

2020 – 2022

MMC PA Sciences Program Student Handbook



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2020 – 2022

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NOTE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program!

The development, implementation, and integration of the PA program into the rich and vibrant Meharry Medical College community truly commemorates a historical time in the expansion of medical education at this institution. The Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program will strive to add to the standard of excellence in medical education that is the foundation of Meharry Medical College.

The state-of-the-art simulation lab, Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) teaching platforms, and supportive community-based partners, ensures the program is able to fulfill its intention to prepare graduates for a successful and rewarding career as a physician assistant. Our goal is to engage, support, and prepare highly skilled PAs as primary care clinicians and public health policy advocates to the underserved communities in TN, the nation, and the world.

Meharry Medical College is excited to add this new chapter to its legacy of preparing healthcare providers to serve those in need.

Kenneth A. Mitchell, MPAS, PA-C
Program Director

WELCOME

MMC Physician Assistant Students:

The Faculty and Staff of the Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program welcomes you and congratulates you on being selected out of a very competitive applicant pool.

As members of the inaugural class you are making history and are among an exceptional group of 30 individuals who will carry the mission and vision of the program for life.

Becoming a Physician Assistant is one of life's most significant milestones. Use the next 29 months to cultivate lifelong relationships and professional development. The faculty and Staff are dedicated to your success and look forward to your transition from a student to a practicing Physician Assistant.

Welcome!

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook provides students with the policies, procedures, competencies, and expectations required during the program. It is a valuable source of information for success during the didactic phase and contains specific instructions, tools and guidelines to assist the student in obtaining the necessary knowledge and skills to competently navigate the didactic phase.

***The program reserves the right to amend this handbook and change or delete any existing rule, policy or procedure, or to add new rules, policies or procedures at any time and without prior notice.**

Mission, Vision & Goals

Meharry Medical College Mission Statement

Meharry Medical College is an academic sciences center that exists to improve the health care of minority and underserved communities by offering excellent education and training programs in the health sciences. True to its heritage, Meharry places special emphasis on providing opportunities for people of color, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, and others regardless of race or ethnicity; delivering high quality health services; and conducting research that fosters the elimination of health disparities.

Meharry Medical College Vision Statement

The leadership at Meharry Medical College is committed to enhancing our national reputation and expanding our global reach as a quality-driven academic health center noted for its:

- Leadership in diversifying the nation's health professions workforce;
- Highly effective and innovative educational and training programs;
- Enlightened health policy development and culturally sensitive evidence-based health services; and
- Preeminence in focused research that leads to the elimination of health disparities.

MMC PA Sciences Program Mission Statement

The Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program is committed to recruiting, educating, and graduating PA's that provide compassionate, high quality, medical care as an integral part of the healthcare team. True to the heritage of Meharry, emphasis will be placed on providing PA educational opportunities to people of color, the disadvantaged, and others regardless of race or ethnicity who are committed to increasing health care access and improving the health and well-being of minority and underserved communities.

MMC PA Sciences Program Vision

The MMC-PA Program will contribute to the Meharry Medical College mission and national reputation by:

- Developing an effective and innovative generalist PA educational program that equips our graduates to provide team-based patient centered care in a rapidly changing health care environment.

- Educating highly capable physicians assistants possessing strong clinical and leadership skills. Meharry PA students and graduates will contribute to strengthening PA roles, and join in the local and national healthcare policy debate on increasing health care access and eliminating health care disparities.
- Socializing PA students to see themselves as advocates and leaders in public health/population health issues, health policy development and the delivery of ethical and culturally competent health services.
- Engaging in meaningful community and research activities that contribute to improvements in patient care.
- Maintaining a commitment to diversifying the nation's PA work force.

MMC PA Sciences Program Goals

Guided by our core values we achieve our mission and vision by attaining the following goals:

- 1. To graduate competent Physician Assistants who will function as patient advocates and as integral members of the inter-professional team in meeting the healthcare needs of all.**

Metrics: Summative evaluation, job placement, PANCE pass rate and employer surveys.

Benchmarks: 100% summative evaluation pass rate, 100% ultimate PANCE pass rate at 1 year, and 90% job placement rate as a PA.

- 2. To foster the PA Program's commitment as well as each student's commitment to serving and to improving the health and well-being of minority and underserved communities.**

Metrics: Faculty and student surveys of community service learning activities; participation data in service learning projects, Graduate and alumni surveys, job placement, course surveys, and self-assessment surveys.

Benchmarks: Applicable survey average score of 3.5 or higher, percentage of graduates placed in Medically Underserved Area's greater than the pre-matriculate percentage from MUA's, percentage of graduates placed in MUA's greater than the national average reported in NCCPA and AAPA annual reports.

- 3. To foster, successful admission and matriculation for minority students in PA education.**

Metrics: Admissions data, student progression and promotion data, PANCE pass rate data

Benchmarks: Higher demographic numbers than the average matriculation of peer institutions, national PAEA matriculate averages, and equal to or greater than the American Community Survey data.

- 4. To provide comprehensive, quality education and to develop clinical competency for each Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant student this meets the accreditation standards of the ARC-PA.**

Metrics: Accreditation statement, PANCE scores, attrition, student and preceptor evaluations, institutional support (budget, personnel and facilities), and student to faculty ratio.

Benchmarks: <5% attrition, PANCE >85%, budget at or above median for size/Academic Health Center, student and preceptor evaluations 3.5 or higher (likert scale).

5. To improve health literacy for the minority and underserved communities by developing cultural awareness of and addressing the inherent barriers to health care and compliance.

Metrics: Faculty and student surveys of community service learning activities; participation data in service learning projects, Graduate and alumni surveys, job placement, course surveys, and self-assessment surveys.

Benchmarks: Applicable survey average score of 3.5 or higher, percentage of graduates placed in Medically Underserved Area's greater than the pre-matriculate percentage from MUA's, percentage of graduates placed in MUA's greater than the national average reported in NCCPA and AAPA annual reports.

Educational Program Objectives

The following competencies outline the expected outcomes for the Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program. All didactic and clinical experiences must contribute cumulatively to these outcomes. There are several instruments that will be used to measure acquisition and achievement of these competencies, including but not limited to: (1) Preceptor evaluations, (2) graduate exit surveys and (3) employment surveys.

The faculty and staff of the MMC PA Sciences program adopted the following competencies to serve as a roadmap to enter clinical practice as a competent physician assistant.

General Competency Areas: Patient Care (PC), Medical Knowledge (MK), Practice Based Learning and Improvement (PBLI), Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS), Professionalism (P), Systems Based Practice (SBP)

Patient Care –

PC 1- The ability to obtain record and present an accurate medical history for patients with commonly encountered medical, surgical and behavioral conditions across the lifespan.

PC 2- The ability to perform, record, and present a thorough physical examination including organ system specific examinations as indicated by patient presentation for patients across the lifespan, with commonly encountered medical, surgical and behavioral conditions.

PC 3- The ability to formulate a problem list and differential diagnosis for patients across the lifespan based upon historical information, physical examinations and laboratory and diagnostic studies.

PC 4- The ability to develop and implement patient management plan that are safe and effective and include preventative, emergent, acute and chronic care for patients across the lifespan.

PC 5- The ability to perform routine technical procedures safely and effectively.

PC 6- Provides screening and preventive care that improves wellness, modifies risk factors for illness and injury and detects illness in early treatable stages.

PC 7- The student will demonstrate sound clinical decision making skills in their abilities to order and interpret lab and diagnostic studies for patients across the lifespan using current evidence based medicine.

PC 8- The ability to reason deductively in solving clinical problems.

PC 9- An awareness of health promotion and disease prevention by providing appropriate counseling, patient and family education, related to preventable diseases, communicable diseases, immunization schedules and healthy lifestyles for patients across the lifespan.

