



**RED ROCKS**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM**

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM MANUAL  
2020-2021**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Physician Assistant Program Manual is a resource to guide Physician Assistant (PA) students and preceptors through the didactic and clinical components of the Program. This manual contains specific policies and procedures pertinent to the Program. In addition to the policies and procedures of the Red Rocks Community College Student Handbook, the nature of Physician Assistant education requires that PA students are governed by 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 located in the appendix to be filed in each student's official record.

The RRCC PA program is committed to the education of its students but is also committed to ensuring that its graduates are both medically and professionally competent to practice in the health care system and provide safe care to patients.

## PROGRAM MISSION, VALUES AND GOALS

### Mission

The mission of the RRCC PA program is to prepare physician assistants to practice and promote empathetic, primary care-focused medicine that serves the community.

### 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. Instill and expect professionalism

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

- a. Content and advising designed to teach, monitor, and promote professionalism
- b. Produce graduates with professionalism appropriate for the workplace

3. Deliver a primary care- focused 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. Providing clinical experiences in primary care to include family medicine, pediatrics, women's 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. Provide PAs for the healthcare workforce

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

- a. 100% of graduates entering the PA workforce within 6 months of passing the PANCE

## **MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS**

Upon matriculation to the Program, student health and immunization record, verification of health insurance, and verification of current basic life support (BLS) certification must be submitted to the Program on the first day of orientation (see below). Acceptable BLS certification must be based on guidelines from the American Red Cross or American Heart Association.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE, IMMUNIZATIONS, AND HEALTH STATUS INSURANCE**

It is the responsibility and the requirement of all PA students to present proof of health care coverage at orientation and maintain this until graduation.

### **HEALTH STATUS & IMMUNIZATIONS**

The Program follows CDC guidelines for healthcare workers. Written proof of immunization is required for all PA students and must be presented to the PA Program at orientation and maintained until graduation. A student who declines vaccinations is at risk of being unable to be placed in a clinical learning experience (CLE) or supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) based upon site requirements. The inability to complete Program-required activities may result in dismissal from the Program.

### **DRUG SCREENING**

The Program may conduct drug screens for cause. A student with positive findings will be referred immediately to the Colorado Physician Health Program for evaluation and may be at risk for deceleration or dismissal from the PA Program. Although recreational marijuana use is legal in Colorado, there is a *no tolerance* policy for the majority of health care facilities in the state. See THE IMPAIRED STUDENT POLICY.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

A background investigation will be performed on all students accepted into the Program. Supervised clinical practice experience (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 a concern that would appear on his/her background check should disclose this information during the background check application process.

Each accepted applicant must release the background investigation results to both Red Rocks Community College 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 Red Rocks 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

## **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 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 the suturing of skin and other tissues, the performance of lumbar punctures, and performance of retraction and instrument usage necessary to assist the primary surgeon during surgical operations.

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 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 SERVICES**

Red Rocks Community College, in compliance with federal law, is committed to equal educational opportunity by assuring otherwise qualified students with disabilities equal access to RRCC 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 educational programs and activities.

Students are strongly encouraged to self-disclose disabilities at the beginning of their academic experience. The National Committee for the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) will only allow accommodations for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) if they have been in place throughout the student's PA education. Please see the NCCPA website for further information about special accommodations at <http://www.nccpa.net/SpecialAccommodations?mID=133>.

To ensure the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations and services at Red Rocks, students with disabilities must identify themselves in a timely manner to 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 with the office prior to approval of the accommodation. An Accommodation letter will be provided, if deemed appropriate, following the intake with Accessibility Services. The Program will provide accommodations upon presentation of an Accommodation letter to the Program Director. The student with accommodations will be required to schedule an appointment with Accessibility Services once per didactic semester.

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 not routinely provide this to preceptors or sites.



## REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

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

1. High-quality stethoscope (e.g. Littman except Select or Lightweight)
2. High-quality oto-ophthalmoscope (e.g. Welch-Allyn. NOT pocket size, PanOptic not necessary)
3. Compatible otoscope insufflator
4. Reflex hammer
5. Tuning fork 512 mHz, 256 mHz
6. Penlight
7. 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 activity coordinator 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.

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 at the student's expense. Any student found to be latex allergic must determine whether to remain 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 digital media resources Access Medicine. Direct access is available from both RRCC campuses. In addition to the required texts, the Program recommends these references:

CURRENT Diagnosis and Treatment series\*  
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 M.D.  
The Washington Manual of Medical Therapeutics  
The Sanford Guide to Antimicrobial Therapy  
Tarascon Pocket Pharmacopeia, Epocrates or other medication reference  
Dubin's Rapid Interpretation of EKG's

\*Available on Access Medicine

## **PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

The dates of semester courses and other learning experiences are posted in each individual course syllabus. 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 also be scheduled on nights and/or weekends. In general, the didactic curriculum follows more closely with the RRCC academic calendar while the clinical curriculum is independent of the RRCC academic calendar.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to be punctual and present for all Program activities.

