

UNIVERSAL COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION - PA

As a student enrolled in the Master of Health Science, Physician Assistant Program at South College, you have agreed to abide by the policies and procedures of the Program and the College. The policies on academic standards, student progress, grading, attendance and testing, course syllabi and objectives, classroom etiquette, dress code, food and beverages, academic integrity, and professional conduct are included in this document, **Universal Course Policies and Information – PA**, so that you will understand and fulfill your responsibilities. Resource information for obtaining assistance is also included.

COURSE POLICIES AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Students must have an account with the South College Student Portal in order to gain access to the Moodle web site for this course.
- Students must have a South College e-mail account for course communications with the instructors.
- Any incidence of cheating will result in disciplinary procedures as described in the South College Academic Honor Code (see South College Student Handbook).
- Students are expected to attend all class sessions for the duration of the scheduled period.
- Students must notify the instructors by voice mail or email 24 hours in advance if they cannot attend class, will be late to class, or must leave class early. A written excuse may be required for any absence.
- If a student has an excused absence from a class, it is their responsibility to obtain lecture notes and assignments from other students.
- All cell phones must be turned off or on vibrate during regular class sessions. No cell phones will be allowed in the room during exams. Students are not allowed to leave the classroom and re-enter it during an exam.
- If an exam is missed, the student will receive a zero for the exam unless they have a signed doctor's excuse or have made a previous arrangement with the course director. The decision of the instructor in concert with the Director of Academic Services on whether or not to offer the student a makeup exam is final. Makeup exams may be more rigorous than the regularly scheduled exams.
- Students must adhere to either the South College PA Program policies on behavior and dress. No gum, food, or drinks are allowed in the classroom or in the hallway.

Requirements for Graduation from the Physician Assistant Program

The following criteria must be met in order to qualify for graduation with the Masters of Health Science degree, and a certificate of completion from the South College Physician Assistant Program. Successful candidates for graduation must:

1. Satisfactorily complete all the courses within the didactic and clinical learning phases of the PA program with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0;
2. Achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 for every didactic quarter and every clinical rotation (obtaining a GPA of less than 3.0 for a single didactic quarter or single clinical rotation will result in probation, and obtaining a GPA of less than 3.0 for a second didactic quarter or second clinical rotation will result in dismissal);
3. Not fail (grade below 70%) any didactic courses or clinical rotations;
4. Successfully complete Didactic Summative Evaluation, Clinical Summative Review, and the Capstone Research Project with a minimum grade of 80%;

5. Successfully complete the ACLS and PALS courses;
6. Settle all financial accounts with the South College Business and Financial Aid Office.

Each candidate for the Masters of Health Science degree must be free of indebtedness to the College. The graduate degree and the academic transcript or certification of completion will not be given until all financial obligations to South College have been met.

Matriculation and attendance at the College are privileges granted to the student in consideration of performance of specified assignments and the maintenance of established standards of personal and professional conduct. The College reserves the right, and the student, by the act of matriculation, concedes to the College the right to require withdrawal at any time the College deems it necessary to safeguard the standards of scholarship, conduct, and compliance with regulations, or for such other reasons deemed appropriate by the College as set forth in this manual and/or the South College Catalog.

Evaluation of Professional Conduct

In concert with the core competencies for the PA profession, the faculty of the Masters of Health Science, Physician Assistant Program at South College has established standards for evaluating the professional conduct of all students. This evaluation of professional conduct is in direct compliance with the core competency of professionalism that will be required of practicing PAs in their daily clinical life. At the end of every quarter, the core faculty will conduct a professional review of students.

Professional conduct evaluations will include the components of the Physician Assistant Program Honor Code, the South College Code of Conduct, and the following considerations:

1. Concern for the welfare of patients as evidenced by: thoughtful and professional attitude in obtaining history and physical examinations; avoidance of foul language, offensive gestures, inappropriate remarks, or remarks with sexual overtones; treatment of patients with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with peers; manifestation of concern for the total patient.
2. Concern for the rights of others, shown by: treating professional and staff personnel, peer members of the PA class, and members of the health care team in a considerate manner and with a spirit of cooperation; acting with an egalitarian spirit towards all persons encountered in a classroom setting or a professional capacity regardless of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability; assuming an appropriate and equitable concern of duties among peers.
3. Responsibility to duty which involves: effectively undertaking duties with alacrity and persevering until complete or notifying responsible persons of problems; punctual attendance of classes, rounds, conferences and other clinical duties or offering appropriate explanation when unable to be present; notifying course directors and supervising house officers of absence or inability to carry out duties; seeing patients regularly, assuming responsibility for their care with appropriate supervision; identifying emergencies and responding appropriately; ensuring that he/she can be located when on duty by faculty or staff personnel.
4. Trustworthiness, that is: being truthful and intellectually honest in communication with others; acceptance of responsibility for meeting multiple demands by establishing proper priorities and by completing work necessary for the optimal care of patients; discerning accurately when supervision or advice is needed before acting; maintaining confidentiality of information concerning patients.
5. Professional demeanor, which means: a neat and clean appearance in attire that is professional to the patient population; maintaining equilibrium under pressures of fatigue, professional stress, or

personal problems; avoidance of the use or effects of alcohol or drugs while on duty or attending class.