Medical Knowledge- The student will demonstrate:

MK 1- The ability to apply knowledge of the normal structure, function and behavior of the body (as an intact organism) and each of its major organ systems to the diagnosis and management of specific medical conditions.

MK 2- Develop a diagnostic management plan for common medical, surgical and behavioral conditions for patients across the lifespan, taking into consideration cost, invasiveness, and sensitivity and specificity.

MK 3- Apply scientific principles to explain etiologies, risk factors, and underlying pathologic processes for preventative, emergent, acute and chronic medical conditions, for patients across the lifespan.

MK 4- An understanding of the principles of pharmacology and therapeutics including indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions and adverse reactions.

MK 5- Counsel and educate patients on preventative care, emergent, chronic and acute disease processes

MK 6- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate, diagnosis and treat a diverse population of patients across the lifespan.

Practice Based Learning and Improvement: The student will demonstrate:

PBLI 1- The ability to use information and medical evidence to improve quality of practice and recognize medical errors.

PBLI 2- The ability to locate, appraise, integrate and apply evidence from scientific studies/medical literature to their patient's health and care.

PBLI 3- The ability to explain biomedical information treatment choices to patients and families of various educational and social backgrounds.

PBLI 4- Apply principles of health promotion and disease prevention to patients across the lifespan.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills: The student will demonstrate:

ICS 1- Knowledge of various cultures and belief systems and the ability to communicate with patients of diverse backgrounds to provide culturally sensitive health care.

ICS 2- The ability to work effectively with others as a member of a health care team or other professional group.

ICS 3- The ability to establish and sustain a therapeutic, confidential and ethically sound relationship with patients and families.

ICS 4- An understanding of and the ability to apply the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice to ethical decision making.

ICS 5- The ability to provide compassionate treatment of patients, and respect for their privacy, confidentiality, and dignity.

ICS 6- The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

Professionalism: The student will demonstrate:

P 1- Honesty, integrity and respect in all interactions with patients, families, colleagues and others with whom Physician Assistants interact with during their professional lives.

P 2- An understanding of, and respect for, the roles of other health care professionals, and of the need to collaborate with others in caring for individual patients and in promoting the health of defined populations.

P 3- The ability to provide culturally appropriate care in a community setting.

P 4- An understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the Physician Assistant to include not exceeding one's knowledge and scope of practice.

P 5- Responsibility for personal actions during educational experiences and professional duties while maintaining a commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development, abiding by all applicable MMC professionalism policies.

P 6- Professional responsibility as a student by arriving on time to all scheduled events, submitting all assignments on time and maintaining a professional demeanor and appearance.

Systems-Based Practice: The student will demonstrate:

SBP 1- An understanding of funding sources and payment systems that provide health care coverage such that they can practice cost-effective health care and resource allocation that does not compromise quality of care.

SBP 2- Utilization of information technology to support patient care and education with application of medical information and clinical data systems to provide more effective, efficient patient care.

Technical Standards

A candidate for the Masters in Physician Assistant Sciences (MPAS) degree must have aptitude, abilities and skills in six areas: observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative, quantitative, behavioral, and social. Some disabilities in selected areas may be overcome technologically, however, a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner, without assistance, where the disability can impact the ability to provide safe patient care. The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. Therefore, third parties cannot be used to assist students in accomplishing curricular requirements in the six skill areas specified.

- **Observation:** The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments in the basic sciences including, but not limited to: anatomic, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations on cadavers, animals, microbiologic cultures and microscopic studies of micro-organisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation requires not only the use of the sense of vision, but other sensory modalities as well. It is enhanced, for example by the sense of smell.
- **Communication:** A candidate should be able to speak, to hear and observe patients in order to elicit information; describe changes in mood, activity and posture; and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and with sensitivity toward patients and other students. Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team.
- **Motor Coordination or Function:** Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should be able to perform basic laboratory tests (i.e., urinalysis, CBC, etc.), Perform diagnostic procedures and read EKGs and X-rays. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, application of pressure to stop bleeding, opening of obstructed airways, suturing of simple wounds and performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.
- **Intellectual/Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving and the critical thinking skills demanded of physician assistants require all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relations of structures.
- **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** Candidates must possess the emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate

physically taxing workloads and to function effectively when stressed. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Empathy, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that should be assessed during the admission and education processes.

Candidates for the MPAS degree must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision, smell, and hearing. Candidate's diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium or taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain and temperature), sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis and vibratory) and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the section above. They must be able to consistently, quickly and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data.

The MMC PA Program will consider for admission any applicant who demonstrates the ability to perform or to learn to perform the skills listed in this document. Students will be judged not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the school's curriculum in order to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners of medicine. The following technical requirements apply:

1. The candidate is able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments in the basic sciences.
2. The candidate is able to analyze, synthesize, extrapolate, solve problems and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments.
3. The candidate has sufficient use of the senses of vision and hearing and the somatic sensation necessary to perform a physical examination and perform palpation, auscultation and percussion.
4. The candidate can reasonably relate to patients and establish sensitive, professional relationships with them.
5. The candidate can communicate the results of an examination to the patient and to colleagues with accuracy, clarity and efficiency.
6. The candidate can learn and perform routine laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures.
7. The candidate can perform with precise, quick and appropriate actions in emergency situations.
8. The candidate displays good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients.
9. The candidate possesses the perseverance, diligence and consistency to complete the medical school curriculum and to enter the independent practice of medicine.
10. The candidate is able to accept criticism and respond with the appropriate modification of behavior.

General Information

MMC PA Sciences Program Organizational Structure & Reporting

The MMC-PA Program falls under the leadership of the program director Kenneth Mitchell. The program director reports directly to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Dr. Maria de Fatima Lima, and the President of Meharry Medical College, Dr. James Hildreth.

Program Faculty

Name	Position	Phone	Email Address
Kenneth A. Mitchell, MPAS, PA-C	Program Director	615-327-6575	kmitchell@mmc.edu
	Associate Program Director		
Wayne Moore, MD, FACEP	Medical Director	615-327-6751	wmoore@mmc.edu
Michelle J. Drumgold, MSPH, MSPAS, PA-C	Clinical Education Director	615-327-6751	mdrumgold@mmc.edu
	Academic Education Director		

Program Staff

Name	Position	Phone	Email Address
Will Wyatt, MA, MPH	Program Manager	615-327-6575	wwyatt@mmc.edu
Amanda Thompson	Administrative Assistant	615-327-6341	ajthompson@mmc.edu
Craig Preston	IT Specialist	615-327-6751	cpreston@mmc.edu

MMC Facilities

Study space is located in the following locations and is available for all students of Meharry Medical College. The guidelines set forth below are based on common courtesy and to the extent possible, will be enforced through the citizenship of all students. Therefore, please observe the following Rules of Conduct:

1. Student space is available on a first come basis and is limited to one table or one carrel per student. You are welcome to use the study space as long as you like, but the space is only yours while you are physically present.
2. If you leave the study area to attend classes, eat lunch or pursue other activities, please remove all of your study materials and personal effects so that the area can be used by others.
3. The college assumes no responsibility for safeguarding materials that are left unattended; students assume all liability for the potential loss of or damage to, unattended books/notes and personal items.
4. The arrangement of tables and carrels was designed to optimize study space. Do not disassemble, move or otherwise rearrange furniture in the study area.
5. Do not deface/damage the furniture or the walls of the study areas.
6. Except where provided by and placed by the College, electrical appliances (toasters, heaters, coffee pots, etc.) are not allowed in the study areas.
7. Refrigerators are provided in the student lounges across campus. Students are responsible through their class organizations to clean and maintain the refrigerators.