The Program does not excuse absences. When considering an absence, the student should make an individual decision regarding his/her participation in Program activities. 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. Students may request an 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 an LOA of up to one calendar year. 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 competency of knowledge and skills prior to restarting within the curriculum. 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 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.

The Director of Clinical Training 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 Clinical Manual for more information regarding an 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.

## **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 Coordinator 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**

The PA Program strongly values diversity and inclusion, especially as a program of health care providers who must treat patients ethically, with equity, and without discrimination. In compliance with the mission and objectives of the College, PA students will be expected to treat peers, faculty, staff, and all other individuals with respect. As future health care providers, PA students must always strive for awareness and sensitivity of diversity in gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, and race/ethnicity/nationality.

The RRCC Center for Inclusion and Diversity'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 <http://www.rrcc.edu/diversity/contact>. RRCC supports diversity through Safe Zone. This denotation in various locations around campus alert students to LGBT support. The PA Program facilitates discussions designed to increase PA students' awareness of the preferences, needs, and beliefs of others.

Under no circumstances will discrimination due to gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, or race/ethnicity/nationality be tolerated. Should a PA student experience or demonstrate harassment or discrimination, the complaint should be reported to Human Resources. See the RRCC Student Handbook for further information <http://www.rrcc.edu/sites/default/files/StudentLifeStudentHandbook.pdf>.

## **PROFESSIONAL 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. 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.

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. Hair styles must not be extreme. There should be no visible body piercing other than small ear rings. Facial piercings, including tongue piercings, should be removed. Tattoos should be 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. Fingernails should be trimmed short.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND PROMOTION

Students enrolled in the Red Rocks Physician Assistant Program must successfully complete all requirements to be awarded the degree from Red Rocks Community College. Didactic courses require a *B* or higher to pass and clinical courses require a *C* or higher to pass. See each course syllabus for specific grading mode and requirements.

The Student Assessment Committee (SAC) meets regularly to evaluate the performance and progress of each individual student.

In its review of an individual PA student's progress, the SAC will consider the following criteria:

1. The grades earned by the student in each academic activity
2. Reports from assigned academic advisors and other appropriate persons regarding the professional behaviors and academic, clinical, ethical and social performance of the student
3. The student's compliance with the requirements of this manual
4. The student's standing with the Red Rocks Community College Business Office
5. The student's disciplinary status with the Program and the institution

After review of each PA 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 didactic courses, skills exams, and SCPEs and has met all professional and ethical standards and should be promoted to the next semester or SCPE.

### 2. *At risk for failure to progress*

- The committee finds trends in the student's performance that may indicate he/she is at risk for failing a course and/or is failing to meet professional or ethical standards.

- The student has earned a *C* grade in a clinical course, placing the student on academic probation.

A determination of *at risk for failure to progress* is meant to officially notify the student that he/she may be at risk for dismissal or deceleration.

### 3. *Failure to progress*

- The student has 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 has failed to meet professional and/or ethical standards.
- The student has failed to progress toward clinical competency as observed by clinical preceptors and/or Program faculty.
- The student has failed to achieve the grade of *B* or higher in one or more didactic courses.
- The student has failed more than three end of rotation exams during the clinical curriculum.

The Committee may recommend a leave of absence for any student who has failed to progress. The committee may suggest a remediation plan to prepare the student for repeating the course(s) or SCPE.

### 4. *Recommendation for dismissal*

- The student has failed to obtain a grade of *B* or higher in one or more didactic courses.
- The student has failed to demonstrate the professional and/or ethical behaviors necessary for safe and competent clinical practice as a PA. Such a recommendation requires a specific explanation of the reasons for the finding.
- The student has repeatedly failed a required skills-based practicum.
- The student has refused to participate in a required activity or rotation.
- The student has 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).

Findings other than satisfactory progress 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 faculty and/or Program Director which will include an interview with the student. The Program Director will then determine whether, by clear and convincing evidence, the student has failed to progress and warrants either a leave of

absence, 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 appropriate Instructional Dean. The Instructional Dean will determine 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**

A student who earns a final grade of C in any course will be placed on academic probation for the duration of the following semester. A subsequent course grade of a C may result in dismissal from the Program. A student may be removed from academic probation in the probationary semester by meeting the criteria for satisfactory progress as above. Additionally, a student who has been decelerated will be placed on academic probation throughout the entirety of the Program.

## **DECELERATION**

In the event a student fails one or more courses or has failed to achieve the professional or ethical standards of the Program, the SAC and the Program Director may consider a deceleration. A deceleration allows a student to start the Program again with the next cohort. When considering allowing a deceleration rather than dismissal, the Program will take into account professionalism and performance in other courses. The student is responsible for all tuition costs incurred by a deceleration. The decelerated student will be placed on academic probation throughout the entirety of the Program. A determination of *failure to progress* or *recommendation for dismissal* after deceleration may result in dismissal from the Program.

