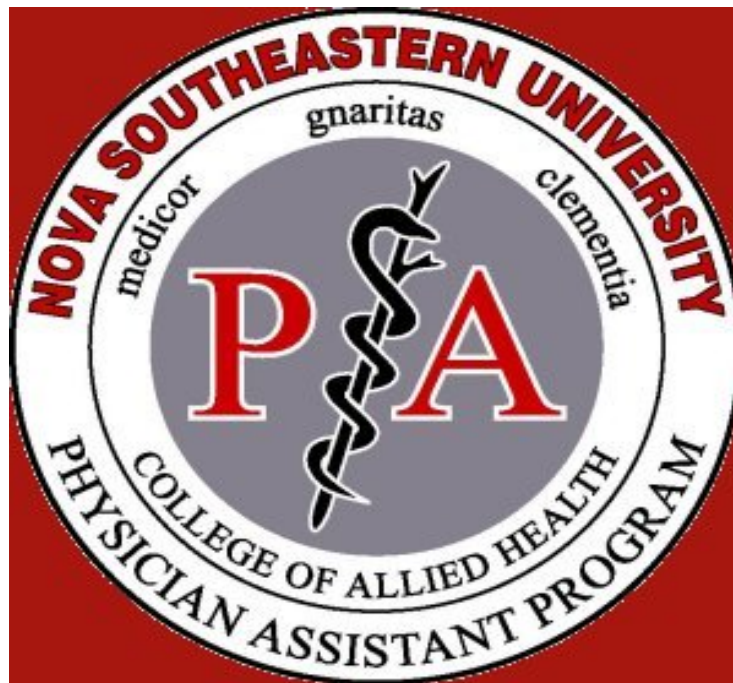


ACADEMIC YEAR HANDBOOK

"Class of 2011"



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVISION
COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH AND NURSING
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT
Ft. Lauderdale

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MISSION STATEMENT

Nova Southeastern University

Nova Southeastern University is a dynamic, not-for-profit independent institution dedicated to providing high quality educational programs of distinction from preschool to the professional and doctoral levels, as well as service to the community. Nova Southeastern University prepares students for a lifelong learning and leadership roles in business and the professions. It offers academic programs at times convenient to students, employing innovative delivery systems and rich learning resources on campus and at distant sites. The University fosters inquiry, research, and creative professional activity by uniting faculty and students in acquiring and applying knowledge in clinical, community, and professional settings.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 24, 1997

MISSION STATEMENT

Health Professions Division

The mission of Nova Southeastern University Health Professions Division is to train primary care health practitioners in a multidisciplinary setting, with an emphasis on medically underserved areas.

The institutional premise is that health professionals should be trained in a multidisciplinary setting and, whenever possible, with integrated education. The University trains students in concert with other health profession students so that the various disciplines will learn to work together as a team for the good of the public's health. During the didactic work, students share campus facilities and, in some cases, have combined classes. In their clinical experiences, they work together in facilities operated by the University.

Furthermore, the Division aims to educate health care practitioners who will eventually increase the availability of health care in areas of Florida that suffer from health care shortages. The Division aims to alleviate some of these shortages by exposing the entire student body to the needs, challenges, and rewards of rural, underserved urban and geriatric care. Existing curricula require all students to attend ambulatory care clerkships in rural or urban areas, or both, making Nova Southeastern University strongly oriented toward a pattern of training its students in areas geographically removed from the health center itself, and to the care of indigent and multicultural population groups.

In doing this, it developed training programs which address the primary care needs of the regions most medically underserved populations.

MISSION STATEMENT

Physician Assistant Program Ft. Lauderdale

To provide a primary care training program designed for and dedicated to producing competent physician assistants who will provide quality health care in rural, urban, underserved and culturally diverse communities; and

To increase the accessibility of quality health care in the primary care setting; and

To prepare students for life-long learning and leadership roles; and

To promote the physician assistant profession.

***Nova Southeastern University
College of Allied Health & Nursing
Physician Assistant Department - Fort Lauderdale***

Organization

President, Nova Southeastern University

Ray Ferrero, Jr., JD

Chancellor, Health Professions Division

Frederick Lippman, RPh, Ed.D

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Irvin Rosenbaum, MPA, DPA, Ed.D

Dean, College of Allied Health and Nursing

Richard E. Davis, Ed.D, PA-C, DFAAPA

Associate Dean, Physician Assistant Education Programs

William H. Marquardt, MA, PA-C, DFAAPA

Chair, Physician Assistant Department

Melissa J. Coffman, MPA, PA-C

Associate Chair, Physician Assistant Department

Academic Director

C. Richard Finley, Ed.D, PA-C, DFAAPA

Medical Director

Morton A. Diamond, MD

Clinical Director

Odo K. McCallum, MPH, CHES

**NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM
Ft. Lauderdale**

FACULTY & STAFF

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Associate Chair Academic Director Associate Professor	C. Richard Finley, Ed.D, PA-C cfinley@nova.edu	(954) 262-1288
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Admissions Staff	Linda George lindgeor@nova.edu	(954) 262-1120
Admissions Staff	Minerva Bruny bruny@nova.edu	(954) 262-1085

**Curriculum Outline Master of Medical Science (MMS)
Physician Assistant Program
Ft. Lauderdale**

Start Date: June 2009

Length: 27 months

Degree: Master of Medical Science (MMS)

Didactic: 14 months

Clinical: 13 months

First Semester (Summer I; June 2008-August 2008):

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
ANA 5420	Anatomy	54	28	5
PHS 5400	Physiology	54		4
PAC 5400	Clinical Pathophysiology	48		3
PAC 5000	Physical Diagnosis I	30	36	3
PAC 5002	Medical Terminology	4	14	1
PCO 5300	Biomedical Principles	18		1
PAC 5003	Fundamentals of Medical Imaging	18		1
PAC 5001	Introduction to the PA Profession	16		1
Total Hours		242	78	19

Second Semester (Fall; Sept 2008 – Dec 2008):

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
MIC 5400	Microbiology	52		3
PAC 5404	Legal and Ethical Issues in Healthcare	34		2
PAC 5100	Physical Diagnosis II	30	36	3
PCO 5400	Pharmacology I	38		2
PAC 5110	Clinical Medicine and Surgery I	112		7
PAC 5229	Electrocardiography	30	6	2
PAC 5130	Clinical Laboratory Medicine I	20	2	1
Total Hours		316	44	20

Third Semester (Winter; Jan 2009 – May 2009):

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
PAC 5200	Physical Diagnosis III	32	38	3
PAC 5210	Clinical Medicine and Surgery II	120		8
PAC 5310	Clinical Medicine and Surgery III	112		7
PAC 5131	Clinical Laboratory Medicine II	36		2
PCO 5410	Pharmacology II	72		4
PAC 5311	Clinical Psychiatry	45		3
PAC 5410	Complementary Medicine and Nutrition	30		2
PAC 5412	Interpretation and Evaluation of Medical Literature	<u>32</u>		<u>2</u>
Total Hours		479	38	31

Fourth Semester (Summer II Advanced Didactic; June 2009 – July 2009):

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
PAC 5460	Life Support Procedures & Skills	24	40	3
PAC 5510	Clinical Procedures & Surgical Skills	58	26	5
PAC 5129	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	22		1
PAC 5006	PA & Health Care Dynamics	18		1
PAC 5010	Core Competencies	15		1
PAC 5407	Clinical Pharmacology	50	1	3
PAC 5408	Clinical Genetics	<u>36</u>		<u>2</u>
Total Hours		223	67	16

Clinical Curriculum-Second Year (August 2009– August 2010):

<u>Course #</u>	<u>Rotation Title</u>	<u>Weeks/Contact Hrs</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
PAC 6304	Prenatal Care & Gynecology	6 / 270	6
PAC 6311	Internal Medicine	6 / 270	6
PAC 6313	Surgery	6 / 300	6
PAC 6315	Emergency Medicine	6 / 270	6
PAC 6317	Pediatrics	6 / 240	6
PAC 6318	Family Medicine	6 / 250	6
PAC 6401	Elective I	6 / 270	6
PAC 6402	Elective II	6 / 270	6
PAC 6308	Elective III	4 / 160	4
PAC 6500	Graduate Project		3
Total Contact Hours for the Second Year		2300	55

*Approved by Curriculum Committee 03/20/2008
Modified 03/20/2008*

**WELCOME TO THE
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM
FORT LAUDERDALE**

Hello and Welcome Everyone!