Meharry Medical College Library (Stanley S. Kresge Learning Resource Center)

- 437 total seating on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of the building
- Café Area - 1 microwave
- 27 small group rooms (first come basis)
- 1 open access computer lab, 1st level
 - 16 computers (Thin Clients) including two 27-ince Monitor iMac Computers, instructor's work station, printer, projector, Smart Board, Whiteboard, Scanner and DVD/Video player
- 1 e-Classroom, 2nd level (only for instructional classes)
- 24 computers (Thin Clients), instructor's work station, projector, Smart Board, Whiteboard and printer

Harold D. West Basic Sciences Building

There are a number of study areas in the Harold D. West Basic Sciences Building. The study rooms/spaces and lounges are available on a first come basis.

- 1st floor student lounge – 2 refrigerators, 4 microwaves
- Computer labs are located on the mezzanine level
 - M-102 (located behind the sophomore lecture hall) 30 computers – 24/7
 - Study Room C (located over the bookstore) 15 computers – 24/7
 - M-208 (located on the south side of the mezzanine) 32 computers – access by request
 - Annex Area (located adjacent to M-208) 35 computers – access by request

School of Dentistry

Study lounge, 5th floor – 2 refrigerators, 2 microwaves

Metro Nashville General Hospital

Lounges/café area available to students are listed below

- 2nd floor outpatient center – 1 microwave
- Cafeteria – 2 microwaves
- 4th floor Ob/Gyn Suite (Old Hospital) – 1 refrigerator, 1 microwave
- Internal Medicine Suite – 1 microwave
- Family Medicine Call Room – 1 refrigerator, 1 microwave

Turner Family Center

Study space and meeting locations are available for students in the Turner Family Center. Rooms 317, 318, 319, 320 and 321 are available upon request.

Program Accreditation

The Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program has applied for Accreditation – Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA). Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Program anticipates matriculating its first class in January 2020, pending achieving Accreditation – Provisional status at the September 2019,

ARC-PA meeting. Accreditation – Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program’s ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding accreditation-provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students. The program will not commence in the event that this provisional accreditation is not received

New Student Information

New Student Orientation

Prior to the beginning of the first phase all new Physician Assistant students are required to attend orientation. New student orientation provides the students with an opportunity to meet their classmates and faculty and staff. Students will be given an overview of the policies and procedures of the program, School of Graduate Studies and Research and the College, as well as an introduction to student services and campus resources.

Background Checks & Drug Screening

Prior to matriculation, students offered a seat in the program must complete a criminal background check and drug screen. Thereafter, students may be required by clinical sites to undergo repeat drug screening and criminal background checks, including but not limited to, prior to beginning clinical rotations. Students are responsible for all expenses related to meeting drug screening, student health requirements and background documentation. Students who at any point in the program delay or decline to participate in a requested alcohol and/or drug screen will have that action considered equivalent to taking and failing a drug/alcohol screen. Applicants accepted into the MMC PA Program who answered "no" to questions relating to criminal background in their CASPA application and found to have a subsequent positive criminal background check are likely to be dismissed from the program on the basis of misrepresentation. In the event of a reported incident, a determination about the applicant’s/student’s continued progress in the academic program will be made by Meharry Medical College in accordance with College’s procedures. Applicants who have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor may be denied certification or licensure as a health professional. Information regarding eligibility may be obtained from appropriate credentialing boards. Clinical rotation sites may not permit participation in the clinical experience. This should be considered seriously by the candidate prior to application and matriculation. Applicants are advised that results of criminal background checks and other required background screening will be released to third parties involved in their clinical education. Criminal offenses incurring after the student matriculates may result in the student’s dismissal from the program; if this occurs, tuition and fees will not be refunded.

Immunizations

Prior to registration, all students entering Meharry Medical College must provide proof of prior immunization for measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chicken pox), tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, polio, and hepatitis B consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations. Documentation of the results of tuberculosis screening (PPD) within 6 months of matriculation is also required. Student Health Services will review all documentation submitted to determine adequacy.

- Hepatitis B vaccinations: documented series of 3 vaccines **or** Hepatitis B surface antibody quantitative serologic titer
- Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR): documented series of two doses **or** quantitative serologic titers

- Varicella: documented series of two doses and quantitative serologic titer or documented dates or disease **or** quantitative serologic titer
- Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis: documentation of TDAP vaccine within the last 10 years
- Polio: documentation of last immunization
- Tuberculosis Screening: within the last 6 months: PPD results or IGRA result or documentation of previous positive PPD, subsequent treatment **and** most recent chest x-ray report (within the last 6 months).
- Tuberculin skin testing and influenza (flu) vaccination is required annually.

Students who cannot provide adequate documentation of prior immunization or physician-diagnosed diseases, (as indicated by serologic evidence) must receive immunization to these diseases prior to the beginning of the fall semester of the said academic year.

Tuberculosis skin testing and influenza (flu) vaccination is required annually for all students enrolled in the MMC-PA Program. Any student who has not been appropriately immunized or who fails to receive such annual screening will not be allowed to continue enrollment in the MMC PA Program. Any student who becomes tuberculosis skin test positive during the course of their medical training will be evaluated and followed routinely in the Student Health Service without charge. The student must notify the Office of Student and Academic Affairs and the Student Health Services in order for the student to be cleared to return to clinical rotations. The college will assume responsibility for the cost of the initial chest x-ray(s) and such medication as deemed appropriate by Meharry Student Health Service.

Health Insurance

Meharry Medical College requires that all registered students have health insurance or purchase the Meharry Medical College sponsored group plan. Students must be officially enrolled in a degree program at Meharry Medical College to be eligible for the student insurance plan. One of the following options is mandatory for all Meharry students:

- On a parent's or spouse's health insurance policy
- Individual, private, or group health insurance policy*
- Group policy offered by Meharry Medical College

*The plan must meet the waiver requirements listed in the student insurance waiver information section. Please contact the Office of Student Life via email to studentinsurance@mmc.edu or by phone at (615) 327-6792 if you have questions/concerns that are not addressed here.

https://www.mmc.edu/prospectivestudents/student_insurance/student_ins_policy052014.pdf

Please note that the Meharry Medical College Group Student Insurance Plan includes medical, vision and dental coverage. If you enroll in the plan, you will get all three and if you waive the coverage, you waive all three. Coverage plans cannot be purchased separately.

Required Supplies, Medical Equipment, Books & Library Resources

Required Supplies

The following medical equipment is required. Students may purchase the equipment through the program vendor and purchase option A or B. The following is the required equipment list:

Required Equipment

Option A Kit Items:

- 797CCT Stethoscope
- Riester Elite View w/3.5V Recharge
- 848AR Sphygmomanometer
- Sheers
- Taylor Hammer
- Tuning forks (128 Hz , 256 Hz and 512 Hz)
- Penlight
- Near vision screening chart
- MDF DR Bag
- Custom Diaphragm with Meharry PA logo

Cost of Kit = \$799

Option B Kit Items:

- MDF797 Cardiology Stethoscope with custom logo on diaphragm
- RSTR EliteVue Diagnostic Set
- MDF848AR Sphygmomanometer
- Reflex Hammer
- Tuning Forks (2)
- Medical Bag
- Pediatric Cuff

Kit price = \$599

Books

Students are required to purchase textbooks as specified in the class syllabi. Students may access some online textbooks through the Meharry Medical College Library's digital library, in which case the purchase of a hard text is optional.