## **INTERVENTION AND REMEDIATION**

The Program and its faculty are invested in all students' successful completion of the curriculum along with passing the national certifying exam and practicing as a competent physician assistant. Intervention and remediation are provided to the student who needs additional support.

Intervention is defined as any process or interaction between a student and faculty which assists the student in improving academic performance or professional behaviors. This includes, but is not limited to tutoring, small group study, additional assignments, or referral to the Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP). Intervention is not a formal process or procedure. It occurs on an individual basis for individual needs. Formal documentation of an intervention is not required although it may be desirable, and is not a part of the student's permanent record.

Remediation is defined as a formal plan or process in which a student must correct an academic, clinical, or professional deficit. Should a student demonstrate repeated or significant unprofessionalism or fail a course, supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE), summative exam, or other requirement of the Program, a remediation plan may be allowed by the SAC. This plan will be

based upon individual student deficits as suggested by an instructor, a preceptor/clinical site, the faculty, and/or the SAC. The plan will include a definition of the deficiency, outline of the plan to remediate the deficiency, timeline for the plan, a measurable outcome, and plan for re-assessment. This may be in conjunction with a leave of absence with no forward progression within the curriculum until the student has sufficiently completed the plan. Formal documentation of the remediation is part of the student's permanent record.

The goal of the remediation is to provide the student an opportunity to correct the deficit, successfully complete the curriculum, pass the national certifying exam, and practice as a competent physician assistant. The student is responsible for being a self-advocate, communicating challenges and concerns, seeking resources, and fully participating in the remediation process. The student is responsible for all tuition costs incurred by remediation. Unsuccessful completion of the remediation plan may result in deceleration or dismissal from the Program.

## 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*. <http://www.rccc.edu/sites/default/files/StudentLifeStudentHandbook.pdf>. 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
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Respect
- Humility
- Altruism

PA students should progress towards competency in professionalism throughout the Program by developing a strong and acceptable professional identity congruent with that of a PA and of a member of the health care team. There are multiple ways in which PA students demonstrate these behaviors, to include:

- Accepting constructive criticism in a positive manner and incorporate feedback
- Avoiding offensive speech that offers unkind comments and unfair criticisms of others
- Appreciating and respecting the diverse nature of students, faculty, staff, and patients, and honor those differences when working with them
- 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
- Reporting data and submitting Program requirements consistently, accurately, timely, and honestly
- Working collaboratively and respectfully within a team
- Supporting colleagues with the intent of positive outcomes for all
- Volunteering one's skills and expertise
- Meeting requirements, commitments and obligations in a conscientious manner
- Respecting the rights, individuality, and diversity of others
- Demonstrating adaptability, flexibility, 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 of 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
- Committing to confidentiality
- Demonstrating compassion and empathy
- Avoiding negative interactions that could be handled in an otherwise mature, calm manner

## PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

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

- Arrive 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 a possible follow-up only if necessary. If further follow-up on 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 classmates are finished.



## STUDENT CONDUCT IN A CLINICAL SETTING

### **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. The 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 of a female or the 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 his/her 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 or patient's family or bystanders. Students must avoid open disagreement with preceptors and other health care workers during CLE/SCPE.

### **PRECEPTOR AND PATIENT COMMUNICATION**

Students should avoid inappropriate familiarity with preceptors, especially in the presence of other health care workers and 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 shall avoid inappropriate familiarity with patients and their families and refer to every patient over the age of 18 years old as "Mr." or "Ms.", as appropriate, unless and until the patient invites the student to use the first name of the patient.

### **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 obligation to safeguard a patients' privacy during encounters. Congress enacted the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in 1996 and became effective on April 14, 2003. Under HIPAA, all practice settings are required to develop and implement a written privacy policy. Appropriate training will be provided to students. Failure to adhere to the privacy policy or a breach of confidentiality is grounds for termination for a health care provider (or staff member) in a clinical practice setting and grounds for removal of a Red Rocks Community College PA student from a service-learning activity, clinical experience, or clinical rotation 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](http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa).

### VIOLATIONS

These guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive of all professionalism expectations. Any professionalism concerns from Program students, faculty, staff, preceptors, site personnel, or other pertinent persons (other RRCC staff, credentialing staff of a clinical site, etc.) will be submitted to the Student Assessment Committee (SAC) for review.

Violations, especially those that are repetitive, consistent, or multiple, may result in one or more of the following:

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

## **SOCIAL MEDIA/INTERNET UTILIZATION**

PA students should avoid any online/social media presence that does not comply with professional and/or ethical standards or any behavior that would compromise professionalism. The Program expects that students maintain professional boundaries on social media and strongly recommends against initiating social media connections with preceptors. 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. Public defamation of the Program, faculty, or colleagues/classmates on the internet is considered unprofessional and is grounds for disciplinary action.