We are very happy to welcome you to the Nova Southeastern University Physician Assistant Program in Fort Lauderdale. We want you to feel that your association with the program will be mutually beneficial and pleasant.

You have joined an organization that has established an outstanding reputation for quality Physician Assistant education. Credit for this goes to every one of our faculty, staff, and graduates. We have worked hard as a team to watch this program prosper and grow, and we're extremely proud of the progress we have made. We hope you, too, will find satisfaction and take pride in your work here.

This Academic Handbook provides answers to many of your questions about the program, as well as the guidelines and procedures we abide by - our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to us. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with any faculty or administration member. You are responsible for reading and understanding this material. In addition to clarifying responsibilities, we hope this material also gives you an indication of our interest in the welfare of all who learn here.

From time to time, the information included in our guidelines may change. Every effort will be made to keep you informed through appropriate lines of communication, including posting on bulletin boards and/or notices sent directly to you or your class officers via E-mail. Please be flexible and understanding. Adjustments will always be for your benefit and the facilitation of learning. Nova Southeastern University and the Fort Lauderdale Physician Assistant Program are committed to assuring that you have a stimulating and productive learning experience.

I extend to you my personal best wishes for success and happiness as you progress through the Physician Assistant Program here at Fort Lauderdale. If I can assist you in any way, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

C. Richard Finley

C. Richard Finley, Ed.D, PA-C
Academic Director
Associate Professor

You're Part of Our Team...

As a member of the NSU-FTL PA Program team, you are expected to continually contribute your talents, learning abilities, and energies to improving the environment and quality of the program. In return, you will be given opportunities and tools to learn and advance in your new career.

The NSU-FTL PA Program is dedicated to two essential standards:

1. To provide our faculty, staff, and students with an environment that fosters professional excellence and stimulates interest in improving the educational process and the PA profession.
2. To provide our students with the finest quality Physician Assistant education possible with the resources available to us.

Successful completion of the program will be based on competent academic and clinical performance utilizing established standards and guidelines, coupled with a good team attitude. No one will be denied learning opportunities on the basis of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential learning functions.

Program Overview

The NSU Ft. Lauderdale PA Program enrolled its first class in 1993. Since then, the program has established an outstanding reputation for quality education and has earned continuous accreditation.

The program is a 27-month health professional program preparing individuals to practice medicine with the supervision of a physician, and is divided into three phases. The first is 12 months in length and is referred to as the “academic” or “didactic” year. The second phase is 2 months in length and is termed the “advanced didactic” semester. The final phase is the “clinical” year and is the 13 months during which you transition from studying the science of medicine - to practicing the art of medicine.

Student Evaluation

During the didactic or academic year you will be formally evaluated in several ways including, but not limited to, in-class participation, written examinations, and practical skills evaluations. Grading procedures for each course are determined by the respective course directors and will be outlined in the syllabus received at the onset of each course.

Academic to Clinical Promotion

Successful progress through the curriculum requires continuous, satisfactory, academic and professional performance. At the end of each semester, the Academic Director, Department Chair, and the Committee on Student Progress will evaluate your performance to determine timely promotion to the next term.

Promotion to the clinical year is dependent upon successful completion of all courses during the didactic curriculum. Failure to pass any of the didactic components or their remediations may lengthen your time in the program, delay graduation, incur additional tuition, or result in dismissal from the program.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Administration of Student Records

The tasks of maintaining student records and providing related administrative direction are assigned to the Program Director. Questions regarding your records should be directed to the Program Director.

Student Files

Files on students are maintained by the following departments or individuals:

1. The Admissions Office – application records
2. The Registrars Office – official transcripts
3. The NSU Student Health Clinic – health / immunity records
4. The PA Department - academic records
5. Your Academic Advisor

It's vital that you keep your **personal information up-to-date!** If you have a change in any of the following items, please be sure to notify the program AND the Registrar as soon as possible:

1. Legal name
2. Home address
3. Contact telephone number(s)
4. Person to call in case of emergency

You may view information that is kept in your PA Program student file in accordance with the guidelines and procedures outlined in the student handbook. Please ask the Program Director, in writing, to make these arrangements for you.

Health Insurance

Health Insurance is required. You must maintain a valid health insurance policy throughout your course of study in the program. Failure to maintain a valid insurance policy will result in you being removed from the program until proof of compliance is provided. At the outset, and throughout your time in the program, you may be required to show proof of a valid health insurance policy on demand.

Any costs incurred through illness and/or a hospitalization during attendance at the PA Program is your sole responsibility.

Business Hours

The PA Program office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday.

Lunch breaks are scheduled into the regular class day. Your particular hours of work and the scheduling of your lunch periods are determined by the PA Program.

Only rarely will you be required to attend evening classes or activities. These, however, are **mandatory** and you will need to make the necessary accommodations. You will be given as much prior notice as possible for such activities.

Please be flexible. Class, break, and lunch times and locations are subject to change AT ANY TIME, and you must maintain the flexibility to adapt to sudden changes. The program will make every reasonable attempt to notify you of schedule changes as far in advance as is possible.

Emergencies During School Hours

From time to time emergencies may arise during school hours. If you are aware of a possible situation requiring your immediate attention, please give this information to the program secretaries who will relay a message as necessary.

Loitering In and Around the PA Program Office

The PA Department offices are where business is being conducted on your behalf. Loitering around or in the PA offices is not appropriate, and visits must be limited to official business with faculty and staff. Student lounge areas are available on campus for breaks and study.

When meeting with faculty or staff, DO NOT proceed to their offices without first obtaining permission from the program staff in the reception area. NO student will be received by faculty or staff if NOT in the proper attire, including lab coat.

Copy Machines and Phones in the PA Office

The copier, fax, and phones in the PA Department offices are for faculty and staff use only. Students are not permitted to use university phones for personal use, except for emergency cases. Copy machines are available in the libraries.

Academic Advisors

Upon matriculation you were formally assigned to a faculty member as an Academic Advisor. You are expected to meet with your Academic Advisor at least once per semester to monitor your progress and assist in your successful completion of the program. You may schedule this, or additional appointments, at any time during the year.

Your Academic Advisor, being aware of many valuable resources, can assist you in every facet of the program if you are having problems that might interfere with your studies or progress. Do not hesitate to contact your advisor. Also, it is expected that you respond to any email communication from your Academic Advisor within 24 hours of receipt.

Student Grievance Policy

Normally, you will be expected to use the Grievance Procedure outlined in the College of Allied Health & Nursing Handbook. However, if the problem or complaint is of a personal or sensitive nature, you may meet first with any member of the faculty or the program administration to discuss it. He or she will guide you to the appropriate resources.

Confidential Information

Our students, preceptors, and patients trust us with important information relating to their lives, practices, and medical problems. The nature of this relationship requires maintenance of confidentiality. In safeguarding the information received, the PA Program earns the respect and further trust of the people we deal with.

Your matriculation in the PA Program obliges you to maintain confidentiality, even after you leave our program.

Any violation of confidentiality seriously injures the PA Program's reputation and effectiveness. Therefore, please do not discuss PA Program business with anyone who does not work for us or who is not enrolled in our program. Even casual remarks and suppositions can be misinterpreted and repeated, so develop the discipline necessary to maintain confidentiality.