Didactic Year Curriculum

Didactic Courses Phases I - IV

Course No.	Course	Phase	Credits
GSPA735-01	Structures of Human Anatomy	I	9
GSPA736-01	Medical Physiology	I	3
GSPA719-01	Fundamentals of Microbiology	I	3
GSPA725-01	PA Professional Issues	I	1
GSPA724-01	Medical Ethics	I	1
GSPA734-01	Pharmacology I	II	3
GSPA733-01	Pathophysiology	II	5
GSPA721-01	Patient Communication Skills I	II	2
GSPA720-01	Clinical Laboratory Medicine	II	2
GSPA723-01	Radiology	II	1
GSPA726-01	Behavioral Medicine	II	3
GSPA744-01	Pharmacology II	III	2
GSPA730-01	Physical Exam Skills I	III	2
GSPA728-01	Adult Clinical Medicine I	III	6
GSPA737-01	Pediatric Clinical Medicine I	III	3
GSPA714-01	Clinical Skills I	III	2
GSPA739-01	Research I	III	1
GSPA732-01	Geriatrics	IV	2
GSPA731-01	Physical Examinations Skills II	IV	2
GSPA729-01	Adult Clinical Medicine II	IV	6
GSPA738-01	Pediatric Clinical Medicine II	IV	3
GSPA741-01	Clinical Skills II	IV	2
GSPA722-01	Patient Communication Skills II	IV	2

Academic Calendar

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Clinical Year	Clinical Year
January 2 nd - 4 th Orientation	May 4 th First day of Class	September 7 th First day of Class	Jan 4 th First day of Class	May 3 rd – May 28 th	Return to Campus December 16 th – December 17 th
January 6 th First day of Class	May 25 th Memorial Day – No Classes	November 11 th Veterans Day – No Classes	Didactic Summative January 17 th	May 31 st – June 25 th	Break December 20th – December 24th
January 20 th MLK – No Classes	August 10 th -14 th Last week of Class	November 30 th – December 4 th – Thanksgiving Break	March 15 th – 19 th – Spring Break	June 28 th – July 23 rd	December 27 th – January 21 st
March 11 th Research Day – No Classes	August 17 th – 21 st – Finals Week	December 14 th - December 18 th Last week of Class	April 5 th -9 th Last week of Class	Return to Campus July 24 th – July 25 th	January 24 th – February 16 th
March 16 th – 20 th Spring Break – No Classes	August 24 th – 28 th – Break	December 18 th – White Coat Ceremony	April 12 th – 15 st – Finals Week	Break July 26th – July 30th	Return to Campus February 17 th – February 18 th
April 10 th Good Friday – No Classes		December 21 st - December 23 rd – Finals Week	April 19 th – April 23 rd – Pre-Clinical Orientation	August 2 nd – August 27 th	Summative Exam February 21 st – February 25 th
April 20 th – 24 th – Finals Week		December 24 th – January 1 st – Christmas Break	April 26 th – April 30 th – Break	August 30 th – September 24 th	February 28 th – March 25 th
April 27 th – May 1 st – Break				September 27 th – October 20 th	March 28 th – April 20 th
				Return to Campus October 21 st – October 22 nd	Return to Campus April 21 st – April 22 nd
				October 25 th – November 19 th	Summative Exam Remediation April 25 th – April 29 th
				November 22 nd – December 15 th	

Didactic Year Academic Performance

Evaluations

Students are required to complete course surveys. This is a crucial component used to evaluate the course, Course Directors, and course lectures. Your feedback is used to make improvements. The surveys are available on D2L and will be posted during the course. All related surveys must be completed and submitted via D2L no later than three (3) days after the final examination for the course. If course evaluations are not completed, your grade will not be submitted to the Registrar.

Grading

The faculty of record assigns grades for all courses in the PA Sciences Program Curriculum. The following grading scale will be used:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
100-90	A
89-85	B+
84-80	B
79-75	C+
74≤69.5	C
Below 69.5	F

Appeals

The responsibility for academic evaluation of students rests with the faculty. Academic appeals pertain to: (1) appeals of an academic evaluation related to a course; (2) appeals under the student professionalism policy; and (3) program related decisions. The sole basis for an appeal of any of the above decisions is an alleged prejudiced or capricious evaluation by the instructor(s) or evaluator(s). The burden of proof shall be upon the student, who must establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the evaluation or decision was capricious or prejudiced. A student may not appeal an action taken simply because he/she does not agree with it.

The meetings associated with this process are closed to the public. The student may seek counsel but the student must present his or her case without legal representation present.

The dean's decision is final and may not be appealed.

The student may continue with enrolled courses in progress while the appeal is in progress. The student may not enroll or start new courses until the final decision of the appeal by the dean has been made. This is to protect the student from incurring unnecessary educational expense and the likelihood of having to repay distributed financial aid. Please refer to the following link for the complete policy [Appeals Policy](#) .

Remediation

Remediation is the opportunity to correct unsatisfactory performance, progress and/or professional conduct in the program. Remediation may be recommended by the SPC to further assess/evaluate a student and to support the student in meeting the learning objectives of the course.

Remediation may also begin when a student is placed on Academic Monitoring or Probation. The student may be offered a remediation plan (see below). Remediation is not automatic or guaranteed.

A **Remediation Plan** is designed to notify faculty and learners of program expectations established to provide the greatest opportunity to achieve success in meeting the learning outcomes of a course when an initial attempt of the assessment indicates the student has been unsuccessful. The plan will be developed by the Academic Education (AED) or Clinical Education Director (CED) with the assistance of the course director. The plan will be presented and reviewed by the SPC.

The components of the plan will include:

- a. required activities, assignments and assessments to be successfully completed
- b. the final date of submission of materials in support of the remediation plan; and
- c. signatures of the students and the faculty reviewer or SPC Chair(s).

Failure to fulfill all the terms of a remediation plan may result in dismissal from the program. Student remediation progress will be monitored by the course director and the SPC.

Deceleration

Deceleration is the loss of a PA student from an entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the PA program. The MMC PA Sciences curriculum is designed to be delivered and completed on a full-time basis. The MMC PA Sciences program **does not** offer deceleration or option to complete the curriculum on a part-time basis.

Student Services

Tutoring

The Anna Cherrie Epps, Ph.D., Center for Educational Development and Support (CEDS) is a comprehensive academic support unit, established to foster an environment that stimulates and nurtures excellence in learning and teaching in the three school: Medicine, Dentistry and Graduate Studies and Research.

CEDS is located in the Rolfe Student Center Building and offers the following services:

- Skills Profile Assessment
- Skill Improvement Instruction in:
 - Time management
 - Critical thinking/analytical reasoning
 - Stress management advising
 - Self-confidence building
 - Reading & comprehension
 - Test taking strategies
 - Note taking
 - Study techniques
- Individual skills development consultation
- Computerized student practice testing
- Peer tutoring

- Small group intervention review sessions
- Small group case-based review sessions

Mental Health & Counseling

Counseling Services at Meharry Medical College provides core psychological services to enhance the mental health and wellness of the students through culturally competent, consultative and preventative mental health services. Meharry Medical College Counseling Services, which operates as a unit of the Division of Student Affairs, is located in the Meharry Clinic Building, Suite #325 (near Student Health Services) on the Meharry campus. Counseling for students and their significant others is provided by Professional Health Service Providers who have no teaching or evaluative role with the students.

Services include:

- Crisis intervention
- Case management
- Coaching
- Individual, group, family, and couples counseling
- Outreach and consultation

All counseling services for students and their immediate family are provided at no cost to the student and are strictly confidential.

To make an appointment or to obtain further information about the Counseling services, please call 615.327.6915. Counseling Services is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Student Health

Meharry Medical College offers convenient, high-quality healthcare by providing acute and preventive health services for Meharry students and employees to promote a healthy environment. The Student Health Center is located in Suite 331, Meharry Comprehensive Health Building. The Student Health Center is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. No appointment necessary; however, to better accommodate student's busy schedules, appointments are encouraged. Same-day appointments are available by calling 615.327.5757.