The results of this review will be shared with and signed by each student; any student requiring additional counseling or professional development will meet with both his/her academic advisor, and the Director of Academic or Clinical Services. If a student receives an unsatisfactory evaluation regarding professional conduct, written notification to the student by the faculty is required together with written documentation of the events leading to the unsatisfactory evaluation. This notification must also be forwarded to the Student Progress Committee, which consists of the core faculty in the Physician Assistant Program, and to the Program Director. If the documented event involves a serious offense, the student may be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program regardless of previous academic record. If a student receives an unsatisfactory evaluation of professional conduct, or a violation of the Honor Code, the student may be issued a letter of warning, be placed on professional probation or, depending on the violation, be dismissed from the program. Recommendations for dismissal will be made by the Student Progress Committee to the Program Director and to the Executive Vice President of South College.

Academic Standards, Grading and Student Progress

The Student Progress Committee will review each student's scholastic achievement record, clinical learning progress, and professional behavior at the end of each quarter. The academic and clinical standards that must be met by each student are outlined above (Requirements for Graduation from the Physician Assistant Program). The professional standards that must be met by each student are also outlined above (Evaluation of Professional Conduct). The review process by the Student Progress Committee includes first a review by each Course Director or Clinical Preceptor, then review by the Faculty Advisor, then review by the Director of Academic or Clinical Services and finally by the Program Director. The findings of these reviews are then presented to the Student Progress Committee by the Director of Academic or Clinical Services. If a student fails to meet academic, clinical, and/or professional standards, the Committee will meet with the student in question.

Depending on the nature of the academic, clinical, and/or professional deficiency, the Committee will determine the status of the student's academic/clinical standing, which may include warning, probation, or dismissal from the program.

The categories of Academic/Clinical Standing are:

Good Standing: Status of a student who has met course and clinical requirements in a satisfactory manner, and has demonstrated appropriate professional behavior.

Warning: Status of a student whose performance in an academic course or clinical rotation places them in jeopardy of falling below the minimum stated standards, or who has exhibited questionable professional behavior.

Probation: Status of a student whose performance in an academic course or clinical rotation has fallen below the minimum stated standards, or who has exhibited unacceptable professional behavior.

Dismissal: Action whereby a student will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program of South College due to failure to adhere to academic, clinical, and/or professional standards. Dismissal will occur after review of the student's academic and/or professional deficiency by the Program Director, by the South College Graduate Academic Committee, and following approval by the South College Executive Vice President.

The causes of and consequences for receiving a Warning, Probation, or Dismissal will be:

Warning

A student who receives a grade of less than 70% on any quiz, exam, or other individual assessment tool (or who fails any pass/fail exercise) in a didactic course or clinical rotation will receive a warning and must meet with the Course Director for remediation. No remediation will be offered for final exams or final projects. A student may also receive a warning for questionable professional behavior.

Warning in a didactic course. The Course Director will ask the student to fill out a self-assessment form. The Course Director and student will review the questions and answers that the student missed on the exam or other assessment tool. The Course Director will ensure that the student understands the material and will make recommendations to the student for satisfactory performance on future exams/assessments. Acquisition of knowledge will be measured by student performance on the cumulative portion of the course midterm and/or final exam. Copies of the forms will be made for the Course Director, the Director of Academic Services, the student's faculty advisor, and the student's file.

Warning in a clinical rotation. The Course Director will ask the student to fill out a self-assessment form. The Course Director and student will review the questions and answers that the student missed on the exam or other assessment tool. The Course Director (and the Clinical Preceptor, where appropriate) will devise a remediation plan for the student based on the nature of his/her deficiency. The student must complete the plan with a passing grade. Copies of the forms will be made for the Course Director, the Director of Clinical Services, the Director of Academic Services, the student's faculty advisor, and the student's file.

Probation

Students will be placed on Probation if: (1) their GPA for any single didactic quarter is below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, (2) their GPA for any single clinical rotation is below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or (3) they fail to exhibit appropriate professional behavior.