If you hear, see, or otherwise become aware of anyone breaking this trust, consider what he or she might do with information they get from you. Any violation of this confidentiality must be reported to the Program Director.

PA Student Dress Code

Health professionals enjoy the respect of colleagues and patients largely due to their expertise, education, and professionalism. A substantial degree of this respect comes from appropriate appearance and dress. To that end, the PA program has a prescribed dress code, believing strongly in the need for professional appearance. Students **can, and will, be sent home if not in proper attire.**

All lab coats, scrubs, and attire should be clean, neat, and pressed to affect a professional image at all times. If stained or worn, clothing items should be immediately replaced. Costs of uniform items are the responsibility of the student.

Appropriate dress shall be either navy blue scrubs or medical business attire. Short pants, jeans, denim, or dungaree slacks are not permitted at any time. Certain footwear such as flip-flops, beach thongs, and bedroom slippers are not considered appropriate business attire.

Lab Coats (short, intern-style) with prescribed patches and embroidery **must be worn at all times during class hours whenever you leave the classroom.** This includes during breaks and at lunch (on campus).

Scrubs may be worn at any time during the year. They must be navy blue with matching tops and bottoms. Drawstrings should be tied and tucked into the pants. Lab coats must be worn over scrubs. Athletic shoes may be worn with scrubs. **Only white, blue or gray colored T-shirts** may be worn under scrubs in lecture halls and labs.

Institutional Scrubs, hospital or clinic scrubs are **NOT permitted at HPD.** Institutional scrubs are those marked with the logo or name of another facility.

Sweat Shirts are permitted to be worn over your clothing when in class or on campus. Sweat shirt colors will be limited to dark blue, gray, or white. Except for the NSU logo, the sweat shirt must have no writing, insignia or pictures of any kind.

Physical Exam (Physical Diagnosis) Lab Attire includes a gray short-sleeved tee shirt with the PA program logo. No logo or writing should be on the back of the tee shirt. Shorts should be Navy blue “gym-type” shorts with elastic waistband and drawstrings with PA program logo on pant leg. Lab attire is permitted to be worn in lab only. Athletic shoes and socks must be worn at all times in the lab except as dictated by the instructor, or material. Lab uniform, tee shirts and shorts may be purchased at the NSU bookstore on campus.

Under-Attire for Females in Lab must be sports bra or similar under-attire. All students must be prepared and able to remove tee shirts at any time during physical examination labs.

Recommended: Anatomy laboratory can be harsh on lab coats and scrubs. We recommend that you obtain a separate coat and scrubs for this activity.

Elections

Elections for several student government positions and committees will be held during the first semester. Class officers from the previous year will meet to discuss the responsibilities and time commitment involved with each of the positions. The PA Faculty representative to the PA Student Society (PASS), will be available during these sessions as well.

Once elected, any class officer must be in good academic standard to remain in that position.

Identification Badges

Identification badges must be worn at all times while on campus. This protects you and your fellow students, as well as your personal property. Please cooperate with the instructions of security or police officers regarding the display or procurement of identification badges. You may be denied entrance into the facility without proper display of identification.

Community Relations

The success of the PA Program depends upon the quality of our relationships with the College, the Health Professions Division, the University, our clinical sites, our patients, and the public at large. These entities are collectively known as our community, and their impression of the PA Program and their interest and willingness to deal with us is greatly formed by the students, faculty, and staff that they come in contact with. In a sense, you are a PA Program ambassador. The more goodwill you promote, the more the community will respect and appreciate you, the Program, and our services.

Here are several things you can do to promote a good impression of our Program:

1. Act competently and deal with faculty, staff, administration, university employees, visitors, preceptors, visiting faculty, and patients in a courteous and respectful manner.
2. Communicate pleasantly and respectfully with other students at all times.
3. Follow up on questions about the program promptly (or refer appropriately), provide businesslike replies to inquiries and requests, and perform all your learning duties in an orderly manner.
4. Take great pride in your work and enjoy doing your very best.
5. Always dress in professional attire, which includes lab coat while on campus.

Classroom Behavior and Conduct

Students are expected to always conduct themselves in a responsible and professional manner consistent with the high standards of the medical profession and NSU.

Professional behavior and decorum is a requirement for successful completion of this program. This will be evaluated in both the classroom and in associated encounters with your instructors, staff, and the community. Failure to adhere to this standard, regardless of academic achievement, will subject the individual to referral for possible disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

Inappropriate classroom behavior is handled in accordance with the Student Handbook. Remedies and/or consequences of indiscretions will be considered by the Committee on Student Progress and the Department Chair.

Beepers, cell phones, and other electronic devices (excluding laptop computers) must be turned off during class hours as they are distracting to fellow students and instructors. When laptop computers are used during lectures, they are to be used for lecture topic and notes ONLY

HPD mandates that NO FOOD or DRINK be allowed in the classroom. If you are eating or drinking in the classroom, you will be asked to dispose of the food or drink or to leave the classroom.

Arriving to class after the lecture has begun is extremely disruptive to your classmates and the lecturer. The same is true of leaving after class has begun, and must be limited to urgent situations. In either circumstance, a student **may be denied** entrance to the classroom once a lecture has begun.

Course Assignment Format: Word Processing

Unless specifically indicated by the instructor, or when prior arrangements have been made, all written work (history and physical exams, reports, essays, book reviews projects, etc.) must be submitted in electronic form. If not agreed upon prior, any work submitted that is hand written will be considered incomplete and graded accordingly.

All preparation, binding, assembly, and copying are your responsibility. There are several computer laboratories located within HPD and on campus. The PA program has no computers available for this use.

Harassment

Harassment of any sort by students, faculty, or staff will not be tolerated. For proper policy and procedure on harassment, please refer to the CAH&N Student Handbook.

Telecommunications: E-mail and Internet Access Account

During your time with the PA Program you will routinely be required to access information and data via E-mail and the Internet. Your NSU E-mail account is the key to effective communication while enrolled in the PA Program. E-mail can be accessed through the microcomputer laboratories anywhere on the campus, or from home utilizing standard POP.mail systems such as Netscape, Eudora, or Explorer. You are required to check your E-mail daily. The PA Program administration, faculty, and staff will use E-mail routinely to communicate with you or the entire class. **Failure to check your E-mail will not be accepted as a reason for missed communication.** It is recommended that E-mail be checked before class and at the end of the day.

University Telecommunications: Issues and Implications

You will receive training on several electronic / online computer resources during orientation, including WebStar, WebCT, E-mail, class listserves, and NSU's electronic library, among others. Faculty, staff, and administration rely heavily on these tools as aids in communication and providing instruction as well as feedback. The faculty E-mail listing is on page 8 of this document or can be obtained through the program website.

The PA Program maintains a web site at: <http://www.nova.edu/pa>

This site includes a wealth of routine information and resources to be used throughout your time in the program and includes resources specific to each class and extending to the profession in general.

Code of Computer Ethics

Users of Nova Southeastern University's computer system, the Internet, and E-mail are subject to all applicable federal, state, and international computer laws. A copy of the Florida Computer Crimes Act and referenced Florida Statutes may be examined online or in the computer center. Additionally, unprofessional behavior on computer systems will not be tolerated and will be dealt with accordingly, to include, but not limited to dismissal from the program.

Outside Employment

What you do outside of this institution reflects on you, the Program, and the University and influences how you handle the demands of the program. We expect that your enrollment here is your primary responsibility. Any outside activity must not interfere with your ability to properly, and professionally perform your duties as a student, and no considerations will be made to accommodate either schedule, financial, or other implications of outside employment as they affect your work, attendance, or performance in this program.

The PA Program strongly discourages any employment during your 27 months in the Program. Outside of the PA Program there are a limited number of work-study positions available. Students are prohibited from performing clerical or administrative work for the Program.