The student health fee provides all current Meharry students access to the services provided at the Student Health Center. The clinical staff of Student Health Services is comprised of a certified nurse practitioner and clinical faculty from the Department of Internal Medicine. The services include:

- Acute illness and injury management
- Physical examinations
- Laboratory services
- Immunizations
- Tuberculosis screening
- N95 respirator fit testing

Disability

Meharry Medical College is committed to the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act in creating an inclusive community for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations for any type of disability are encouraged to contact the ADA Coordinator. Services include, but are not limited to, extended times for testing, assistance with locating sign language

interpreters, audiotaped textbooks, physical adaptations, note-takers and reading services. Accommodations are tailored to meet the needs of each student with a documented disability. Specific concerns pertaining to services for people with disabilities or any disability issue should be directed to the ADA Coordinator.

Students who report or suspect they have a disability condition may go directly to Lyttle Hall, Room 306 or call 615.327.6500 to make an appointment.

Program Policies

Academic Advising & Notification

Individual academic advising sessions will be conducted on a determined schedule between the faculty advisor and the student. Additional individual advising sessions can be triggered by a failed exam, course average of $\leq 75\%$, failing a course or rotation, substandard mid or end of SCPE evaluation, or to address any other academic performance concerns. The course director will coordinate with the student's faculty advisor to schedule the student academic advisement meeting including student notification. Academic advising may occur through a face to face meeting, phone exchange, or email. The advisor or the course director may lead advising. Advising will include a description of the student's deficiencies with recommendations for improvement and/or additional assignments. The academic advising session will be documented for every advising session and placed in the student's file. Student attendance is required for all scheduled meetings.

During advisement sessions the following items may be discussed and recommended: voluntary referral to the Center for Educational Development and Support for academic support and evaluation, voluntary referral for mental health counseling, and/or medical evaluation to assess any underlying medical issues that may be causing or contributing to the student's decline in academic performance. Additional assignments may be assigned by the student's faculty advisor and/or course directors. Follow up meetings may be scheduled at the faculty advisor or course director's discretion, or by student request. [Academic Advising & Notification Policy](#)

Academic Evaluation of Students

Throughout the MMC PA Program students are assessed against standards of academic achievement established by course faculty. In order to be promoted in the MMC PA Program, a student must receive a grade of "S" (Satisfactory), "C" or better in all courses.

The SPC monitors student progress and determines if a student is in good academic standing and recommends continuation of the student in the PA program.

Didactic Course Evaluations

Final grades and grade reports should be submitted no later than 2 weeks after the course is completed.

Clinical Course Evaluations

Preceptor evaluations are sent electronically to preceptors during the last week of the rotation. Preceptors may also elect to complete a paper evaluation. Preceptors have four weeks to submit evaluations to the program. For the final rotation, preceptors will have until 48 hours before graduation day. If the evaluation is not completed according to the above timeframes, the course grade will be calculated omitting the preceptor evaluation.

Access to Academic Records

An enrolled student in the MMC PA Program may review his or her academic records through written request to the Office of the Registrar. If a student has a dispute or disagreement with the material, a written request for reconsideration and alteration can be made to the MMC PA Program Director [Access to Academic Records](#)

Administration of Examinations

- Examinations given through a computer-based platform will be taken in the Meharry Medical College Testing Center located in the West Basic Sciences Building. Students must comply with any instructions given by external testing software and/or websites utilized by the PA program.
- Proctor(s) will actively monitor the examination at all times.
- No questions will be answered by the proctor(s) or course director(s), if present, at any time during the examination (except for questions regarding possible technical problems or typographical errors).
- All students will report for the examination 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the exam. This will allow time for students to be seated after placing all personal items, including all electronic items, in a proctor designated area with all phones turned off. A seating chart may be utilized by the MMC PA Program during examinations. The proctor(s) will verify student identity and direct each student to assigned seating for that exam. No talking will be permitted once a student enters the exam room. Students who miss an examination for an excused absence will be required to take a make-up examination. Students who miss an examination MUST notify the course director in accordance with the student attendance policy (insert link), in most instances BEFORE the exam; otherwise, the student will receive a score of 0 (zero) on that examination. The Course Director must approve all requests for excused absences.
- Student ID, program provided pencils and ear plugs, the student's laptop computer, power cord, and computer mouse are the only items permitted in the immediate testing area. Food or drinks will not be permitted in the examination area. No hats, sunglasses, or jackets/coats with pockets may be worn.
- During the examination, no talking or other communication will be permitted. Students will not be permitted to congregate by the doors of the examination room.
- Course directors will clearly designate the time limit for each exam.
- At the end of an online examination, the online exam program will force submit the exam, regardless of whether the student has completed his/her exam at that time. For examinations in a written format, a proctor will inform the examinees that the time allotted has expired and that no further marking of examinations or answer sheets, or writing of any kind will be permitted.
- Students who finish the examination must provide evidence that they are not leaving the room with exam information by demonstrating to the proctor(s) that they are signing out of all exam software for a computer-based platform examination and by submitting all pages of any paper

copies or reference sheets. Students must leave the examination room quietly, and must immediately leave the examination area, which includes the lobby.

- All exams, quizzes, OSCEs, and other methods used to evaluate student performance are closed unless written notification to the student is provided by the Course Director. It is a violation of the MMC PA Program Student Professional Behavior Policy (insert link) for students to disclose or have in their possession copies of questions or OSCE content from previously given closed exams, quizzes, OSCEs, or other methods used to evaluate student performance.
- Once seated, students will not be permitted to leave the examination room and return to complete the exam without a proctor escort. Students are permitted to use the restroom, one student at a time. A proctor will exit the exam room with the student and accompany their return. Students leaving the exam room without a proctor will be considered to have finished taking the exam.
- Reasonable accommodations for any student who has an approved qualifying disability from the Center for Educational Development will be provided based on the specific need of the student. Accommodations provided must not result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program, service, or activity, cause undue hardship, or result in undue financial or administrative burden.

AHA Certification

All students in the MMC PA Program will be required to maintain current certification in Basic Life Support (BLS) / Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) / Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) prior to the start of the clinical phase of training (Phase V) and must maintain current certification throughout the remainder of his or her training. The costs associated with these certifications will be included in the students' financial aid package and covered by student tuition & fees.

Appeals

The responsibility for academic evaluation of students rests with the faculty. Academic appeals pertain to: (1) appeals of an academic evaluation related to a course; (2) appeals under the student professionalism policy; and (3) program related decisions.

The sole basis for an appeal of any of the above decisions is an alleged prejudiced or capricious evaluation by the instructor(s) or evaluator(s). The burden of proof shall be upon the student, who must establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the evaluation or decision was capricious or prejudiced. A student may not appeal an action taken simply because he/she does not agree with it.

The meetings associated with this process are closed to the public. The student may seek counsel but the student must present his or her case without legal representation present.

The dean's decision is final and may not be appealed.

The student may continue with enrolled courses in progress while the appeal is in progress. The student may not enroll or start new courses until the final decision of the appeal by the dean has been made. This is to protect the student from incurring unnecessary educational expense and the likelihood of having to repay distributed financial aid. [Academic Appeals](#)

Attendance

MMC PA Program students pursuing the Master's in Physician Assistant Sciences degree participate in an intensive, highly structured and progressive educational program in which full participation is essential. MMC PA Program students are expected to assign the highest priority to their professional development and participation in the educational program. Attendance and participation are expected in all education curriculum and activities.

Students are allowed to attend class for only those courses which he or she is officially registered by the Registrar. Credit is given only for coursework taken after official registration.

MMC PA Program students are required to arrive on time and participate fully in all required activities.