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

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action by the PA Program, including dismissal from the Program. Further information regarding RRCC's social media policy can be found at <https://www.rrcc.edu/marketing-communications>.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE**

In the event that a student has a grievance against another student, faculty, or staff, the student should first attempt to resolve the dispute with that party 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 <http://www.rrcc.edu/sites/default/files/StudentLifeStudentHandbook.pdf>.

## **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](http://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 to have 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 to progress in the Program will be done on an individual basis by the Program Director. 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.

## **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 his/her academic experience may self-refer to CPHP at any time for a confidential evaluation.

Students may be subject to random drug screening at any time during the didactic or clinical curriculum. Many clinical sites will require drug screening prior to starting a CLE or SCPE and have a *zero tolerance* policy of alcohol, recreational, or illicit drug use.

A student suspected of being impaired or having 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

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As future physician assistants who are responsible for the health, well-being, and privacy of patients, PA students are expected to uphold the highest level of integrity. 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 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 taking quizzes, tests or examinations or the use of or sharing of examinations or answer keys
2. Copying from another student or allowing copying in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or completing assignments
3. 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).

## **STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

Experience has shown that students are not capable of 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 must 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.

## **EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM**

Students may be asked to evaluate the Program in any of the following areas:

1. Guest lecturers and lectures
2. Course and the instructor(s)
3. A cumulative evaluation of the Program
4. Evaluation of each preceptor and SCPE
5. An exit survey interview prior to graduation

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM OFFICES

The Red Rocks Physician Assistant Program offices are located on the Arvada Campus. The mailing address is 10280 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Arvada, CO 80002, telephone (303) 914-6039 or (303) 914-6048, fax (303) 914-6806.

In order to protect confidentiality and ensure the efficient operation of the Program, the following office policies are in effect:

1. Unscheduled time in Program office/faculty offices should be kept to a minimum.
2. Students must respect and may not access the confidentiality of letters, forms and other materials located in the PA Program offices.
3. The faculty has an “open-door” policy for student meetings, but an appointment is preferable.

## 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. 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.

PAS 601, 602	Professional Seminar I,II
PAS 629,630	Clinical Medicine Lab I, II

PAS 625, 626	Clinical Medicine I,II
PAS 631, 632	History and Physical Exam I,II
PAS 618	Psychosocial Dimensions of Primary Care
PAS 609,610	Human Anatomy I, II
PAS 611, 612	Human Anatomy Lab I,II
PAS 603	Biochemistry
PAS 605, 608	Physiology/Pathophysiology I, II
PAS 604	Evidence-based Medicine
PAS 613,614,641	Pharmacology I,II, Clinical Pharmacotherapeutics
PAS 678	Advanced Practice Seminar
PAS 643	Clinical Resources and Pearls
PAS 645, 655	Clinical Decision Making I,II

## CLINICAL CURRICULUM

Progression from didactic training to clinical training requires evidence that the student is prepared 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, 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 EVALUATION

Students will undergo a summative evaluation of cumulative knowledge and skills prior to completing the Program. *Skills Summatives* consists of case-based assessments of the student's clinical ability to evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients. A student who performs poorly on one or both cases may be required to complete an additional case(s) to further assess competency. *Written Summatives* consists of a comprehensive exam of medical knowledge focusing on primary care. Each student must pass each component of the summative evaluation, demonstrating a level of competency congruent with PA students nearing graduation. The SAC committee will review overall performance from all summative components along with the student's professional and academic 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.

## **NATIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Upon successful completion of the Program, 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.

## **PROGRAM ACCREDITATION**

The Red Rocks Community College PA Program has been fully accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) since January 2001.

**APPENDIX: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT CONTRACT**





## Physician Assistant Student Contract

\_\_\_\_ The conduct of the student reflects upon the individual, the clinical site, Red Rocks PA Program, and the physician assistant profession. Therefore, I will conduct myself in a professional and mature manner at all times. I will adhere to all policies in this manual, the Red Rocks Community College 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.

\_\_\_\_ I will uphold the highest level of academic integrity. 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 will not see, treat, or dismiss a patient without consultation with the responsible community-based preceptor. I understand that I am obligated to know and adhere to the privacy policies and procedures of the clinical site to which I am assigned. I acknowledge that medical records, accounting information, patient information and conversations between healthcare professionals about patients are confidential under the law and this agreement.

\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must uphold the tenets of HIPAA at all times in patient interactions.

\_\_\_\_ I will not discuss any preceptor or my interactions with preceptors outside of the Program. I understand that denigration of any preceptor could result in dismissal from the Program or other legal consequences.

\_\_\_\_ I authorize the Program to access, store, and transfer to clinical sites as necessary a copy of my immunizations, TB and health statement form.

\_\_\_\_ I authorize the Program to provide to any community-based preceptor/institution relevant information concerning my academic progress and professional development.