Security Checks

The Campus Security or local police departments may exercise the right to inspect all packages and parcels entering and leaving our premises. Please cooperate with security personnel providing these services.

All students are required to undergo an initial background investigation upon acceptance to the program, conducted by an agency identified by the HPD and updated annually.

Communications

Optimal learning environments and relationships depend upon successful communication. Not only do you need to be aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information, you also need to communicate your ideas, suggestions, personal goals, or problems as they affect your learning.

You need to be aware of, and utilize all methods of communication, including the Academic Handbook, bulletin boards, E-mail, discussions with your advisor, discussions with instructors and course directors, etc.

E-mail, the on-line WebEvent calendar, classroom and on-line bulletin board(s) are our "official" ways of keeping everyone informed about new policies, changes in procedures, class schedules, and special events. Information of general interest is posted regularly on the bulletin boards in your classroom or outside the program office.

Community Activities

The PA Program recognizes the importance of community participation. Our institution and profession are dependent upon the community for patients, employees, and support and the community is dependent on our institution for employment opportunities and for our services.

The PA Program encourages and supports your participation in service activities that benefit and contribute to the community, and you will be involved in one or more approved community service activities required of the entire class. There will also be a number of extracurricular activities in which you may choose to volunteer your support.

If you have an idea for a project outside of the program requirements, your student PA society, NSU PASS, is a good place to make it happen. The program encourages students to participate in community-based projects.

Resolving Problems

Classroom concerns should first be brought to the attention of the class officers. Your **class president is the only person** that the faculty will recognize as speaking for the class. If the concern is not adequately addressed, it may then be handled in the following manner:

1. First, talk to the course instructor or your faculty advisor. These individuals are most familiar with your classroom and study needs and are in the best position to assist you.
2. If the instructor or your faculty advisor cannot help you resolve the matter, you may speak to the Academic Director who will give your problem or complaints prompt consideration.
3. If the Academic Director feels that the situation warrants further review or cannot resolve the problem, he or she will direct you to the Program Director for assistance.

Housekeeping

Neatness and good housekeeping are signs of efficiency and pride. You are expected to keep your classroom space neat and orderly at all times - it is a required safety and health precaution.

Easily accessible trash receptacles and containers are located throughout the buildings and campus. Please put all litter and recyclable materials in the appropriate receptacles and containers. Please do not put cigarettes out on the ground. Always be aware of good health and safety standards, including fire and loss prevention.

Please report any situation or equipment that needs repairing or replacing to the Program immediately.

Personal Mail

The PA Program will not accept or sign for any mail, and/or packages for students. Please do not use the PA Program as a personal mailing address.

Personal Property

The PA Program, the College of Allied Health and Nursing, the Health Professions Division, and / or NSU assume no responsibility for loss or damage to your personal property while on or off campus.

Restricted Areas

In the interest of safety and security, certain portions of the Health Professions facilities may be restricted to authorized personnel only. Such areas will be clearly marked. All areas in the building are designated no smoking areas.

Return of University Property

Any university property must be returned at the time of your dismissal or graduation, or whenever it is requested by administration, the department in control of the item, or the Program. You are responsible for any lost or damaged items. The value of any property issued and not returned may be charged to your financial account. Diplomas will be withheld for any outstanding financial obligation.

Visitors

Unescorted visitors are not allowed in our facilities. Visitors are not permitted in classrooms or laboratories without prior permission from the Program and instructor. No visitors are permitted in restricted areas (including Anatomy Lab) at any time. If you are expecting visitors, you must request permission from the Academic Director or Program Director and obtain permission from the instructor(s) giving the lecture that the visitor will be attending.

Organization Memberships

All students in the PA Program are automatically enrolled as members of the NSU PA Student Society (NSU PASS) and are strongly encouraged to become a member of the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA). The program will provide information.

Membership in the AAPA affords several publication and financial aid opportunities not available to non-members. The PA Student Society of NSU maintains official liaison with the AAPA and the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants (FAPA). Student membership in FAPA is also highly encouraged.

Florida Academy of Physician Assistants (FAPA)
222 S Westmonte Drive - Suite 101
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714-4236
(407) 774-7880
Fax: (407) 774-6440
<http://www.fapaonline.org>

Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA)
950 North Washington Street
Alexandria, VI 22314
(703) 836-2272
Fax: (703) 684-1924
Email: students@aapa.org
<http://saaapa.aapa.org/index.htm>

Test Administration Policy

These policies and procedures preserve the integrity and fairness of the examinations you will be taking during your didactic year.

Test Administration

1. All examinations will begin promptly, at the time designated. The dates, times, and locations of examinations are listed on the electronic WebEvent calendar.
2. Students are allowed access to the testing room prior to the start of the exam when permitted by the exam proctors.
3. No food or drinks are permitted in the classrooms per HPD policy.
4. Unless instructed in advance, you will take no material other than two #2 pencils and an eraser to your seat.
5. All books, book-bags, etc., brought to the testing room will be placed in the front of the room. All material will be secured. Adjacent chairs and floors around desks should have nothing on or in them.
6. All beepers, cellular phones, and other communication devices must be turned off during testing. Violation of this provision will be handled as "Disruptive Behavior".
7. You are expected to be seated no later than 3 minutes before the start time. When you arrive at your seat, you should immediately write your name on the outside of the testing packet and refrain from speaking. Exam conditions begin the moment you enter the classroom.
8. You must not open the test until instructed to do so. Anyone doing so will have the exam confiscated and a grade of "0" (zero) will be awarded for that exam.
9. Testing instructions will begin at the scheduled start time. Time limits for the exam will be announced and strictly enforced. **When time is complete, you must STOP. No additional time will be allowed to complete the examination, transfer answers onto the Scantron sheet, or fill out identification data.**
10. It is the responsibility of each student to properly mark the answers and identification information on the Scantron sheet. Any questionable, unreadable, or omitted answers will be marked incorrect. **Failure to accurately fill in identification information (name, NSU ID number, test form) may cause a delay in students receiving their test score and will result in a 5-point grade deduction for the exam.**

11. Once the test instructions have been given and the test has begun, the test packets will be collected from the seats of students who are absent.
12. Late entry into the exam is permitted only if no student has completed the exam and has left the exam room. If late entry into the exam is permitted, you will receive **no extra time** to complete the exam.
13. Students who arrive late and are not permitted to take the exam must then present themselves to the Academic Director/Associate Program Director to explain the situation. A make-up exam may be offered depending on the situation.
14. Once the examination has begun, **NO QUESTIONS ON ANY SUBJECT MAY BE ASKED OF THE PROCTORS.**
15. Do not communicate with each other in any way. This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. If suspected of either giving or receiving information, the proctor may collect the exam and dismiss you from the exam session. An incident statement will be forwarded to the PA Program Director for disposition.
16. You are allowed to make calculations and notes on the original exam booklet, unless otherwise instructed. You should mark your answers in the test booklet for use during the exam review. You may NOT make any notes or record answers on anything other than the test form or Scantron sheet provided. There will be NO extra time given to transfer your answers to the Scantron sheet.
17. You must not remove exam material from the room - turn in your exam and Scantron sheet to the proctor before leaving the room for any reason.
18. Any attempt to distribute information to other students taking the examination will be interpreted as an act of academic dishonesty.
19. The test proctor will provide 10-minute and 2-minute warnings indicating the remaining time for the testing session.
20. Those who complete the examination before the allotted time are permitted to quietly leave the room after submitting the Scantron to the proctor and are not permitted to return to the room. Students should take any personal belongings from the front of the room upon leaving.
21. Once you have left your seat to return the testing materials, no attempt to alter the Scantron will be allowed. Upon verification that all materials have been collected, the proctor will allow you to leave the test area. No attempt should be made to engage the proctor or other students in conversation.

