



RED ROCKS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
PROGRAM**

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
PROGRAM MANUAL
2021-2022**

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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 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. 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.

PROGRAM MISSION, VALUES 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 and an emphasis on excellence.

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 inclusion

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)
- 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. 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 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:

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.
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 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.

Students are strongly encouraged to self-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. Skills and skills-based assessments, including the skills portion of the Summative Exam, do not qualify for extended time accommodations. Accommodations may apply to the written portion of a skills assessment.

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.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

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

- 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 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, 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*
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 27-month schedule of the RRCC PA Program includes 13 months of didactic (classroom) curriculum and 14 months of clinical/capstone curriculum. PA students 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 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. In the case of illness, emergency, etc., the student should notify a faculty or staff from the Program and at the least, a classmate who can notify the Program.

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 LOA and may be allowed only at the discretion of the course director for partial or full credit.

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 the 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.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students may request a leave of absence (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. 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 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 AND INCLUSION

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 LGBTQ+ 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, 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 <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. 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 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. Fingernails should be trimmed short.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The Student Assessment Committee (SAC) consists of all PA faculty (not including adjunct instructors). 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 decision-making in order 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 ASSESSMENT 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.

To continue with forward progress in the curriculum sequence, didactic courses require a *B* or higher and clinical courses require a *C* or higher. See each course syllabus for specific grading mode and requirements.

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 student's compliance with the requirements of this manual
- The student's 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, 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 he/she is at risk for failing a course and/or is failing to meet professional or ethical standards.
- Low passing in a course or consistent failure of didactic exams/quizzes/assignments
- 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 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 the grade of B or higher in one or more didactic 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 B or higher in one or more didactic courses
- The student obtained lower than a C in a clinical course

- 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 appropriate 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

A student who earns a final grade of C in a clinical 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. Additionally, a student who has been decelerated will be placed on academic probation throughout the entirety of the Program. The SAC may place a student on academic probation for repeated or egregious violations of the Codes of Standards of Professional Behaviors that do not fully warrant recommendation for dismissal.

DECELERATION

A deceleration allows a student who has failed one or more courses, 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.

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.

INTERVENTION AND REMEDIATION

Intervention is a process or interaction that assists the student in improving academic performance or professional behaviors that would not cause an undue burden for the student to address while progressing in the curriculum. This includes, but is not limited to tutoring, small group study, additional assignments, or referral to the Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP) or RRCC support services. 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.

Remediation is a formal plan or process in which a student must correct an academic, clinical, or professional deficit. Should a student 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 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. Remediation of a deficit may place an undue burden on a student while progressing in the curriculum, and therefore, a LOA is likely to be recommended or required to provide the student the optimal opportunity for success. Formal documentation of the remediation is part of the student's permanent record. 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.rrcc.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
- 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 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 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 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 students 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. 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.

PRECEPTOR AND PATIENT COMMUNICATION

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

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.

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 or an interesting/"entertaining" case, may still 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 cadavers 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 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. If unresolved, the student should consider reporting to the appropriate chain of command to include an instructor, course director, Program Director, Instructional Dean, Human Resources/Student Services offices. However, Human Resources or Student Services may be contacted at any time. 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

<https://www.rrcc.edu/sites/default/files/u2999/2021%20Handbook%20Update%20FIN.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). 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 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/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 in 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.

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 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 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

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 minor 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.

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 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 taking quizzes, tests, or examinations or the use of or sharing 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 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.

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), and preceptor evaluations; and exit interviews. Multiple sources of evaluation with analysis of 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. 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 619	Psychosocial Dimensions of Primary Care
PAS 609,610	Human Anatomy I, II

PAS 611, 612	Human Anatomy Lab I,II
PAS 646	Biochemistry
PAS 647, 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 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. Primary examples of demonstration of competency include:

- 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
- Performance of a physical exam that, by using proper technique, allows the student to further develop the assessment and plan
- Ordering and interpreting labs, imaging, referrals, etc. that consider the individual patient and the risks, benefits, and costs
- Reaching an appropriate assessment that is reflective of the evaluation of the patient that does not cause harm, neglect, or death
- Developing a treatment plan that reflects the individual patient's needs and does not cause harm, neglect, or death
- Documentation that is medicolegally truthful and sound and protects both the patient and the provider
- 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)
- Professional behaviors such as honesty, humility, self-reflection, self-awareness, and implementation of constructive feedback that allow the student to understand professional boundaries and when to refer or consult
- Organizational skills, reliability, and accountability that would ensure appropriate evaluation, follow-up, and follow-through to protect patient outcomes
- Collegial collaboration with other members of the health care team that promotes interprofessional communication and positive patient outcomes
- Practices that protect professional licensure and prevention of disciplinary action such as prescribing practices and preferences and moral and ethical choices

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).

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

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.

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.

APPENDIX: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT CONTRACT



Physician Assistant Student Contract

____ The conduct of the student reflects upon the individual, the clinical site, Red Rocks Community College (RRCC) Physician Assistant (PA) Program, and the PA 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 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.

____ 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 status, 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 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 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) 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



RED ROCKS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
PROGRAM**

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
CLINICAL MANUAL
2021-2022**

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 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 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 and may risk being placed on a LOA, failure of the SCPE or course, delay of graduation, or dismissal from the Program. Need for any subsequent SCPE courses to complete 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 in 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. As required by the ARC-PA and the Program, students will 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

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 falsifying logs may result 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 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 within a 450-mile radius of the RRCC campus, which may include states contiguous with Colorado. 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.

Placement will be 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. 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.

REMOVAL FROM A SCPE

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.

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, failure of the SCPE, deceleration, or dismissal from the Program (see *The Impaired Student Policy* section).

Prior to the start of clinical curriculum, students who may test positive on a drug screen due to prescription medications or other medical conditions for which a positive drug screen must notify the Clinical Team no later than February of the spring didactic semester to allow adequate time for CPHP to perform an evaluation and provide clearance to participate in the clinical curriculum.

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 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. 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 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 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. The Colorado Area Health Education Center's (AHEC) facilitates most of the housing for non-local SCPEs outside of a 50-mile radius of the RRCC Arvada campus. Each student must set up an account with AHEC at <https://hschealth.uchsc.edu/ahec/htmls/finaid> to register for housing. 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. 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.

Housing may be unavailable through AHEC or become unavailable outside of the Program's control. The Program may allow the student to decline the rotation, however, Program requirements for graduation remain in place. All required clinical experiences/clinical time must be completed to graduate from the Program. It may be advantageous for a student to consider seeking alternative housing on their own and accepting the financial responsibility to meet graduation requirements on time.

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 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 without student notification. 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 SCPEs

International rotations (IR) are elective in nature and may 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 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. 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.

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 additional educational 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 submitted by the first day of EOR. The Clinical Team preference is for electronic submittal via EXXAT but paper is acceptable. The student should retain original signed evaluations for portfolio presentation at Exit Interviews. The Program must have all 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.

Trish Arbuckle, PA-C
Director of Clinical Training
Trish.arbuckle@rrcc.edu
303-914-6036

Kathy Beamis
Clinical Coordinator
Kathy.beamis@rrcc.edu
303-914-6048



RED ROCKS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
PROGRAM**

**COVID-19 ADDENDUM
2021-2022**

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.

COVID-19 VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PA STUDENTS (8-13-21)

BASIS

Colorado law requires all students attending certain college or university programs in the state of Colorado to be vaccinated against specified vaccine-preventable diseases (i.e., Measles, Mumps, Rubella), as established by Colorado Board of Health rule 6 CCR 1009-2, unless an exemption is filed.

While the Colorado Board of Health does not currently require students be vaccinated against COVID-19, the RRCC PA Program does require its students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 unless an exemption is granted. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the virus that causes COVID-19. Serious symptoms and effects include difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, body aches, and death. The risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 can far outweigh any benefits of natural immunity. The COVID-19 vaccination helps protect individuals from contracting and spreading the virus.