\_\_\_\_ I understand and agree that I will be expected to go to any clinical or service learning site within the state of Colorado or a 450-mile radius of RRCC as assigned by the Program and any refusal to participate in an assigned SCPE will be considered a voluntary withdrawal from the Program.

\_\_\_\_ In connection with my education and clinical training at any healthcare facility associated with Red Rocks Community College, 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 27 months from the date noted below or my completion/termination of the Program. A photocopy or fax of this consent and release shall have the same binding effect as an original.

**COVID-19 Addendum**

***\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understand the COVID-19 Addendum and under NO circumstances will I come to campus, participate in in-person Program activities, or present to a clinical site with fever and/or symptoms of COVID-19. I understand that as a PA student, it is my obligation to adhere to public health guidelines to help protect myself, others in the RRCC PA Program, clinical sites and preceptors, patients, and the community.***

As a physician assistant student in the Red Rocks Physician Assistant Program, I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand, and will comply with the rules, standards, and policies contained in this 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: 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**

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 Kathy Beamis, Admissions Manager/Clinical Coordinator at 303-914-6048 ([kathy.beamis@rrcc.edu](mailto:kathy.beamis@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 26<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Denver, CO 80211  
303-831-9393



**RED ROCKS**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM**

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
CLINICAL MANUAL  
2020-2021**

## INTRODUCTION

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

## CLINICAL CURRICULUM

The clinical phase of the Program consists of 12 months of supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE) which are divided into the following clerkships (one month=3 credits):

PAS 670 Patient Care I	6 credits
PAS 671 Patient Care II	3 credits
PAS 672 Patient Care III	12 credits
PAS 673 Patient Care IV	9 credits
PAS 674 Patient Care V	6 credits

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 in order 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 his/her 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 move forward in the clinical curriculum and may risk failure to meet the requirements of the SCPE and delay of graduation or dismissal from the Program. Need for any subsequent SCPE courses to complete requirements will be the financial responsibility of the student.

## PATIENT LOGGING

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all patients seen by the student are logged correctly in 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. As required by the ARC-PA and the Program, students must be exposed to the following patients:

- 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

As the student sees these patients, regardless of the setting (inpatient, outpatient, emergency department, operating room) or the Program-determined SCPE, logs must reflect sufficient numbers across the entirety of the clinical curriculum. The student will be required to present a cumulative portfolio of logged patients to his/her advisor upon request.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT DURING THE CLINICAL CURRICULUM**

Components used in the assessment of students may include:

- Patient logs
- Preceptor evaluation of the student- both via formal assessment or verbal adjunctive assessment directly to the Program
- EOR exam
- Assignments as determined by the Director of Clinical Training

Failure to successfully complete the clinical or professional requirements of a SCPE may result in loss of the SCPE elective, repeating the SCPE post-graduation, LOA with remediation or dismissal from the Program. A second failure of a SCPE or failing two SCPE may result in dismissal from the Program. Failure of more than three EOR exams is grounds for dismissal from the program. The student will be responsible for all tuition costs incurred by the failed SCPE.

## **PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS IN CLINICAL TRAINING 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 professional 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, in the settings of outpatient, inpatient, operating room, and emergency department with preceptors in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, and Ob/Gyn or an appropriately approved elective in a specialty 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 manpower 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

In alignment with the mission of the Program, students will be placed in at least two rural/underserved SCPEs. Students may be placed in clinical sites throughout the state of Colorado and within a 450-mile radius of the RRCC campus. This is to include states contiguous with Colorado. All travel costs are the student's responsibility.

The Director of Clinical Training is not required to take into account 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.

Placement will be contingent upon a completed affiliation agreement, student performance, 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. 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 responsibility. It is unacceptable for a student to be supervised by persons who have not been approved in advance by 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. If a student believes he/she is unable to meet the requirements of an assigned SCPE, the student must notify the clinical team within three 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. If the student still believes he/she is not able to meet the requirements of the rotation, the student may appeal to the Program Director. The decision of the Program Director is final.

If a student believes he/she has been the victim of alleged physical abuse, emotional abuse, or sexual harassment, he/she must notify the clinical team 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.

## **CLINICAL ELECTIVE**

A clinical elective provides the student an opportunity to choose a SCPE that is of particular interest to the student. Elective SCPEs must be clinical in nature with substantial patient contact in a clinical setting. The Director of Clinical Training must approve these SCPE in advance in the same manner as all other SCPEs. Students who decline or fail to select either of these will be placed in a SCPE of the clinical team's choice. The Program reserves the right to revoke the student's elective choice in the case of "pass with reservation" or a "fail" of a required SCPE. The Program may also need to revoke the student's elective in the case that adequate numbers and types of clinical experiences are not met. Inadequate exposures to required populations and settings may delay or prevent graduation from the Program.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PRECEPTOR AND CLINICAL TEAM**

The clinical preceptor helps the student make the transition from the classroom to a patient care setting. In the clinical setting, the preceptor will be a physician, physician assistant, 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 works with the student by observing assessments and technical skills and providing constructive feedback. The preceptor is asked to assess student performance, reinforce appropriate behavior/actions, and correct inappropriate behavior/actions in a timely manner.