1. *Students with a GPA below 3.0 for any individual didactic quarter.* A student with a GPA below 3.0 for any individual didactic quarter will receive notification from the Student Progress Committee that they are on Probation. If the student earns a GPA less than 3.0 in any subsequent didactic quarter, they will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program, even if their cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above.
2. *Students with a GPA below 3.0 for any individual clinical rotation.* A student with a GPA below 3.0 for any individual clinical rotation will receive notification from the Student Progress Committee that they are on Probation. If the student earns a GPA less than 3.0 in any subsequent clinical rotation, they will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program, even if their cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above.
3. *Students cited for a professional behavior issue.* A student who fails to exhibit appropriate professional behavior must meet with the Student Progress Committee to define a plan for remediation. The student and the Program Director must sign the remediation plan. If the student fails to fulfill or achieve the minimum outcomes described in his/her remediation plan, they will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program.

Dismissal

Students will be dismissed for failure to comply with academic, clinical, or professional standards. Students will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant program when:

1. A student fails (grade below a 70%) any didactic course or clinical rotation;
2. A student has a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at the end of any didactic quarter or clinical rotation;
3. A student receives a GPA less than 3.0 for two individual didactic quarters, even if the cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above;
4. A student receives a GPA less than 3.0 for two individual clinical rotations, even if the cumulative GPA is 3.0 or above;
5. A student fails to achieve the plans and outcomes listed in a remediation worksheet;
6. A student's professional conduct violates the performance standards set forth in the Physician Assistant Program's Honor Code, the South College Student Code of Conduct, state or federal law, or for moral turpitude, unprofessional behavior, criminal activity, or other reasons as defined by the College;
7. South College reserves the right to dismiss at any time a student who, in its judgment, is undesirable and whose continued enrollment is detrimental to him/herself or his/her fellow students or whose presence is disruptive to the learning environment or the orderly operation of the College.

Grading

Course Directors (in concert with the Course Instructors and Clinical Preceptors) will determine the means by which the final grade will be computed, which may include exam scores, oral presentations, written assignments, laboratory exercises, practical examinations, class participation, clinical participation, clinical performance, and other means of evaluation. Except in the case of an error on the part of faculty, preceptors, or administration, no grade changes will be honored after the end of the course. All didactic courses and clinical rotations will be graded with a letter grade of A, B, C, or F. All didactic courses and clinical rotations will be assigned appropriate credit hours. One credit hour is equal to approximately 10 hours of lecture, small group conference, and required practice session (laboratory session credit hours are determined separately). Course Directors also determine grade adjustments for the purpose of standardization with the A-F scale. Where objective testing is used, scores and grades will be correlated as follows:

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Percentage Score Range
A	4.00	90–100%
B	3.00	80–89%
C	2.00	70–79%
F	0.00	0–69%

Students enrolled in the Master of Health Science, Physician Assistant Program at South College must successfully complete all didactic courses with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in order to proceed to the

clinical learning phase of the program. In addition, in order to graduate and be awarded a Master of Health Science degree, students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of the clinical learning phase. Successful completion of the program is defined as having a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale for the entire program.

Attendance and Testing

The Physician Assistant curriculum requires students to master a large amount of information and skills in a very short period of time. Excused absences must be obtained from the Course Instructor or Course Director, in person or by phone, not by e-mail. The Physician Assistant program utilizes the following attendance and testing policies:

Attendance

1. Attendance for all scheduled lectures, laboratory sessions and student meetings is mandatory for all didactic students.
2. Call Back Clinical Learning Days are mandatory for all clinical learning students.
3. Didactic courses and Call Back Clinical Learning Days may utilize an attendance and grade reduction policy that may result in a failing course grade (F) for unexcused absences. Course Directors will outline and discuss their attendance and grade reduction policies in their course syllabi.
4. Address and phone number: Please update this information with the Registrar's Office (main campus – 2nd floor, Student Services Suite) as well as the program.

Testing

1. Absence will typically be defined as being 15 or more minutes late for a scheduled class or laboratory session.
2. Instructors may offer "make-up exams" in the event of an "Excused Absence" with the permission of the Director of Academic Services, within a reasonable period of time.
3. Make-up exams will not be given in the case of an "Unexcused Absence."
4. Students who are late for a scheduled exam will not be allowed additional time to complete the exam and will not be allowed to enter the classroom and initiate the exam if another student has already completed the exam and left the room.

Course Syllabi and Objectives

For every course and clinical learning rotation, students will be provided with a complete syllabus, which includes specific, measurable, course goals and learning objectives, outlining the intended scope of the course. Course descriptions and course schedules will also be included. Students are expected to learn all information identified in the course goals and learning objectives, and should expect to be tested on such material.

Each instructor, in concert with the Course Director, reserves the right to alter the syllabus as time, teaching materials, new clinical and scientific information, or the necessity of a sequenced, integrated, Physician Assistant curriculum dictate. Any altered materials will be made available to the student at lecture time. If there are questions regarding course goals, course objectives, learning objectives, or expected course outcomes the student is expected to direct their questions first to the Course Instructor, then the Course Director, and if needed to the Director of Academic Services.