The RRCC PA Program has chosen to require vaccination due to the increasing numbers of health care organizations who are requiring students to be fully vaccinated to participate in clinical experiences and its personnel to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to retain employment. PA students who are unvaccinated are likely to encounter challenges in clinical placements leading to an inability to meet the requirements of graduation from the PA Program. The Clinical Team will not be required to go to extenuating lengths to seek or place unvaccinated students in clinical sites that do not require the COVID-19 vaccination. The PA student who may be able to meet the requirements of graduation, while unvaccinated with an exemption, should consider the possible barrier to employability after graduation due to vaccination status.

REQUIREMENTS

The RRCC PA Program requires that students, as a condition of its enrollment, be fully vaccinated against COVID-19¹ or be granted a valid exemption. The COVID-19 vaccination is not required as a condition of enrollment at the College.

Students must submit a COVID-19 immunization record or receive an exemption as of September 30, 2021. The COVID-19 immunization record must reflect any second dose necessary for full immunization. The College will provide students with a list of local providers offering the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost. COVID-19 immunization records can be submitted to the PA Program via Cindy Bergers (cindy.bergers@rrcc.edu) or Kathy Beamis (kathy.beamis@rrcc.edu).

¹ If in its sole discretion, Red Rocks Community College determines that there is insufficient COVID-19 vaccine supply to meet the demand, College may either delay implementation of this requirement or amend the same.

If a student does not submit a COVID-19 immunization record or receive an exemption by September 30, 2021, they will not be permitted to continue enrollment in the RRCC PA Program.

EXEMPTION REQUESTS

Students have the right to request an exemption from this vaccination for a medical or non-medical (religious or personal belief) reason. This Procedure adopts the terms and definitions used by the [State of Colorado](#) for other vaccinations. To request an exemption, students should submit the Medical Exemption Form or Non-Medical Exemption Form to the PA Program Director, Christa Dobbs, PA-C (christa.dobbs@rrcc.edu).

Students shall complete and submit the Medical Exemption Form (see attached; signed by a medical doctor, doctor of osteopathic medicine, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse) or the non-Medical Exemption Form (see attached), as is relevant.

Please allow 10-14 business days for an exemption request to be processed. After a student's request has been reviewed and processed, the student will be notified in writing if an exemption has been granted.

VACCINE-EXEMPTED/UNVACCINATED STUDENTS

If granted an exemption, students will be required* to:

- Participate in weekly COVID-19 testing;
- Monitor College email daily for important health notifications;
- Isolate for a period of time as required by local health department regulations if tested positive for COVID-19;
- Quarantine for a period of time per local health department regulation if determined to be in close contact of a positive COVID-19 case; and
- Observe extra precautions to protect self, classmates, faculty, site personnel, and patients including N-95 and/or double masking, 6 ft. social distancing, and any other recommended public health guidelines.

**These requirements are subject to change based upon available and emerging epidemiological evidence and the overall burden of disease related to COVID-19 transmission on our campus and in our region.*

Students with a recorded immunization exemption may be kept out of classes, activities, and clinical experiences during a disease outbreak. The length of time will vary depending on the type of the disease and the circumstances of the outbreak, and alternative attendance options (e.g., online coursework) will be utilized when available. Due to the rigorous schedule and content of the PA Program, a Leave of Absence may be required or recommended if more than 5 days of coursework are missed. Absence of an extended period of time may necessitate a deceleration (see *Student Assessment and Promotion* and *Deceleration* sections). No clinical hour requirements for graduation from the Program will be waived due to immunization exemption.

Where the exemption from vaccination necessitates an accommodation for a disability or medical condition or an accommodation based on a religious or personal belief or practice, the RRCC PA Program will engage in an interactive process with the student to determine which reasonable accommodations may be available for the student to continue enrollment in the Program. More information about the RRCC accommodations process is available through the Office of Accessibility Services.

A student who is unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccine for a medical or other approved exemption may have great difficulty completing PA Program requirements for graduation and is strongly encouraged to consider a withdraw from the Program.

REVISIONS TO REQUIREMENTS

RRCC and the RRCC PA Program reserve the right to change any provisions of these requirements at any time and change shall become effectively immediately.

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

Due to the advances in the vaccination abilities for COVID-19, Fall 2021 didactic courses are being taught primarily in-person with one day per week of a combination of remote/asynchronous content. A change in the COVID-19 pandemic status may dictate a change in the delivery method of the curriculum. PA students will be notified immediately upon any changes in curriculum delivery.