The Program has specific objectives for clinical experiences. The goal for students is to achieve as many of these objectives as possible under the guidance of the preceptor and the clinical team. Achievement of the objectives is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Although the clinical team plays an important role in student instruction and coordination, it is the preceptor who serves as the clinical expert.

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 expected to receive, on average, a minimum of 36 hours of clinical exposure during each week. Students are not to work more than 70 hours in a calendar work week during a SCPE.

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 the time missed. The Director of Clinical Training must be contacted if alternative arrangements cannot be made.

Students may request a leave of absence from the Program for exceptional circumstances. The request must be made in writing to the Chair of the Student Assessment Committee (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 Director of Clinical Training must be notified in advance unless the circumstance is emergent and advance notification is impossible. An absence of more than one day 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.

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 his/her own personal safety. The Program must be notified in the event of any absence.

## **HOUSING FOR NON-LOCAL ROTATIONS**

Students will be placed in clinical sites outside of the Denver metro area for required rotations. Each student must set up an account with the Colorado Area Health Education Center's (AHEC) at <https://hschealth.uchsc.edu/ahec/htmls/finaid>. AHEC has housing available to students outside of a 50-mile radius of the RRCC Arvada campus and on a first-come, first-serve basis. Housing may vary from location to location and is provided strictly for the student only (no guests or pets). It is the responsibility of each student to register and request housing. It is recommended that a 6-8 week advance notice be given to AHEC to secure housing for the student. 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 may 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 30 nights per rotation must have prior approval from the Director of Clinical Training.

Should housing become unavailable, the Program may allow the student to decline the rotation. However, the program requirements for graduation remain in place. All required clinical experiences/clinical time must still be completed to graduate from the Program.

## **MALPRACTICE INSURANCE**

All students are fully covered through the State of Colorado's malpractice insurance policy, a copy 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.

## **SITE VISITS**

During the clinical curriculum, Program faculty and staff may use site visits to evaluate a site and/or preceptor, evaluate a student, and/or develop relationships with a site and/or preceptor. This may consist of visits to clinical sites or phone conversations with preceptors. Students may be observed with a patient or asked to submit an example of his/her documentation to the site visitor, as needed. A student or a site may request a site visit at any time to evaluate any concerns.

## **INTERNATIONAL SCPE**

International rotations (IR) will be considered only as an elective SCPE for which the elective syllabus is the appropriate guiding document for requirements. IR must first be approved by the Program. The student must schedule an individual interview with the Program Director and Director of Clinical Training. Following the interview, the student must submit the International Rotation Proposal Form and International Rotation Student Agreement (see appendix) for approval. 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. As soon as the site is confirmed, the student will be given:

1. Red Rocks Community College Indemnity Release Form
2. Preparing for an International Experience Journal Article
3. International Time Line and Check List
4. RRCC International Rotation Check List

The RRCC International Rotation Checklist is due back no later than the EOR preceding the planned rotation.

In order to promote the safety and security of students participating in IR, the Program will check the following website at least 1 week in advance of the rotation: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html). At any time, if the Program believes the student may be at risk, the rotation will be cancelled. 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.

The student is required to do an independent study prior to leaving regarding the country, health care systems, and customs of the country to which they are visiting. 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.

## **END-OF-ROTATION ACTIVITIES**

End of rotation (EOR) activities will consist of completion of paperwork for upcoming SCPEs, advising, assessments, and content. Students must attend all EOR activities. If circumstances dictate that an EOR activity is missed, the Director of Clinical Training must be contacted. Absences may result in failure of one or more courses or dismissal from the Program. In the event of an approved LOA from EOR activities, other EOR assignments 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 the original is submitted to the clinical team during EOR activities. The Program must have original preceptor evaluations in each student file.

**APPENDIX: RRCC PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT CLERKSHIP  
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Preceptor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Clerkship Dates \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] Mid evaluation [ ] Final evaluation

**I. Professional Standards** (“Unsatisfactory” for any item in the professional standards will result in a failing grade for the clerkship)

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Truthfulness	[ ]	[ ]
Punctuality	[ ]	[ ]
Dependability	[ ]	[ ]
Patient rapport	[ ]	[ ]
Professional relations	[ ]	[ ]
Aware of professional limitations	[ ]	[ ]
Maintains patient confidentiality	[ ]	[ ]

**II. Clinical Skills (Learning outcomes)**

Assess clinical skills at the level of a newly graduated, primary care physician assistant. The program will take into account the student’s expected progression through the clinical curriculum. (n/ob= not observed)