22. **NOTE: Dishonest acts will subject the student to disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion from the program. Such acts include any attempt to pass examinations by improper means and to aid or abet another student in a dishonest act. Thus, any communication between students regarding any examination content will be considered a dishonest act and will subject the student to the above actions.**

Unusual Circumstances

1. Attendance at all testing is mandatory. If an emergency arises, you must notify the Academic Director/Associate Program Director. If the emergency arises after usual business hours you should leave a voice mail message on the Academic Director's voice mail (954) 262-1288. You must see the Academic Director/Associate Program Director the day you return to class.
2. In the event of an unexcused absence for an examination, a grade of zero will be entered for that exam. If an absence is deemed excused, a make-up examination will be offered, and the highest grade possible will be 75%. All make-up examinations will be offered on the scheduled day near the end of the semester. The decision regarding whether an absence from an examination is excused rests with the Academic Director and will be based exclusively upon review of appropriate, formal documentation. Grade disputes are considered under guidelines established by the College of Allied Health and Nursing.
3. Students are permitted to go to the restroom - one at a time. The exam and Scantron sheet must be turned in to the proctors upon leaving the room and returned to resume testing. Extra testing time will not be permitted for the use of restrooms.
4. If an emergency requires evacuation of the testing room, leave **ALL** exam material at your desk and quickly leave the classroom. Arrangements to continue the exam will be made based upon the situation and availability of a testing site.

Testing Review Process

1. An examination review will be conducted immediately following the examination. No electronic or other recording devices are allowed during the review session.
2. You are not required to be present at the review; however, this will be the only opportunity to review the exam.
3. During the review, an answer key with the correct answers for each question will be provided.
4. **The exam review is conducted under exam conditions, and students are not to communicate with each other in any way.** This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. If suspected of either giving or receiving information, the proctor may collect the exam booklet and answer key and dismiss the student from the session. An incident statement will be forwarded to the Program Director for disposition.

Examination Schedule

The examination schedule is set at the same time that the semester schedule is generated. This is a coordinated process not only within the Program but among other Colleges and Departments of HPD as well. The schedule is finalized well before the start of each semester. Unless an unusual or extraordinary situation occurs, there will be no changing of any set examination date.

Course Failures

If you should fail a course, a remedial exam is offered. Remedial exams will be graded on the same standard as all other examinations, but the passing grade in the course is limited to the lowest passing grade (75%).

If you fail to receive a passing grade on the remedial exam (<75%) the course failure remains and you will be referred to the Committee on Student Progress. The Committee will review the situation, and make recommendations to the Department Chair.

Course Evaluations

Every student is required to complete course and instructor evaluations at the conclusion of each semester. These are anonymous, and completed online within a specified period of time. **Final grades will not be posted until all evaluations are completed.**

Exam/Course Progress Notification

After each exam, if you either failed that exam, are failing the course, or both, you will receive an E-mail regarding your academic standing. It is mandatory that you meet with your academic advisor within two (2) school days from the notification date (see Appendix II).

Storage of Examination Materials

The Program will retain individual Scantrons and a copy of each examination, and all other evaluation instruments until you successfully complete the program and graduate, after which these materials will be destroyed.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE – DIDACTIC YEAR

Student Attendance – Didactic Year

Purpose

The Attendance Policy insures that every student has the necessary exposure to educational material and faculty. Complete comprehension can only be attained through interaction in the classroom, as well as extramural study.

Attendance

Attendance is **MANDATORY** under established guidelines published in the College of Allied Health and Nursing Student Handbook. You must attend all scheduled instructional periods. Failure to fulfill this requirement may be considered in the evaluations of academic performance and professional attitude. Ultimately, it could lead to referral to the Committee on Student Progress and / or a failing grade for a course.

You must be in your seat or be present in another specified location (e.g.: labs, exams, demonstrations, etc) whenever attendance is taken. The Audience Response System (ARS) devices are utilized to monitor attendance. You must, therefore, have the device with you for all instructional sessions.

If, at any time, you miss any component of the curriculum, it is your responsibility to report the absence to the Program and to contact the instructor or course director to discuss obtaining any materials missed. Additionally, makeup work may be required in order to expose you to critical information and knowledge.

Tardiness/Lateness

Arriving to class after the lecture has begun disrupts both the instructor and your fellow students. Lectures usually start ten minutes after the hour, and most instructors will allow students to enter the classroom until 15 minutes past the hour, after which you must wait until the next break or the start of the next session. You must then complete a **standard absence form** for the lecture or portion of the lecture missed.

Reporting Absences

A. Unexpected Absences: You must call the PA office and speak to the Academic Director by 8:00 AM on the day of the absence. If the Academic Director is unavailable, a message must be left on the voicemail system as to the nature of the absence along with a telephone number where you can be contacted.

Failure to notify the program office in this manner will result in the absence being unexcused, regardless of reason. You must then file a **standard absence form** upon return to campus (See appendix I).

B. Expected or Planned Absences: If you're aware of, expect, or are planning an absence, you must obtain approval from the Academic Director or the Assistant Academic Director prior to the absence. And, you must file a **standard absence form PRIOR** to the absence.

C. Retroactive excused absences will not be granted for **ANY** reason. It is the responsibility of the student to know and follow the attendance policy in order to avoid disciplinary action.

D. The **standard absence forms** are available from the PA Program office or the Academic Support Coordinator (See appendix I).

E. Excused Absences: See the College of Allied Health and Nursing Student Handbook for definition of "excused" absences. An excused absence only allows the student to make up any missed work, quizzes, or assignments.

F. Unexcused Absences: Absences not falling into the excused category are unexcused absences. See the College of Allied Health and Nursing Student Handbook for policies and guidelines.

G. You must provide proof of reason for an absence, at the discretion of the Academic Director, or the Assistant Academic Director. Refusal or failure to supply such proof will deem the absence unexcused.

Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of extraordinary circumstances, such as a death in the family, contact the Academic Director or Program Director as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements can be made.

There are also specific procedures we can follow in the event of being called for jury duty. If you receive a summons for jury duty, bring it to the Program Director who will explain the alternatives, including requests for postponement.

You are encouraged to participate in any local, state, and national elections during your time in the program, but please attempt to vote prior to or after normal class hours, as you will be responsible for any material missed.

Attendance Effect on Grades and Performance

Attendance may be taken at any scheduled instructional sessions. Absences will affect the fund of knowledge you will acquire in the first year, and may affect your final grades in the courses as well. The Academic Support Coordinator will record total numbers of absences, both excused and unexcused.

Because of the vast amount of knowledge to be gained in so little time, attendance in health professions programs is more critical than other academic disciplines. Attendance and active participation are reflective of commitment, accumulation of knowledge, and professional behavior.

After-Hours Assignments, Laboratories, and Classes

Classes or activities scheduled after normal 8:00AM – 5:00PM hours are done so for specific reasons, typically because the subject matter or skill covered requires additional resources not available during routine hours.

Because of the coordination, resources, and costs required to arrange classes and laboratory practicals after normal class hours, make-up sessions will not be arranged for those who miss them.

Course Directors will assign an incomplete grade to anyone who misses these sessions. The incomplete grade will not be removed until the student provides documented proof of having obtained the training on their own and at their own expense.

Military Reserves or National Guard

Students who serve in the uniformed services will be able to take the necessary time to fulfill this obligation and will retain all of their legal rights for continued matriculation under existing laws.

Unit commanders often allow these students to be excused from or reschedule routine requirements. Please consult with the Program Director about your specific situation or commitment.

You are expected to notify the program as soon as you are aware of the dates you will be on active duty so that arrangements can be made for your absence. You are responsible for any missed work during this absence. You will be asked to repeat courses to fulfill graduation requirements as necessary. Military service does not exempt students from completing requirements toward graduation.