Classroom Etiquette

Students must be seated in the classroom at the designated time and be prepared to participate in the scheduled lecture. Tardiness is both impolite and disruptive to the instructor and to the class. All cellular phones, pagers or alarm devices must be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Food and drink are not permitted in the classroom. The use of any tobacco products is prohibited anywhere on the South College campuses except in your personal vehicle. This includes the use of smokeless tobacco (dip, chew, etc.).

Dress Code

The South College Physician Assistant Program strives to prepare students to become assimilated into the professional medical and health science communities. The general attire and general appearance of students should reflect an attitude for their future professional role and function. Professional appearance and demeanor of students are a demonstration of self-respect, respect for their patients, and respect for their profession. From the outset, students will be viewed by the public as representatives of the Physician Assistant profession. Students may be asked to leave class because of inappropriate attire. They will not be permitted to return unless they are properly dressed.

The following standards of dress and appearance are to be observed by students at all times:

1. Students are expected to look professional and wear appropriate professional attire at all times. During the didactic year faculty may allow for casual dress in the classroom.
2. Torn clothing, hats, exercise clothing, sleeveless T-shirts or shirts with obscenities, mini-skirts/mini shorts, crop tops, denim clothing, and bare feet are never permitted.
3. When students are in clinical laboratories appropriate dress will be discussed by faculty.
4. Men should wear slacks and dress shirts. Women should wear dresses or skirts/slacks and blouses. Dress length should be appropriate for a dignified and professional appearance.
5. Shoes should be clean. Athletic shoes, open toed shoes (men and women) and/or sandals, or spike (or stiletto) heels should never be worn.
6. While present in any clinical setting or facility, students will be subject to rules and regulations established by that facility and South College concerning professional behavior.
7. When in contact with the general public while representing South College and when seeing patients, students are expected to look professional and wear appropriate professional attire.
8. Visual displaying of jewelry or other objects by means of body piercing, with the exception of one pair of earlobe earrings, is prohibited. This prohibition applies while on campus and while off campus when participating in a South College required or sponsored academic, social, or other activity. Any jewelry, including jewelry not displayed by means of body piercing, that interferes with one's ability to comply with any applicable requirements or standards (e.g., medical practice, hospital) is also prohibited.
9. Visual displaying of tattoos is prohibited, with the exception of acting as a patient during a laboratory. Visual displaying of tattoos that offend a reasonable standard of decency (e.g., obscene, sexually explicit, vulgar) are prohibited at all times.
10. In the presence of and if subject to an external policy (e.g., medical practice, hospital) that is stricter than this policy, then the external policy shall control.

Food and Beverages

Eating and drinking are prohibited in all areas of the college except in the student center. The student center, located on the first floor, has a refrigerator for storage of food and drinks, microwave ovens, vending machines, and ample seating. It is permissible to have a bottle of water with a secured screw-on top in the classroom, but it must be stored out-of-sight (in backpacks, purses, briefcases, and other appropriate carry-in bags) and **must not be left on desktops**, tabletops, counters, floors, or any location where it is visible.

Academic Integrity

Students have an obligation to exhibit honesty in carrying out their academic assignments. A student who does not exhibit academic integrity, or who violates either the South College Academic Honor Code or the Honor Code of the Physician Assistant Program becomes liable for dismissal from the PA program. A student is considered to have committed academic irregularity when he/she engages in any violation of either Honor Code or by violation of any of the following:

1. Plagiarism or copyright infringement. (South College defines plagiarism as presenting the work of others as one's own; cheating is taking or accepting any illicit advantage for any course work inside or outside of the classroom.)
2. Unauthorized communication (talking, notes, eye contact, gesturing) with another student during an examination.
3. Unauthorized use of notes and/or printed material during an examination.
4. Unauthorized exit from and/or re-entry into examination room.
5. Theft or unauthorized possession of an examination.
6. Students must refrain from bringing in any electronic devices, i.e. PDAs, cell phones, laptop computers to any testing area, unless told to do so by the course instructor.
7. Knowingly participating in or abetting with any of the above.

Advising and Counseling Services

If you are facing a difficult decision, suffer from depression or have a feeling of hopelessness, or are overwhelmed with your responsibilities, Carolyn Hillegas, Dean of Student Services (293-4539; chillegas@southcollegetn.edu) will meet with you to help you identify and evaluate your options, set priorities, or determine a course of action to resolve a problem or meet the demands in your life. If you desire to speak with a counselor, contact Mr. Gary Taylor (251-1820; gtaylor@southcollegetn.edu) and he will make an appointment for you with the college's counselor.

Students requesting special services (including accommodations for disabilities) from the college should contact Dean Hillegas for complete information on college policy and procedures. All special requests should be made at least one month prior to beginning classes in order to allow time for the request to be evaluated appropriately. South College does not discriminate on the basis of disability and is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.