1. Correlate abnormal exam findings to a given disease process	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
2. Obtains an appropriate complete or focused history	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
3. Performs an appropriate complete or focused exam	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
4. Orders and interprets lab tests/diagnostic studies appropriately	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
5. Generates a reasonable differential diagnosis	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
6. Develops an appropriate treatment/discharge plan, including identifying emergent conditions and indications for hospital admission or specialist referrals.	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
7. Selects appropriate clinical therapeutics and calculates doses and prepares a prescription that is appropriate, legal, and without error	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
8. Delivers an appropriately concise/complete oral case presentation	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
9. Performs appropriate patient documentation (may include procedure, admission, and discharge notes)	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
10. Communicates appropriately with patients and colleagues	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
11. Displays intellectual curiosity	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob
12. Performs clinical procedures as appropriate, including obtaining informed consent and observing universal precautions (Review with student the general competencies under skills/procedures in the Typhon log)	DEFICIENT	DEVELOPING	COMPETENT	n/ob

**III. Comments** (continue on reverse or a separate sheet.)

Page 2 of this form contains instructions for preceptors in completing this form. Page 2 does not have to be returned to the program. The PA program invites your comments regarding any improvements to the program’s curriculum. Please check here [ ] if you have suggestions and describe them on the reverse of this form or a separate sheet. Thank you.

Signature of Preceptor of Record \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Names of others contributing to this evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

I have/will log all patient contacts appropriately in EXXAT and complete the SCPE evaluation. \_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature



1. Please conduct a mid-clerkship evaluation as well as a final evaluation. The mid-clerkship evaluation provides valuable feedback to the student which allows them to correct or improve upon their performance prior to the final evaluation.
2. The RRCC PA program takes professional behavior seriously. Please note that an unsatisfactory evaluation on any item in the professional standards section will result in a failing grade for the clerkship.
3. Please assess the items under clinical skills as compared to a *newly graduated, practicing primary care physician assistant*. See the rotation module (syllabus) for instructional objectives and learning outcomes for this rotation.

**Deficient:** does not perform this skill at the level of a newly graduated, practicing primary care physician assistant.

**Developing:** inconsistent performance of this skill but is making acceptable progress toward competence when compared to a newly graduated, practicing primary care physician assistant.

**Competent:** performs this skill at the level of a newly graduated, practicing primary care physician assistant.

4. Please review the patient logs with the student near the end of the rotation. The student will provide you a hard copy for you to review. Please review the general competencies (procedures/skills) log so that you may evaluate item 12 on this evaluation.
5. If more than one person contributed to the evaluation, please provide this information.
6. Your comments about the student are the most valuable feedback for the student and the program. If you have general suggestions for the curriculum, please provide them on the back of the evaluation.
7. The student is **REQUIRED** to hand carry the completed final evaluation to the program on the last day of the rotation.
8. Don't hesitate to contact us via email or phone if you have any concerns about a student's performance or if you have questions about program policies. We prefer to address concerns early in the rotation rather than later when corrective options may be more limited.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Red Rocks Physician Assistant Program. We could not do it without you.

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**RED ROCKS**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM**

**COVID-19 ADDENDUM  
2020-2021**

## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 global pandemic caused by a novel coronavirus has presented multiple challenges in higher education and more so in the education of health care professionals. This addendum provides additional resources to guide PA students in the navigation of policies and procedures enacted due to the pandemic. RRCC and the PA Program will follow the most current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), and Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH). Due to the frequency of changes and updates of information, please visit these websites and the RRCC website for the most updated information.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the Program may be subject to ongoing changes due to COVID-19 to include the sequencing of didactic and/or clinical courses. Course and Program requirements may also be subject to change. The ARC-PA will be notified of significant curriculum changes to ensure the Program's students and graduates meet the requirements and competencies of the profession.

### DIDACTIC CURRICULUM

In response to COVID-19, Fall 2020 didactic courses are being taught in a **Remote, Hybrid-Remote, or Self-Paced** format. As a Hybrid-Remote course, the class will meet on-campus on specified dates. All other lecture and lab instruction will occur online as a mix of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (on student's own time) interactions. Students should be available during the days and times indicated in the schedule of classes, and students will be notified of any on-campus meetings beyond what is listed. Regular online class meetings will occur including by video conference. As a Remote course, all lecture and lab instruction will occur online as a mix of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (on student's own time) interactions. There will be no on-campus meetings for these courses but there will be regular online class meetings including by video conference. Some courses may be self-paced (primarily for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students), but due dates and deadlines will still occur throughout the semester. Instructors will provide more information about the structure of each course.

If the recommendations from the CDPHE change, hybrid classes may be required to transition to a remote delivery method only, please monitor RRCC email, D2L, and the RRCC website, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information page](#) for up-to-date information.