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 due to a health concern 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.

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.

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 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.

Immunization Medical Exemption Form

Student completing this information:

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	S#	Student Email
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A medical exemption may be granted to any student who has a documented medical condition that prevents them from receiving the immunizations listed below. **This form must be signed by a medical provider.** Please submit this form to Christa Dobbs, PA-C, PA Program Director. Medical exemptions need to be filed only once unless the student's information changes.

Students with a recorded immunization exemption may be kept out of College classes and activities during a disease outbreak; the length of time will vary depending on the type of the disease and the circumstances of the outbreak, and alternative attendance options (e.g., online coursework) will be utilized when available.

Required Vaccines:

Check Vaccine Declined	List medical contraindications for each vaccine declined
<input type="checkbox"/> Measles, Mumps, Rubella: Two valid doses of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine are required for students born on or after January 1, 1957. Measles can cause infection, pneumonia, encephalitis, and death. For more information: https://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccination.html	
<input type="checkbox"/> SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19): Vaccine is required as a condition of living in the College residence halls and/or participating on a College athletic team. COVID-19 can cause difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, body aches, and death. For more information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html	

Statement of Exemption

The physical condition of the above named student is such that vaccination would endanger their life or health or is medically contraindicated due to other medical conditions. The information I have provided on this form is complete and accurate.

Required Signature

Physician (MD, DO), Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), or Physician Assistant (authorized pursuant to section 12-240-107 (6), C.R.S.)

Date

Under Colorado law, you have the option to exclude your information from the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS). To opt out of CIIS, go to: www.colorado.gov/cdphe/ciis-opt-out-procedures. Please be advised that you will be responsible for maintaining your immunization records to ensure school compliance.

Immunization Religious/Personal Belief Exemption Form

Student completing this information:

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	S#	Student email
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The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Red Rocks Community College strongly support vaccination as one of the easiest and most effective tools in preventing diseases that can cause serious illness and even death.

A religious/personal belief exemption may be considered/granted to any student who signs below acknowledging the basis for the exemption. Please submit this form to Christa Dobbs, PA-C, PA Program Director

Students with a recorded immunization exemption may be kept out of College classes and activities during a disease outbreak; the length of time will vary depending on the type of the disease and the circumstances of the outbreak, and alternative attendance options (e.g., online coursework) will be utilized when available.

Required Vaccines:

Check Vaccine Declined	Type of Non-Medical Exemption Claimed (Briefly describe basis for belief)
<input type="checkbox"/> Measles, Mumps, Rubella: Two valid doses of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine are required for students born on or after January 1, 1957. Measles can cause infection, pneumonia, encephalitis, and death. For more information: https://www.cdc.gov/measles/vaccination.html	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious belief <input type="checkbox"/> Personal belief
<input type="checkbox"/> SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19): Vaccine is required as a condition of living in the College residence halls and/or participating on a College athletic team. Unvaccinated persons may be at increased risk of developing COVID-19 if exposed to this disease. COVID-19 can cause difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, body aches, and death. For more information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious belief <input type="checkbox"/> Personal belief

Statement of Exemption

I am the student or parent/guardian (if student is under 18 years of age) of the above-named student and am declining the vaccine indicated above due to a religious or personal belief that is opposed to vaccines. The information I have provided on this form is complete and accurate.

• I may change my mind at any time and accept vaccination(s) for my myself/child in the future. • I have had to opportunity to review the vaccine information provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: [Immunization Education](#) and [Immunization for Good](#) for information on the benefits and risks of vaccines and the diseases they prevent.

- I have had to opportunity to review information about what is in the COVID-19 [mRNA based Vaccines](#) (Pfizer and Moderna) and how they work.

I acknowledge that I have read this document in its entirety.

Student signature (or Parent or Guardian if student is under 18)

Date

Under Colorado law, you have the option to exclude your information from the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS). To opt out of CIIS, go to: www.colorado.gov/cdphe/ciis-opt-out-procedures. Please be advised that you will be responsible for maintaining your immunization records to ensure school compliance.