Notices - Please Read Carefully

The statements in this Handbook and other notices or memos are to be considered as guidelines. Nova Southeastern University, the Health Professions Division, the College of Allied Health and Nursing, or the Physician Assistant Department, at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of these guidelines in this or other information materials at any time without prior notice. Any such action shall apply to existing, as well as future students with continued matriculation being the consideration between the student and the university. No one other than the Dean or Program Director may alter, modify, or officially interpret any of the guidelines in this Handbook. No statement or promises

by a faculty member class officer or program staff member may be interpreted as a change in guideline nor will it constitute an agreement with any student.

Should any provision in this Handbook, the College of Allied Health and Nursing Student Handbook, or the University Catalog be found to be unenforceable and invalid, such finding does not invalidate the entire orientation information material packet, but only the subject provision.

The guidelines in this material only apply to Physician Assistant students. You may encounter other students on this campus that are following procedural guidelines different from ours. Those students are not subject to our procedural guidelines. Nor are you subject to those they follow, unless specifically indicated in the most recent edition of the Student Handbook for the College of Allied Health and Nursing.

Nova Southeastern University, the Health Professions Division, the College of Allied Health and Nursing and the Physician Assistant Department reserves the rights to amend, modify, add to or delete its rules, guidelines, or policies and procedures affecting its institutional relationship with students as deemed necessary by the administration. Any such amendment, modification, addition, or deletion shall not be considered a violation of the relationship between the university and the student. Such right includes modification to academic requirements, curriculum, tuition, and / or fees when in the judgment of the administration such changes are required in the exercise of its education responsibility.

This material replaces all other previous materials for the NSU-FTL PA Program as of June 2009. The information contained in the Official Student Handbook, and the Health Professions Division Catalog supersedes and overrules the information contained in this material.

**Nova Southeastern University
Physician Assistant Program
Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

Receipt & Acknowledgment of Policies, Procedures & Materials

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of this material.

1. I have online access to and have reviewed the current **Academic Year Handbook**. I understand that the guidelines, rules and provisions described in it are subject to change at the discretion of the PA Department at any time, but that any changes will be thoroughly discussed prior to implementation. I further understand that this replaces all previous Academic Year Handbooks.
2. I have online access as well, to the current **Health Professions Division Catalog** and the **College of Allied Health & Nursing Student Handbook**.
3. My matriculation may be terminated for violating any policy, guideline or procedure in the materials referenced above.
4. I acknowledge that the PA program may record any or all practical laboratory examinations and/or exercises. I agree that the digital recording of my performance may be used for educational purposes, as well as a performance review for grading. The recording and its contents are the property of the PA program.
5. I acknowledge that the PA program will photograph me and that the image will be used for internal program purposes only.
6. I have been issued an audience response system (ARS) device to be utilized during my time in the program. I am personally and financially responsible for this equipment and will be charged its replacement cost if lost or damaged. I further understand that posting of final course grades and/or advancement in the curriculum is /are dependent on this requirement being satisfied.

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness Printed: _____ Date: _____

Witness Signature: _____

APPENDIX I

STUDENT ABSENCE REPORTING FORM

Didactic Year: Physician Assistant Program

To: **Academic Director/Associate Program Director**

From: _____ (student) Date: _____

*Academic Advisor: _____

*Date(s) of Absence: _____

Specific Classes/Sessions Missed: _____

Reason(s) for Absence: _____

Received by: _____

Date: _____

Excused Absence(s):

- Incapacitating Illness (Describe): _____
- Injury requiring bed rest (Describe): _____
- Unexpected family emergency (Describe): _____
- Other (Explain): _____

Unexcused Absence(s):

- Any excused absence not reported properly
- Business appointments
- Routine dental/medical appointments
- Social event: Wedding, Graduation, etc.
- Automobile/transportation breakdown
- Other (Describe): _____

Administrative Comments: _____

I did did not approve the above-mentioned absence.

Administrative Signature: _____ Date: _____

cc: Student file Lecturers Course Directors Academic Advisor

APPENDIX II

E-mail Notification of Unsatisfactory Exam / Course Performance

Dear:

Please make an appointment with your advisor concerning your course status after the last exam.

Print two (2) copies of the attached form, review and sign both, and bring them with you to your appointment as your advisor's signature is required on the form. Your advisor will keep one copy, and the other should be given to the Academic Support Coordinator to be retained in your academic file.

You have two (2) school days from the date of this notification to meet with your academic advisor and complete this process. You will not be given any further reminders to set up this meeting

If you have further questions please contact Judith Ricketts at (954) 262-1283.

Thank you.

NSU PA- Department

COURSE STATUS NOTIFICATION

Date

Student Name:

This is to notify you of your academic standing in the following course(s):

COURSE	STANDING
	Failed Exam/Failing Course (F/F)
	Failed Exam/Passing Course (F/P)
	Passed Exam/Failing Course (P/F)
	Missed Exam

In failing the exam and/or the course it is **mandatory** that you schedule a meeting with your faculty advisor within **2** school days. Your advisor and I would like to assist you in finding solutions to this situation.

I would also advise you to meet with the course instructors and/or course directors for advice on improving your performance on future examinations. Any questions regarding specific material from the course should be directed to the instructor.

You must be aware that if you remain in a failure status and do not achieve the required average of 75% to pass the course(s), you will be referred to the Committee on Student Progress and may be dismissed from the program.

If there is anything you would like to discuss with me personally, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

C. Richard Finley

C. Richard Finley, Ed.D, PA-C, DFAAPA
Academic Director

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advisor's name: _____

Advisor's Comments:

Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX III



Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession

Introduction

The physician assistant profession has revised its code of ethics several times since the profession began. Although the fundamental principles underlying the ethical care of patients have not changed, the societal framework in which those principles are applied has. Economic pressures of the health care system, social pressures of church and state, technological advances, and changing patient demographics continually transform the landscape in which PAs practice.

Previous codes of the profession were brief lists of tenets for PAs to live by in their professional lives. This document departs from that format by attempting to describe ways in which those tenets apply. Each situation is unique. Individual PAs must use their best judgment in a given situation while considering the preferences of the patient and the supervising physician, clinical information, ethical concepts, and legal obligations.

Four main bioethical principles broadly guided the development of these guidelines: autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

Autonomy, strictly speaking, means self-rule. Patients have the right to make autonomous decisions and choices, and physician assistants should respect these decisions and choices.

Beneficence means that PAs should act in the patient's best interest. In certain cases, respecting the patient's autonomy and acting in their best interests may be difficult to balance.

Nonmaleficence means to do no harm, to impose no unnecessary or unacceptable burden upon the patient.

Justice means that patients in similar circumstances should receive similar care. Justice also applies to norms for the fair distribution of resources, risks, and costs.

Physician assistants are expected to behave both legally and morally. They should know and understand the laws governing their practice. Likewise, they should understand the ethical responsibilities of being a health care professional. Legal requirements and ethical expectations will not always be in agreement. Generally speaking, the law describes minimum standards of acceptable behavior, and ethical principles delineate the highest moral standards of behavior.

When faced with an ethical dilemma, PAs may find the guidance they need in this document. If not, they may wish to seek guidance elsewhere – possibly from a supervising physician, a hospital ethics committee, an ethicist, trusted colleagues, or other AAPA policies. PAs should seek legal counsel when they are concerned about the potential legal consequences of their decisions.

The following sections discuss ethical conduct of PAs in their professional interactions with patients, physicians, colleagues, other health professionals, and the public. The "Statement of Values" within this document defines the fundamental values that the PA profession strives to uphold. These values provide the foundation upon which the guidelines rest. The guidelines were written with the understanding that no document can encompass all actual and potential ethical responsibilities, and PAs should not regard them as comprehensive.

Statement of Values of the Physician Assistant Profession

Physician assistants hold as their primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings.

Physician assistants uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

Physician assistants recognize and promote the value of diversity.

Physician assistants treat equally all persons who seek their care.

Physician assistants hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.

Physician assistants assess their personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve their medical practice.

Physician assistants actively seek to expand their knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.

Physician assistants work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.