General Absence Policy

Any deviation from the above General Attendance Policy is considered an absence. Students should not assume they are allowed an absence and are responsible for providing as much advance notice of an anticipated absence and/or providing the earliest notification with required supporting information following an absence to the Course Director(s) of those courses or educational phases that will be interrupted. The application of the excused absence criteria and designation of an absence as an excused absence is at the discretion of the MMC PA Program [Student Attendance](#)

Criminal Background & Urine Drug Screen

Applicants should consider their substance use and legal history seriously prior to application and matriculation. The MMC PA Program follows the criminal background check policy for the School of Graduate Studies & Research found [\(Click Here\)](#). Students may additionally be required to complete a background check and/or urine drug screen prior to starting a Structured Clinical Practice Experience course when it is required by the clinical site affiliation agreement. Students are responsible for all expenses related to meeting drug screening, student health requirements and criminal background documentation.

Students who at any point in the program delay or decline to participate in a requested alcohol and/or drug screen will have that action considered equivalent to taking and failing a drug/alcohol screen. Students accepted into the MMC PA Program who answered "no" to questions relating to criminal background in their CASPA application and found to have a subsequent positive criminal background check are likely to be dismissed from the program due to violation of the professionalism policy. In the event of a reported incident, a determination about the applicant's/student's continued progress in the academic program will be made by MMC PA Student Progress Committee.

Students who have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor may be denied certification, licensure, employment, credentials, or clinical privileges as a Physician Assistant. Information regarding eligibility may be obtained from the appropriate medical board and students are encouraged to self-refer and explore the potential consequences of their legal and substance use history.

Structured Clinical Practice Experience sites may not permit participation in the clinical experience and the program will place students at an alternate site to the extent possible. Criminal offenses incurred after the student matriculates may result in the student's dismissal from the program as determined by the MMC PA Student Progress Committee. If this occurs, tuition and fees will not be refunded.

Dress Code

This Dress Code and Identification Policy is implemented in order to promote professionalism and to ensure student and patient safety. You should be aware that your appearance is reflective of the College, MMC PA Program, and the PA profession. The following applies to all students in all phases of the program. Deviations from this code may be made by individual course directors or preceptors when provided in writing. Violation of the Dress Code may result in dismissal from class or clinical activity and may adversely affect your course grade. Repeated offenses will be handled via the Professionalism Policy found at [Professionalism Policy](#)

General

Regarding all activities on or off campus in which a student represents the College or the MMC PA Program.

- Clothing shall not be torn, frayed, cut-up or slit.
- Excessively tight clothing, excessively baggy clothing, shorts, clothing that exposes skin in the chest, abdomen and/or midriff area are not acceptable.
- All undergarments must not be visible, either by color or outline.
- Skirts and dresses must be conservative and professional in length, style, and fabric. Sleeveless dresses are allowed provided undergarments are not visible and the attire does not excessively expose skin in the chest area.
- Sundresses and spaghetti straps are not acceptable unless covered by a jacket. Nothing shorter than two inches above the knee will be allowed.
- Evening or party clothes are not acceptable.
- Shirts/blouses must be appropriately buttoned or zipped. No tube tops or off-shoulder designs.
- Pants or slacks shorter than ankle length, i.e. capri/crop pants/gaucho pants, are acceptable provided the other policies are adhered to, e.g., not excessively tight/baggy, not deeply slit, not clingy. Pants or slacks shorter than mid-calf is not allowed. Pants or slacks must be business professional in style and fabric. Hip huggers are not allowed.
- Jogging attire, gym wear, swim wear, and bedtime attire are not acceptable. This includes items such as sweatshirts, sweatpants, and yoga pants.
- Undershirts, undergarments or spandex are not acceptable as outerwear.
- Any clothing, jewelry, or accessories that contain messages or images that are obscene, vulgar, or related to tobacco, drugs, alcohol, sex and/or violence are not acceptable.
- Tattoos must be concealed during the clinical phase.

- Conservative necklaces, rings and earrings may be worn in moderation. Nose rings, tongue rings, and other noticeable body piercing jewelry are not acceptable.
- Flip-flops, beach/pool wear shoes, or house shoes are not acceptable.
- Hair must be well groomed and neat.
- Baseball caps or other hats (except head coverings required for a rotation activity or prescribed for religious/cultural observation) are not permitted in the classroom nor on rotations. Students are responsible for checking with rotation/clinical staff regarding regulations and rules for dress and head coverings specific to individual rotation policies.
- Facial hair is acceptable if clean and neatly trimmed.
- Fingernails must be clean, neat, moderate in length and well maintained.
- Students are prohibited from attending any program activity smelling of strong odors, including but not limited to: cologne, perfume, smoke, alcohol, or poor personal hygiene.

*Please refer to the following link for the full policy [Dress Code](#)

Faculty as Student Health Care Providers

MMC PA Program faculty, the Program Director and the Medical Director are prohibited from serving as health care providers for students in the program in any capacity, except in emergency situations.

Graduation Policy

To qualify for graduation from the MMC Physician Assistant Sciences Program and be eligible for a Master in Physician Assistant Studies degree, each student must have met the following conditions:

1. Student Progress Committee confirms all requirements for graduation have been met and they recommend the student for graduation
2. Successful completion of the MMC PA Program Curriculum with a minimum cumulative GPA of at least a 2.50 within the (48) months of matriculation, excluding any and all leaves of absence. Any student who does not finish within the required timeframe is dismissed from the MMC PA Sciences Program.
3. Compliance with all high standards of professional and moral conduct and adherence to all College rules and codes of conduct.
4. Payment of all financial obligations
5. Returned all loaned equipment to the respective schools

6. Successful completion of all required examinations
7. Students who have completed all of the above requirements within 30 days after commencement and verified by the Student Progress Committee will receive a diploma with the published commencement date. Those completing all requirements greater than 30 days after commencement will receive a diploma with the date of June 30, October 31, or December 31, as applicable.

Inclement Weather

MMC PA Program follows the MMC Inclement Weather and Emergency Closing Policy ([Click Here](#)).

Additional Policy:

Clinical rotations outside of the MMC campus will abide by the Preceptor decision at the clinic/hospital site regarding rotation attendance, including remaining at the clinical site if road conditions are hazardous. The student is to notify the MMC PA Program if not attending an off-campus rotation.

A campus closed alert means that regularly scheduled classes are cancelled for all students on the closed campus. Course Directors will do their best to adjust subsequent class schedules to minimize the ultimate impact of lost class time.

The following apply:

1. If an exam has started one a campus closure has been issued, students should be aware that the examination will be completed while the campus is closed.
2. Campus is closed before an exam begins: Course or EOR exam must be rescheduled. All courses should have an alternate exam day and time scheduled; the rescheduled exam will occur on this backup day. If campus is closed on the backup day, then the exam will be rescheduled for a subsequent time. Students should be aware this means an examination may be delivered on a separate day and time when the class does not usually meet. Students will be notified of the decision by the Course Director.
3. There are lectures and no required activity: Course Director will reschedule activity. Another possibility is the MMC campus will not be closed for the entire day but may open late such as at 10:00 am. In this case all activities that were originally scheduled to occur after the opening time will still occur, including exams. Activities that were scheduled for earlier than the opening time (e.g., from 8-10 if the campus opens at 10:00), then the numbered policies above will be followed.

When adverse weather conditions are likely, or there are other situations that could affect a student's expected participation, discussing options in advance is recommended. There may be emergency situations that warrant exclusions to this policy. In these situations, the Course Director or other persons in authority may alter this policy to appropriately deal with the emergency.

Students should have access to contact numbers of the persons with whom they work and similarly should share their own contact information. Good communication will go far to minimize misinterpretation of unexpected absences.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of "I" (Incomplete), indicates that the student has satisfactorily completed at least three-fourths of a course, but that for legitimate reasons a small fraction of the work remains to be completed; or that the student's record indicates that he or she can obtain a passing grade, but lacks a specific requirement

such as the final examination, because of illness or some other unique or extraordinary circumstance beyond the student's control.

