Community College Student Handbook and semester bulletins in effect at the time of the student's withdrawal will govern any eligibility for tuition refund.

A rare circumstance may make it necessary for a student to be absent from or leave early from a clinical site. The Clinical Team and student's advisor must be notified in advance unless the circumstance is emergent and advance notification is impossible. An absence from an assigned SCPE without justifiable cause or Program notification may be considered a serious violation of Program policy and may result in failing the SCPE. *[Revised 02-2026]*

In case of inclement weather, please observe the policies of the College or Institution and the clinical site. Students should make every effort to be present for all academic activities and SCPE days. However, it is the policy of the Program that each student must make an individual decision regarding personal safety. The Program must be notified in a timely manner in the event of any absence. The program recommends allowing 8 hours of driving time per day. Please plan appropriately for any inclement weather.

CLINICAL CURRICULUM PERSONAL DAYS

Students are permitted up to 5 total personal days and/or unexpected sick days with the following stipulations. Absences longer than 5 days will necessitate an LOA:

- Must be in good standing in the program (not on academic or professionalism probation, excluding probation due to deceleration)
- These days **do not** apply to on campus or EOR related activities (including remote), no exceptions (see the primary Program Manual for details).
- Must communicate via email with faculty advisor and copy the Director of Clinical Training and PAClinicalTeam@rrcc.edu
- Must log the hours and provide a description in Exxat "My Leave", in addition to emailing as noted above.
- Communication with the precepting team is the responsibility of the student. If the team is not agreeable to the timeframe, the student must abide and defer leave to a more appropriate timeframe.
- When applicable the student must also communicate with the AHEC coordinator and housing host to prevent unnecessary concern regarding wellbeing if the student does not arrive to the home as expected.
- The Clinical Team and the Program are not responsible for outcomes such as lower performance evaluation score/course grades that result from a student's lack of or poor/unprofessional communication with their host team regarding personal day(s) usage.
- Personal days anticipated in excess of 3 necessitate following the formal LOA pathway noted in this manual.
- Should use of personal days and/or unexpected sick days result in lower than acceptable hours or patient encounters to meet graduation requirements, the student is subject to making up patient contact hours at their own expense (if applicable) during Exit Interview week or post-graduation per review and recommendations of SAC.
- Faculty advisors and students are ultimately responsible for tracking use of these personal days; written records need to be kept by all.

Success Tips:

- Many teams/preceptors may not be accustomed to healthcare students having personal days, communicate this early in each rotation to avoid surprise and/or confusion, if needed seek assistance from Clinical Team to provide verification of *approved* leave on your behalf.
- Exercise sound judgment on appropriateness of taking a day(s) based on the impacted clinical rotation schedule, "style" of the preceptor/host team and any other factors that may risk a student's overall assessment by their host team.
- It is highly encouraged that students assess their individual situation and the personalities they will encounter when seeking time off from their precepting team. For example, surgeons/surgical teams may not favorably respond to requested days off, especially OR days.
- Seeking time off early in a rotation is discouraged, get to know your host team first.
- Advanced planning is highly suggested when possible.

Personal days may be used for special life events, service appointments (such as car maintenance,

DMV, etc), routine medical appointments, trips etc. Personal days are not required to be used for illness, although if a student requires an excess number of illness days, the SAC reserves the right to request official documentation of illness, review the student's status, and/or require the use of personal days, if not already utilized.

Policy details are subject to revision by the Program at any time. Students will be updated about any changes via email and a D2L announcement.

HOUSING FOR NON-LOCAL ROTATIONS

The Program is able to provide housing for many SCPEs through partnerships with Colorado Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). However, to avoid significant tuition increases, students will be responsible for securing and financing housing for SCPEs (class of 2027). Financial aid is available on a case-by-case basis for housing and transportation during SCPEs.

AHEC may be able to secure and provide housing for many SCPEs within the state of Colorado and outside of a 50-mile radius of the RRCC Arvada campus. Accommodations are first-come, first-serve, may vary from location to location, and are provided strictly for the student only (no guests or pets). It is the responsibility of each student to register and request housing 6-8 weeks in advance. Likewise, it is the responsibility of each student to notify AHEC in the event of the cancellation of a rotation that would negate the need for housing. Failure to secure housing will result in the student having full responsibility for locating and paying for housing. A student's failure to cancel housing will be the financial responsibility of the student. Housing needs greater than 45 nights per rotation must have prior approval from the Director of Clinical Training or Clinical Coordinator.