Physician assistants use their knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.

Physician assistants respect their professional relationship with physicians.

Physician assistants share and expand knowledge within the profession.

The PA and Patient

PA Role and Responsibilities

Physician assistant practice flows out of a unique relationship that involves the PA, the physician, and the patient. The individual patient–PA relationship is based on mutual respect and an agreement to work together regarding medical care. In addition, PAs practice medicine with physician supervision; therefore, the care that a PA provides is an extension of the care of the supervising physician. The patient–PA relationship is also a patient– PA–physician relationship.

The principal value of the physician assistant profession is to respect the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings. This concept is the foundation of the patient–PA relationship. Physician assistants have an ethical obligation to see that each of their patients receives appropriate care. PAs should be sensitive to the beliefs and expectations of the patient. PAs should recognize that each patient is unique and has an ethical right to self-determination.

While PAs are not expected to ignore their own personal values, scientific or ethical standards, or the law, they should not allow their personal beliefs to restrict patient access to care. A PA has an ethical duty to offer each patient the full range of information on relevant options for their health care. If personal moral, religious, or ethical beliefs prevent a PA from offering the full range of treatments available or care the patient desires, the PA has an ethical duty to refer a patient to another qualified provider. That referral should not restrict a patient’s access to care. PAs are obligated to care for patients in emergency situations and to responsibly transfer patients if they cannot care for them.

Cost Containment

Cost containment and resource allocation policies can present particular ethical challenges to clinicians. Physician assistants should always act in the best interests of their patients and as advocates when necessary. PAs should actively resist policies that restrict free exchange of medical information. For example, a PA should not withhold information about treatment options simply because the option is not covered by insurance. PAs should inform patients of financial incentives to limit care, use resources in a fair and efficient way, and avoid arrangements or financial incentives that conflict with the patient’s best interests.

The PA and Diversity

The physician assistant should respect the culture, values, beliefs, and expectations of the patient.

Non-discrimination

Physician assistants should not discriminate against classes or categories of patients in the delivery of needed health care. Such classes and categories include gender, color, creed, race, religion, age, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, nature of illness, disability, socioeconomic status, physical stature, body size, gender identity, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Initiation and Discontinuation of Care

In the absence of a preexisting patient–PA relationship, the physician assistant is under no ethical obligation to care for a person unless no other provider is available. A PA is morally bound to provide care in emergency situations and to arrange proper follow-up. PAs should keep in mind that contracts with health insurance plans might define a legal obligation to provide care to certain patients.

A physician assistant and supervising physician may discontinue their professional relationship with an established patient as long as proper procedures are followed. The PA and physician should provide the patient with adequate notice, offer to transfer records, and arrange for continuity of care if the patient has an ongoing medical condition. Discontinuation of the professional relationship should be undertaken only after a serious attempt has been made to clarify and understand the expectations and concerns of all involved parties.

If the patient decides to terminate the relationship, they are entitled to access appropriate information contained within their medical record.

Informed Consent

Physician assistants have a duty to protect and foster an individual patient’s free and informed choices. The doctrine of informed consent means that a PA provides adequate information that is comprehensible to a competent patient or patient

surrogate. At a minimum, this should include the nature of the medical condition, the objectives of the proposed treatment, treatment options, possible outcomes, and the risks involved. PAs should be committed to the concept of shared decision making, which involves assisting patients in making decisions that account for medical, situational, and personal factors.

In caring for adolescents, the PA should understand all of the laws and regulations in his or her jurisdiction that are related to the ability of minors to consent to or refuse health care. Adolescents should be encouraged to involve their families in health care decision making. The PA should also understand consent laws pertaining to emancipated or mature minors. (See the section on *Confidentiality*.)

When the person giving consent is a patient's surrogate, a family member, or other legally authorized representative, the PA should take reasonable care to assure that the decisions made are consistent with the patient's best interests and personal preferences, if known. If the PA believes the surrogate's choices do not reflect the patient's wishes or best interests, the PA should work to resolve the conflict. This may require the use of additional resources, such as an ethics committee.

Confidentiality

Physician assistants should maintain confidentiality. By maintaining confidentiality, PAs respect patient privacy and help to prevent discrimination based on medical conditions. If patients are confident that their privacy is protected, they are more likely to seek medical care and more likely to discuss their problems candidly.

In cases of adolescent patients, family support is important but should be balanced with the patient's need for confidentiality and the PA's obligation to respect their emerging autonomy. Adolescents may not be of age to make independent decisions about their health, but providers should respect that they soon will be. To the extent they can, PAs should allow these emerging adults to participate as fully as possible in decisions about their care. It is important that PAs be familiar with and understand the laws and regulations in their jurisdictions that relate to the confidentiality rights of adolescent patients. (See the section on *Informed Consent*.)

Any communication about a patient conducted in a manner that violates confidentiality is unethical. Because written, electronic, and verbal information may be intercepted or overheard, the PA should always be aware of anyone who might be monitoring communication about a patient.

PAs should choose methods of storage and transmission of patient information that minimize the likelihood of data becoming available to unauthorized persons or organizations. Computerized record keeping and electronic data transmission present unique challenges that can make the maintenance of patient confidentiality difficult. PAs should advocate for policies and procedures that secure the confidentiality of patient information.

The Patient and the Medical Record

Physician assistants have an obligation to keep information in the patient's medical record confidential. Information should be released only with the written permission of the patient or the patient's legally authorized representative. Specific exceptions to this general rule may exist (e.g., workers compensation, communicable disease, HIV, knife/gunshot wounds, abuse, substance abuse). It is important that a PA be familiar with and understand the laws and regulations in his or her jurisdiction that relate to the release of information. For example, stringent legal restrictions on release of genetic test results and mental health records often exist.

Both ethically and legally, a patient has certain rights to know the information contained in his or her medical record. While the chart is legally the property of the practice or the institution, the information in the chart is the property of the patient. Most states have laws that provide patients access to their medical records. The PA should know the laws and facilitate patient access to the information.

Disclosure

A physician assistant should disclose to his or her supervising physician information about errors made in the course of caring for a patient. The supervising physician and PA should disclose the error to the patient if such information is significant to the patient's interests and well being. Errors do not always constitute improper, negligent, or unethical behavior, but failure to disclose them may.

Care of Family Members and Co-workers

Treating oneself, co-workers, close friends, family members, or students whom the physician assistant supervises or teaches may be unethical or create conflicts of interest. For example, it might be ethically acceptable to treat one's own child for a case of otitis media but it probably is not acceptable to treat one's spouse for depression. PAs should be aware that their judgment might be less than objective in cases involving friends, family members, students, and colleagues and that providing "curbside" care might sway the individual from establishing an ongoing relationship with a provider. If it

becomes necessary to treat a family member or close associate, a formal patient-provider relationship should be established, and the PA should consider transferring the patient's care to another provider as soon as it is practical. If a close associate requests care, the PA may wish to assist by helping them find an appropriate provider.

There may be exceptions to this guideline, for example, when a PA runs an employee health center or works in occupational medicine. Even in those situations, the PA should be sure they do not provide informal treatment, but provide appropriate medical care in a formally established patient-provider relationship.

Genetic Testing

Evaluating the risk of disease and performing diagnostic genetic tests raise significant ethical concerns. Physician assistants should be informed about the benefits and risks of genetic tests. Testing should be undertaken only after proper informed consent is obtained. If PAs order or conduct the tests, they should assure that appropriate pre- and post-test counseling is provided.

PAs should be sure that patients understand the potential consequences of undergoing genetic tests – from impact on patients themselves, possible implications for other family members, and potential use of the information by insurance companies or others who might have access to the information. Because of the potential for discrimination by insurers, employers, or others, PAs should be particularly aware of the need for confidentiality concerning genetic test results.