A student receiving an "I" must complete the requirements for the course to remove the "I" within the approved time frame established by the Course Director. If the requirements are not completed within the specified time, no credit will be given and the Office of Admissions and Records will automatically record the final grade as "F."

At the time final grades are reported, any student who has not completed all course requirements will be assigned a grade of "I" (Incomplete). The "I" grade can then be changed to the appropriate letter grade once the course requirements have been met.

The grade of "I" (incomplete) is a neutral mark, not an alternative to a grade of "F." No student who is failing a course when grades are awarded may receive an "I." The student should have completed a substantial portion of the required coursework for the semester satisfactorily to receive an "I."

The "I" grade is intended to be temporary and to be used when a student, for reasons acceptable to the Course Director, is unable to complete certain identifiable requirements of a course and cannot be assigned another grade.

Interactions with Vendors & Students

MMC PA students should maintain ethical relationships with vendors. This policy applies to all MMC PA students when they are acting within the course and scope of their role as students and future medical professionals.

For the purposes of this policy a vendor refers to any corporation or entity external to the MMC which provides or may provide goods or services for administrative or clinical operations. This includes (but is not limited to): pharmaceutical organizations, home health care agencies, hospice organizations, durable medical equipment providers, laboratories, office supply organizations, consultants, etc.

1. Access - To protect patients, patient care areas and work schedules, access by pharmaceutical and vendor representatives to individual MMC PA students should be restricted to non-patient care areas and nonpublic areas and should take place only by appointment or invitation of the supervising physician.
2. Educational Programs - Presentations, educational programs, and training by industry representatives can provide useful scientific information and training to MMC PA students. MMC PA students may attend such presentations and programs only if they are found to be acceptable by the supervising faculty and/or Clinic Education Director. This does not include presentations that are mainly intended to market the vendor's drugs, materials, or services. Gifts and meals provided in conjunction with educational programs will not be accepted (except as noted in #7 below).
3. Support of Non-MMC Medical Education Programs – Financial assistance from vendors to support MMC PA student attendance at carefully selected educational conferences is permitted only as unrestricted grants to the Physician Assistant Sciences Program. Decisions regarding student participation at such programs rest with the Program Director. Financial assistance and/or reimbursements may not be paid by vendor directly to the student.
4. Gifts – No gifts shall be accepted from vendors. This includes books, reference manuals, training materials, or promotional objects (such as pens, mugs, or notepads), meals, and recreational

activities. Cash or cash equivalents, such as gift certificates, stocks, bonds, or frequent – flyer miles of any amount may not be accepted.

5. Samples and Other Clinical Items – MMC PA students may not accept drug samples or other patient care products from vendors.
6. Recreational Activities – Attendance at industry-provided recreational or entertainment activities is prohibited.
7. Food and Meals - Meals and snacks provided by or paid directly by a vendor may not be accepted by MMC PA students. If in doubt students should ask their course director or appropriate faculty supervisor. Vendor-supported meals may not be provided “off-site” or independent of these approved educational activities.

Leave of Absence

Students may request a leave of absence only for extraordinary personal or illness reasons.

Extraordinary personal or family problems or illness may require a leave of absence. Academic difficulty in itself is not a sufficient reason to request a leave of absence. Lengthy absences for less compelling reasons usually are not approved because of the adverse effects of a hiatus on the systematically integrated medical curriculum.

Leaves of absence may be granted for up to one year and require review and approval by the Program Director of the MMC PA Program. All requests must be made in writing and submitted to the Program Director of the MMC PA Program.

Students requesting a leave of absence during the didactic phase of training will remain on leave and resume the didactic phase at the beginning of the courses that were interrupted by their leave of absence. In-progress courses interrupted by the student’s leave of absence must be retaken in their entirety, regardless of how this affects the student’s continuity within the Program.

Leave of absences may be granted for up to one year. It is the MMC PA Student Progress Committee’s (SPC) discretion when the student will restart in the Program. The decision will be based upon knowledge currency, continuity and availability of courses.

Students requesting a leave of absence in the clinical phase must take leave in one-month increments. Students who begin an approved leave of absence during a clinical course and have completed the minimum number of patient contact hours (116 hours) will not be required to repeat the course. However, students will be required to complete the end of rotation (EOR) exam and requirements for the previous course no later than one business day prior to advancing to the next clinical course. Students who have not completed the minimum number of patient contact hours will be required to repeat the course. Students must complete all clinical courses in order to fulfill graduation requirements regardless of the length of the leave of absence.

Students who are on a leave of absence are not enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies & Research. Health and disability insurance coverage may be affected while on leave. Students on a leave cannot receive financial aid. Loan deferment may continue while a student is on an official leave of absence from the School.

The College considers a student on a leave of absence to be in continuous enrollment and, therefore, subject to adhering to all College compliance issues. It is the responsibility of the student to request a leave of absence. It is not the responsibility of the MMC PA Program to recommend a leave of absence to a student. Taking a leave of absence will delay the date of program completion and may affect the date of graduation. A leave of absence will effect financial aid impact and should be discussed with the Financial Aid Office.

All leave of absence requests must be approved in advance and requests must be made using the MMC PA Program's form available online format.

One month prior to an anticipated return, the student must request in writing (using the MMC PA Program's form listed above), termination of leave of absence for reinstatement to active status. The student may be required to provide official documentation to return, including professional documentation of meeting the Educational Technical Standards for Admission, Retention, and Graduation. Extensions of the leave of absence may be requested, but not necessarily granted. If granted, the extension will not exceed one additional year. Failure of such requests will result in automatic dismissal.

PASPE

A narrative description of a PA student's performance, including his or her noncognitive achievement, is included as a component of the assessment in each required course and rotation whenever teacher-student interaction permits this type of assessment. This narrative assessment is called the Physician Assistant Student Performance Evaluation (PASPE).

The narrative assessment becomes part of the student's educational record and is combined with other components of the student's performance in the academic program and serves as the sole document for verification of enrollment, credentialing, privileging, licensure, and "Program Director's Recommendation."

Professionalism

Physician Assistant students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. Professionalism is a core Educational Program Objective of the Physician Assistant Program. The MMC PA Program has established the following policy and procedure for addressing standards of ethical and professional behavior in the PA Program. Please refer to the following link for the full policy [Professionalism Policy](#)

Program Policies

MMC Physician Assistant Sciences Program policies apply to all students, principal faculty and program director regardless of location.

A signed clinical affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding may specify that certain program policies will be superseded by those at the clinical sites.

Records Retention

The MMC PA Program is subject to and complies with the [Office of General Counsel/Compliance Records-Retention Policy](#). Section IX in Exhibit A describes the student records retention schedule, including, but not limited to, Academic Progress Records, Admissions Records, Advisor File, Alumni Records, Disciplinary Records, Grades and Grade Point Averages; Academic Record, Honors and Awards, and PASPE.

Review of Closed Examination

All exams, quizzes, OSCEs, and other methods used to evaluate student performance are closed unless written notification to the student is provided by the Course Director. It is a violation of the MMC PA Program Professionalism Policy ([insert link here](#)) for students to disclose or have in their possession copies of questions or OSCE content from previously given closed exams, quizzes, OSCEs, or other methods used to evaluate student performance.

Whether students will be allowed to review exams is at the discretion of the Course Director. This information will be provided to the students in the course syllabus.

If a Course Director allows a student to review any closed exam, the procedure for such review will be outlined in the course syllabus.

Sexual Misconduct

MMC PA Program students are subject to and are expected to comply with the Meharry Medical College [Sexual Misconduct Policy and Grievance Procedures](#) and disciplinary measures as outlined in the policy. ([Click Here](#))

Social Media

The faculty and staff of the MMC PA Program encourages the responsible use of all social media platforms to foster the professional development of our students both academically and clinically. MMC PA students have an obligation to represent not only the Physician Assistant profession but Meharry Medical College in all interactions with the public and are asked to be respectful, professional, and maintain the highest level of integrity when posting to social media.