### CLINICAL CURRICULUM

Supervised clinical experiences (SCPE) may be discontinued at any time by the PA Program, a preceptor, or a site due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regulatory bodies may discontinue student experiences based upon federal, state, county, or organizational policies. In the case of a lack of SCPEs, the Program has developed clinical substitution content allowing students to continue academic progress while awaiting the return to clinical experiences. Clinical schedules may vary greatly during this time due to the changing availability of SCPEs. Students may request an LOA for a health concern placing themselves or close contacts at high-risk for COVID-19 infection. Some clinical sites may be high-risk and for these sites, student placement will be voluntary. During the time of a pandemic, declining to participate in a high-risk SCPE will not place the student at risk of dismissal from the Program as it would in a non-pandemic time, however, the student will be placed on an LOA allowing the student to complete missed clinical time at a later date as determined by the Program.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Training is provided by the Program to cover donning and doffing of PPE and avoidance of blood-borne pathogen and COVID-19 exposure risk. The Program will make every effort to ensure necessary PPE for each student in each SCPE either via provision by the clinical site or purchase by the PA Program, if possible. However, students should always ensure they are provided the equivalent PPE in a clinical site as others with the same exposure risk. If a student should have a concern that they are not as adequately protected as other personnel within the site, the student must report this concern to the Program immediately. The Program will then determine if the student should be immediately removed from the site. No student should be placed at higher risk for exposure than others in an equivalent environment.

Students should consider purchasing their own PPE, if possible, as an emergency kit.

## EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

**Under no circumstances** should a student present to campus or a clinical site with a fever and/or symptoms of COVID. At the time of this writing (July, 2020) the guidelines from the CDC and CDPHE are:

An *exposure* is considered within 6 ft of an infected person for 10 minutes or more.

Any person who has been *exposed* to a COVID-positive or COVID-symptomatic person should quarantine for 14 days to monitor for symptoms (or be tested)

Any person with a COVID positive test should isolate for 10 days from when symptoms started AND no fever for 72 hours AND symptoms are improving.

A secondary contact (an exposure to someone who has been exposed to someone who was positive, (*not personally exposed*)) should monitor for symptoms but are not required to quarantine.

A student who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive patient should follow the guidelines of the clinical site, the CDPHE and CDC guidelines, and report the exposure to the RRCC PA Program Director of Clinical Training and Clinical Manager for further instructions. This may include reporting to Human Resources and presenting to a Worker's Compensation provider/occupational medicine. Concerning symptoms or potential exposures must be reported to the Program. Students must complete health and exposure tracking documents as requested.

As future health care providers, PA students are advised to closely follow all current public health guidelines to minimize risk of exposure and transmission. Clinical students should especially consider stricter adherence to these guidelines to minimize risk to patients, preceptors, colleagues, staff, and themselves, and to minimize the potential of lost clinical time due to infection or need for quarantine.

## ABSENCE DUE TO COVID-19

A student who is ill with COVID-19 or who must isolate or quarantine due to other exposure will be provided an LOA for missed coursework. Due to the nature of PA education (hands-on practice, labs,

clinical experiences, etc.), students missing prolonged time from the Program may necessitate make-up time during breaks or post-graduation. This will not impact the student's academic standing in the Program or place a student at academic "risk of failure to progress" or "failure to progress" unless the student refuses to attempt to meet Program requirements or definitively cannot meet Program requirements due to a cause other than that related to the pandemic. Students will still be subject to the SAC policies and procedures for academic and professionalism performance.

## **GRADUATION DURING A PANDEMIC**

The Student Assessment Committee (SAC) will consider how each student meets the requirements of graduation, especially considering a potential deficit of clinical experiences as compared to previous cohorts, by reviewing all aspects of the student's academic and professional performance throughout the Program. The SAC may consider allowing a waiver of additional clinical experience time and patient exposures if the student has reached sufficient clinical competency and has met all other requirements for graduation. The waiver consideration may be subject to change or discontinuation at any time.

## **ADVICE FOR STUDENTS DURING A PANDEMIC**

The tenets of professionalism would suggest that students during unprecedented times such as a pandemic demonstrate:

- ❖ flexibility and tolerance for change (courses may change, SCPEs may get cancelled)
- ❖ grace and compassion for others (people may be feeling stressed, make mistakes, feel overwhelmed, etc., consider what others are also dealing with at this time)
- ❖ self-control of heightened emotions (avoid outbursts, poor word choice, disrespectful comments or non-verbal communication, etc.)
- ❖ respect for others (people may have a job to do although you may not understand, people with experience may be trying to help, everyone must be treated ethically and with equity)
- ❖ empathy for others (put yourself in their shoes)
- ❖ integrity (don't cut corners or compromise the depth of your experience or education, do what is right, disclose and take ownership of mistakes)

As future PAs, students should consider themselves representatives of the health care community and always act in a manner that is best reflective of themselves, the PA profession, and the RRCC PA Program. Students should stay up-to-date on current public health requirements and observe and encourage adherence to these requirements/guidelines.