Reproductive Decision Making

Patients have a right to access the full range of reproductive health care services, including fertility treatments, contraception, sterilization, and abortion. Physician assistants have an ethical obligation to provide balanced and unbiased clinical information about reproductive health care.

When the PA's personal values conflict with providing full disclosure or providing certain services such as sterilization or abortion, the PA need not become involved in that aspect of the patient's care. By referring the patient to a qualified provider who is willing to discuss and facilitate all treatment options, the PA fulfills their ethical obligation to ensure the patient's access to all legal options.

End of Life

Among the ethical principles that are fundamental to providing compassionate care at the end of life, the most essential is recognizing that dying is a personal experience and part of the life cycle.

Physician assistants should provide patients with the opportunity to plan for end of life care. Advance directives, living wills, durable power of attorney, and organ donation should be discussed during routine patient visits.

PAs should assure terminally-ill patients that their dignity is a priority and that relief of physical and mental suffering is paramount. PAs should exhibit non-judgmental attitudes and should assure their terminally-ill patients that they will not be abandoned. To the extent possible, patient or surrogate preferences should be honored, using the most appropriate measures consistent with their choices, including alternative and non-traditional treatments.

PAs should explain palliative and hospice care and facilitate patient access to those services. End of life care should include assessment and management of psychological, social, and spiritual or religious needs.

While respecting patients' wishes for particular treatments when possible, PAs also must weigh their ethical responsibility, in consultation with supervising physicians, to withhold futile treatments and to help patients understand such medical decisions. PAs should involve the physician in all near-death planning. The PA should only withdraw life support with the supervising physician's agreement and in accordance with the policies of the health care institution.

The PA and Individual Professionalism

Conflict of Interest

Physician assistants should place service to patients before personal material gain and should avoid undue influence on their clinical judgment. Trust can be undermined by even the appearance of improper influence. Examples of excessive or undue influence on clinical judgment can take several forms. These may include financial incentives, pharmaceutical or other industry gifts, and business arrangements involving referrals. PAs should disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest to their patients.

Acceptance of gifts, trips, hospitality, or other items is discouraged. Before accepting a gift or financial arrangement, PAs might consider the guidelines of the Royal College of Physicians, "Would I be willing to have this arrangement generally known?" or of the American College of Physicians, "What would the public or my patients think of this

arrangement?”

Professional Identity

Physician assistants should not misrepresent directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, or identity. Physician assistants should uphold the dignity of the PA profession and accept its ethical values.

Competency

Physician assistants should commit themselves to providing competent medical care and extend to each patient the full measure of their professional ability as dedicated, empathetic health care providers. PAs should also strive to maintain and increase the quality of their health care knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence through individual study and continuing education.

Sexual Relationships

It is unethical for physician assistants to become sexually involved with patients. It also may be unethical for PAs to become sexually involved with former patients or key third parties. Key third parties are individuals who have influence over the patient. These might include spouses or partners, parents, guardians, or surrogates.

Such relationships generally are unethical because of the PA’s position of authority and the inherent imbalance of knowledge, expertise, and status. Issues such as dependence, trust, transference, and inequalities of power may lead to increased vulnerability on the part of the current or former patients or key third parties.

Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

It is unethical for physician assistants to engage in or condone any form of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is defined as any behavior, action, or policy that adversely affects an individual or group of individuals due to disparate treatment, disparate impact, or the creation of a hostile or intimidating work or learning environment.

It is unethical for PAs to engage in or condone any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or academic environment, or

Accepting or rejecting such conduct affects or may be perceived to affect professional decisions concerning an individual, or

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's training or professional position.

The PA and Other Professionals

Team Practice

Physician assistants should be committed to working collegially with other members of the health care team to assure integrated, well-managed, and effective care of patients. PAs should strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with other health care professionals, their organizations, and the general public.

Illegal and Unethical Conduct

Physician assistants should not participate in or conceal any activity that will bring discredit or dishonor to the PA profession. They should report illegal or unethical conduct by health care professionals to the appropriate authorities.

Impairment

Physician assistants have an ethical responsibility to protect patients and the public by identifying and assisting impaired colleagues. “Impaired” means being unable to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety because of physical or mental illness, loss of motor skills, or excessive use or abuse of drugs and alcohol.

PAs should be able to recognize impairment in physician supervisors, PAs, and other health care providers and should seek assistance from appropriate resources to encourage these individuals to obtain treatment.

PA–Physician Relationship

Supervision should include ongoing communication between the physician and the physician assistant regarding patient care. The PA should consult the supervising physician whenever it will safeguard or advance the welfare of the patient. This includes seeking assistance in situations of conflict with a patient or another health care professional.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine

When a patient asks about an alternative therapy, the PA has an ethical obligation to gain a basic understanding of the alternative therapy being considered or being used and how the treatment will affect the patient. If the treatment would harm the patient, the PA should work diligently to dissuade the patient from using it, advise other treatment, and perhaps consider transferring the patient to another provider.

The PA and the Health Care System

Workplace Actions

Physician assistants may face difficult personal decisions to withhold medical services when workplace actions (e.g., strikes, sick-outs, slowdowns, etc.) occur. The potential harm to patients should be carefully weighed against the potential improvements to working conditions and, ultimately, patient care that could result. In general, PAs should individually and collectively work to find alternatives to such actions in addressing workplace concerns.

PAs as Educators

All physician assistants have a responsibility to share knowledge and information with patients, other health professionals, students, and the public. The ethical duty to teach includes effective communication with patients so that they will have the information necessary to participate in their health care and wellness.

PAs and Research

The most important ethical principle in research is honesty. This includes assuring subjects' informed consent, following treatment protocols, and accurately reporting findings. Fraud and dishonesty in research should be reported so that the appropriate authorities can take action.

Physician assistants involved in research must be aware of potential conflicts of interest. The patient's welfare takes precedence over the desired research outcome. Any conflict of interest should be disclosed.

In scientific writing, PAs should report information honestly and accurately. Sources of funding for the research must be included in the published reports.

Plagiarism is unethical. Incorporating the words of others, either verbatim or by paraphrasing, without appropriate attribution is unethical and may have legal consequences. When submitting a document for publication, any previous publication of any portion of the document must be fully disclosed.

PAs as Expert Witnesses

The physician assistant expert witness should testify to what he or she believes to be the truth. The PA's review of medical facts should be thorough, fair, and impartial.

The PA expert witness should be fairly compensated for time spent preparing, appearing, and testifying. The PA should not accept a contingency fee based on the outcome of a case in which testimony is given or derive personal, financial, or professional favor in addition to compensation.

The PA and Society

Lawfulness

Physician assistants have the dual duty to respect the law and to work for positive change to laws that will enhance the health and well being of the community.

Executions

Physician assistants, as health care professionals, should not participate in executions because to do so would violate the ethical principle of beneficence.

Access to Care / Resource Allocation

Physician assistants have a responsibility to use health care resources in an appropriate and efficient manner so that all patients have access to needed health care. Resource allocation should be based on societal needs and policies, not the circumstances of an individual patient-PA encounter. PAs participating in policy decisions about resource allocation should consider medical need, cost-effectiveness, efficacy, and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens in society.

Community Well Being

Physician assistants should work for the health, well being, and the best interest of both the patient and the community. Sometimes there is a dynamic moral tension between the well being of the community in general and the individual patient. Conflict between an individual patient's best interest and the common good is not always easily resolved. In general, PAs should be committed to upholding and enhancing community values, be aware of the needs of the community, and use the

knowledge and experience acquired as professionals to contribute to an improved community.

Conclusion

The American Academy of Physician Assistants recognizes its responsibility to aid the PA profession as it strives to provide high quality, accessible health care. Physician assistants wrote these guidelines for themselves and other physician assistants. The ultimate goal is to honor patients and earn their trust while providing the best and most appropriate care possible. At the same time, PAs must understand their personal values and beliefs and recognize the ways in which those values and beliefs can impact the care they provide.