The policies of AHEC are non-negotiable. A student who fails to abide by AHEC policies is subject to disciplinary action upon review by SAC, which may range from a lower or failing grade in the SCPE/course to dismissal from the Program.

It is possible that AHEC may not be able to secure or provide housing that accommodates a student's personal allergies or health conditions. In this case, the student will be responsible for locating their own housing at their own expense. Additionally, should a student have personal preferences that are not within AHEC's standard accommodations, a student may decline the use of AHEC, and secure their own housing at their own expense.

Housing for a student-requested SCPE may be available but is not the responsibility of the Program. Once a student-requested SCPE is confirmed, the student is expected to secure housing and is unable to rescind the SCPE request due to housing barriers.

MALPRACTICE/WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

All students are fully covered through the State of Colorado's malpractice insurance policy while enrolled as a student of the RRCC PA Program and completing formal SCPE placements. A copy of the policy is provided to each preceptor and rotation site before the student's arrival. Students are also covered by the College's State of Colorado Workers' Compensation insurance for injury or illness arising out of any rotation activity. Any personal volunteer activities such as completion of community service hours as part of student portfolios is not covered by the RRCC insurance noted

above. Students participating in this type of voluntary activity are to refrain from representing themselves as RRCC PA students completing official school sanctioned requirements (A3.05c 6th Standards).

CLINICAL SITE ASSESSMENTS/VISITS

Assessment of clinical sites is an ongoing process of the Program and is used to evaluate sites, preceptors, and/or students. Long-standing, well-known sites/preceptors who have been previously vetted and approved to provide clinical experiences for students will be periodically assessed on an as-needed basis based upon review of student feedback and patient logs. New sites will be assessed via in-person visit, virtual video visit, phone, or email that reviews the adequacy of the site to provide physical space, adequate patient visits in both quality and quantity, and support of preceptors and staff. Sites are then monitored and periodically assessed as needed. Clinical site and preceptor feedback will be analyzed for ongoing adequacy based upon trends among students and cohorts unless concerning feedback triggers further immediate assessment and intervention as necessary.

INTERNATIONAL SCPEs

International rotations (IR) are elective in nature and will not meet the population and setting requirements for graduation from the Program. To be considered for approval, the student must schedule a meeting with the Program Director and Director of Clinical Training to propose the IR. The student must submit a fully completed SCPE request form, International Rotation Proposal Form, and the International Rotation Student Contract (provided by Program Director/Director of Clinical Training). Other RRCC forms and releases will be provided to the student as indicated. Students must be aware that the process for gathering required information from the site and preceptor along with completion of the Affiliation Agreement likely will take no less than 9 months.

In order to promote the safety and security of students participating in IR, the Program will follow current CDC guidelines for international travel and check the following website at least 1 week in advance of the rotation: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>. At any time, if the Program believes the student may be at risk, the rotation will be cancelled (A3.09b 6th Standards). The Program strongly encourages the student to have health insurance coverage for the country to be visited along with evacuation insurance in the event that conditions change and the student needs immediate removal. The cost of an international rotation, rotation cancellation, or postponement will be the sole responsibility of the student. This includes but is not limited to airline tickets, health insurance, evacuation insurance, room and board, etc. Travel insurance is highly recommended. Late cancellation due to unforeseen circumstances may result in delay of SCPE completion pending availability of a new host team. Lost clinical time must be made up to meet graduation requirements and may result in graduation delay.

Upon return, the student is encouraged to present during end of rotation (EOR) activities to enhance understanding of cultural beliefs pertaining to medicine and medical systems in other countries.

Non-program associated medical mission trips may be approved as a LOA by the SAC, which will allow the student time away from the clinical curriculum while not serving as a RRCC PA student. The LOA must be made up in additional SCPE time, which may delay graduation.

END-OF-ROTATION ACTIVITIES

End of rotation (EOR) activities will consist of completion of paperwork for upcoming SCPEs, advising, assessments, and additional educational content. Students must attend all EOR activities. If circumstances dictate that an EOR activity is missed, the Director of Clinical Training and student's advisor must be contacted timely. Absences may result in loss of points, failure of one or more courses, or dismissal from the Program. In the event of an approved LOA from EOR activities, other EOR assignments/activities may be scheduled at the discretion of the Program.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that preceptor evaluations are completed by the preceptor of record and submitted by the end of students' last shift. The Clinical Team preference is for electronic submittal via EXXAT, but paper is acceptable. The Program must have records of all preceptor evaluations in each student file.