All MMC PA students should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Social Media should only be used in the appropriate setting. Social media should not be used at any time during duty hours on a clinical rotation or in the classroom setting. Use of social media during these hours shows a lack of professionalism and will be reflected in your professionalism grade.
2. The highest privacy settings should be used on all social media platforms.
3. HIPAA rules and regulations must be adhered to and no identifiable patient information can be communicated on any social media platform.
4. All social media posting regarding MMC, MMC PA program, preceptor, clinical site, faculty or staff should be respectful and in accordance with the [MMC Media Relations](#) policy.

Any posts that are deemed unprofessional will be viewed as a violation of the Professionalism Policy and the potential consequences are outlined in the policy. Any posted material or comments using identifiable patient information is a direct HIPAA Policy violation and will result in discipline according to the policy. The MMC PA Program Student Progress Committee is ultimately responsible for enforcing the policy.

Student Acknowledgement of Policies and Practices

All students must sign the "Receipt of Acknowledgment" form, which documents the student's receipt of, understanding of, and adherence to all policies, rules, regulations and procedures of the MMC Physician Assistant Sciences Program.

This Receipt of Acknowledgement will be collected at the end of orientation once the handbook and policies have been reviewed.

Students Called to Active Military Duty

Members of the State or National Guard, Reserve, or active United States Military, who are called to active duty (e.g. drill, annual training) will not be academically penalized for that service.

Students activated may have different options, depending on the time of the semester the student is called to duty and length of duty.

1. MMC PA students in the Didactic Phase of their PA education who are called to Active Military Duty for less than (2) weeks will have the opportunity to remediate the material which was missed. Remediable material includes examinations, laboratory/skills center activities and other curricular activities.
2. For MMC PA students in the Clinical Phase of their PA education who are called to Active Military Duty, a reasonable attempt will be made to allow the student to complete their current clinical rotation without a delay in their overall academic progression. However, this decision will be made at the discretion of the Clinical Education Director. If accommodations cannot be made that prevent a delay in academic progression, the student may be required to take a leave of absence and repeat the incomplete clinical rotation.
3. MMC PA students who are called to Active Military Duty for greater than (2) weeks should take a leave of absence. All rights and privileges granted students serving in the Armed Forces shall apply, and they will be allowed to continue their education. Depending on the length of Active Military Duty assignment, decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis as to the best route for reinstating the student within the PA Curriculum. In cases of military deployments greater than 2 weeks, a delay in the student's originally projected graduation date may be inevitable. Decisions on where in the PA Curriculum to reinstate an MMC PA student returning from Active Military Duty will be made by the Student Progress Committee.
4. All students who are called to Active Military Duty are responsible for making arrangements with the Financial Aid Office regarding applications for loan deferments and other financial responsibilities.

Student Record Policy

The MMC PA Sciences Program maintains files for all PA students to document academic progress and promotion. The confidentiality and security of education and health records are of primary importance to the MMC PA Sciences Program and the College. The Admissions Coordinator complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

All records will be secured and only available to authorized personnel. The Admissions Coordinator and the program administrative assistant will store and maintain MMC PA Sciences Program student files.

Students will not have access to the records and/or confidential information of other students or faculty. All records will be secured and only available to authorized personnel.

Student files include the following sections:

- Admissions and Enrollment Criteria
 - CASPA full application
 - Background check & Urine Drug Screen
 - Proof of health insurance
 - BLS/ACLS/PALS certifications
 - Student Directory Approval
 - Technical Standard Acknowledgement
 - HIPPA Certificate
 - OSHA Certificate
 - Handbook and Policy Acknowledgement
- Student Performance including Academic Progressions
 - Phase I – IV evaluations and final grades
 - Phase V – evaluations and final grades
 - PASPE form
- Remediation efforts and outcomes
- Administrative Action(s)
 - Academic/behavioral disciplinary action
- Completion of Graduation Requirements
 - Documentation that students have met requirements for completion

*Local current student addresses and telephone numbers must be on file. It is the responsibility of the student to update said directory information in Blackboard.

Students with Military Service Obligation

The MMC PA Program shall grant a Military Leave of Absence, not to exceed a cumulative five (5) years, to a student who is a member of the active uniformed, military services of the United States and is called to active duty.

Student Employment

Students are highly discouraged from participating in extra-curricular employment. History demonstrates these students are at high risk of dismissal due to poor academic performance attributed to the time conflicts that outside employment brings.

Due to the intensity and high standards of the program, it is advisable that students be prepared and focused as they progress through the curriculum. Students are strongly discouraged from seeking or maintaining outside employment while enrolled in the MMC PA Program.

If a PA student chooses to work during the program, it is his/her responsibility to ensure that employment does not interfere with or hinder academic progress. Program expectations, assignments, deadlines, examinations and other student responsibilities will not be altered or adjusted to accommodate a student's working schedule and it is expected that the student employment will not interfere with the student's learning experience. Course work or days missed as a result of outside employment will not be excused.

Student Service as Instructional Faculty or on Clinical Rotation

- PA students are not required to work for the PA program in any capacity.
- PA students do not substitute for or function as instructional faculty. Students may share their previous health care knowledge and skills with students informally but will not be required to provide instruction.
- Students must not accept payment or stipends for services rendered in connection with their performance on clinical rotations. Accepting payment or gifts could result in the loss of malpractice liability coverage for the student.
- PA students are not required and should never substitute for clinical or administrative staff during clinical rotations.

Students must notify the Clinical Education Director immediately if they are put in such a position, or if they have any questions or other concerns regarding this policy.

Appendices

Student Handbook Manual Receipt & Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and read the 2020-2022 Physician Assistant Sciences Program Student handbook. I have had an opportunity to have questions answered with regard to its content. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained therein.

I have been made aware that, as a student enrolled in a Meharry Medical College program that I am bound by policies and procedures contained in the Meharry Medical College Student handbook.

Print Name

Signature

Date

PAS1 Summative Evaluation Meeting Checklist

Student Name: _____

Student Faculty Advisor: _____

Benchmark	Grade P/F	Notes/Comments
Credentialing		HIPPA training, immunizations, background check, IRB training if needed VA credentialing clearance
Didactic Courses:	GPA	Any remediation Strengths Weakness
PAS 1- End of Year Exam Written	Score	Make recommendation for focused area of study during clinical year based on organ system areas of weakness of summative exam as well as weak areas based on didactic courses and practice packrats.
Comprehensive Patient Encounter exams I in following courses PCI, PCII, PEI, PE II, simulation activities		Any remediation Strengths Weakness
Preparation for clinical phase courses (suturing, casting, gown and gloving, procedures, medical documentation, professionalism, clinical skill I/II)		Any skills requiring remediation or need for early clinical year site visit Strengths Weakness
Professionalism		Any citations or issues

PAS2 Summative Evaluation Meeting Checklist

Student Name: _____

Student Faculty Advisor: _____

Benchmark	Grade P/F	Notes/Comments
Credentialing		HIPPA training, immunizations, background check, IRB training if needed VA credentialing clearance
Clinical Courses:	GPA	Any remediation Strengths Weakness
PAS2 - End of Year Exam Written	Score	Make recommendation for focused area of study for NCCPA board prep based on organ system areas of weakness of summative exam as well as weak areas based on end of rotation exam and clinical rotation performance as well as practice packrats.
PAS2 Comprehensive Patient Encounter exams: PAS2 mid- year and end of year OSCEs		Any remediation Strengths Weakness
Clinical Year Courses		Any remediation Strengths Weakness
Professionalism		Any citations or issues