APPENDIX: RRCC PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT CLERKSHIP PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

RRCC Physician Assistant Student Performance Evaluation

Student Name:

Preceptor Name:

Rotation Dates:

Evaluation
Timeframe:

☐ Mid-Rotation

☐ Final

I. Professional Standards

<u>Professional Behaviors</u>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Intervention Suggested</i>
Positive Rapport	☐	☐	☐
Respectful Communication	☐	☐	☐
Truthfulness	☐	☐	☐
Humility	☐	☐	☐
Self- Reflection	☐	☐	☐
Intellectual curiosity	☐	☐	☐
Implementation of Constructive Feedback	☐	☐	☐
Recognition of Professional Boundaries	☐	☐	☐
Organization	☐	☐	☐
Reliability	☐	☐	☐
Accountability	☐	☐	☐

Interpersonal Skills

Collegial Communication	☐	☐	☐
Willing Acceptance of Constructive Feedback	☐	☐	☐
Active Listening	☐	☐	☐

Empathy	☐	☐	☐
Self- Regulation	☐	☐	☐
Self-Awareness	☐	☐	☐

Number of days absent from rotation:

Was student's communication regarding absence professional and appropriate? ☐YES ☐NO
☐N/A

II. Clinical Skills/Learning Outcomes

Assess clinical skills at the level of a NEWLY GRADUATED, primary care physician assistant.

I/O = Insufficient Opportunity to Assess

Rank on a scale of 0 to 4:

0 = unsafe practice/significant concerns for patient safety and/or ability to improve by Nov graduation

1= deficient compared to peers with similar level training, concern for lack of progression to date and inability to improve by the end of this rotation despite feedback attempts

2 = deficient compared to peers with similar level training, demonstrating positive progression, continued improvement likely

3 = developing appropriately for current level of training and in consideration of *your* practice specialty

4 = competent, ready to be hired with adequate new graduate oversight

-
- 1) Correlates the underlying basic science principles (pathophysiology, anatomy, biochemistry, genetics, etc.) to a given disease process 0 1 2 3 4 I/O
 - 2) Performs and documents an organized, individualized complete or focused medical history 0 1 2 3 4 I/O
 - 3) Using proper technique, performs and documents an organized, individualized complete or focused physical exam 0 1 2 3 4 I/O
 - 4) Correlates abnormal physical examination findings to a given disease process 0 1 2 3 4 I/O
 - 5) Generates a reasonable differential diagnosis 0 1 2 3 4 I/O
 - 6) Identifies conditions that constitute a medical emergency 0 1 2 3 4 I/O

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1) Identifies indications for hospital admission | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 2) Identifies indications for referral to a specialist | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 3) Generates and delivers a patient education plan | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 4) Develops and documents a treatment plan/discharge plan | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 5) Selects appropriate clinical therapeutics and calculates accurate dosages | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 6) Prepares a written or electronic prescription which is appropriate, legal, and without error | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 7) Explains and obtains informed consent, as appropriate | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 8) Uses universal precautions | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 9) Orders necessary laboratory tests/diagnostic imaging studies | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 10) Interprets laboratory tests/diagnostic imaging studies | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 11) Documents procedure, admission, and discharge notes, as appropriate | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |
| 12) Demonstrates responsible stewardship of resources (examples include respect of personnel/patient time, judicious use of supplies, prudent use of labs/studies/referrals) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I/O |

How well was the student prepared for this rotation? 0 1 2 3 4 5
(0 extremely ill prepared ☐ exceptionally prepared)

How likely are you to recommend this student as a future colleague on your team?
(0 concerns noted ☐ 5 would hire them today) 0 1 2 3 4 5

I would like someone from the program to contact me to further discuss this student. ☐ YES
☐ NO

III. Comments:

Signature of Preceptor

Date

Names/title/role of *others* contributing to this evaluation:

Preceptor licensure attestation (verify license state/number, expiration date and status). *If not in good standing, please outreach the Clinical Team via email and provide details instead of indicating such on this form.*

If you have not yet submitted your CV to our program, please send via email to PAClinicalTeam@RRCC.edu, we accept your most recent version without need to edit for this purpose

License State/Number

Expiration Date

Status

Board Certification(s) If Applicable:

Provider Signature