

University of the Cumberland
Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program



Didactic Student Handbook
2010

Preface

Welcome to University of the Cumberland's Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Program. This Handbook is published to aid students who are beginning their first year of Physician Assistant training at University of the Cumberland. The handbook should be used in conjunction with the following:

- University of the Cumberland's online catalog:
www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/catalog/
- Internet posting of University of the Cumberland's:
www.ucumberlands.edu
- PA Program Web Site:
<http://gradweb.ucumberlands.edu/medicine/mpas>

Each student needs to clearly understand both the college and program-specific policies. Please read these sources carefully and contact the PA faculty with any questions or concerns you may have with respect to these important documents and how they apply to you.

Occasionally, updates, corrections, additions or other changes to this handbook become necessary. The PA Program reserves the right to alter the contents of this handbook as needed and at any time. Any changes apply to all current and prospective students. The faculty reserves the right to alter the curriculum, schedule of required courses, exams and other regulations. Every effort will be made to keep students well informed with respect to any changes.

Validation of college registration implies the student's acceptance of the published academic rules and regulations found in this and any other official program or college publication.

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Physician Assistant Professional Oath

All Physician Assistants make the pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

- Hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all human beings.
- Uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice.
- Recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- Treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- Hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- Assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my practice.
- Seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- Work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- Use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- Respect my professional relationship with the physician.
- Share and expand knowledge within the profession.

(Source: <http://saaapa.aapa.org/students/grad/oath.htm>.)

University of the Cumberlands

Mission Statement

University of the Cumberlands has historically served students primarily, but not exclusively, from the beautiful mountain regions of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio and Alabama which have traditionally been described as Appalachia. The

University's impact can be seen in the achievements of its graduates who have assumed roles of leadership in this region and throughout the nation.

While located in the resort like area of Appalachia, with emphasis primarily on serving the beautiful mountain area, the University now reaches into every state and around the world through its student body and alumni.

UC continues to offer promising students of all backgrounds a broad-based liberal arts program enriched with Christian values. The University strives for excellence in all of its endeavors and expects from students a similar dedication to this pursuit. Its commitment to a strong academic program is joined with a commitment to a strong work ethic. UC encourages students to think critically and creatively so that they may better prepare themselves for lives of responsible service and leadership. This focus of its undergraduate programs is extended and extrapolated into its graduate programs. These programs prepare professionals to be servant-leaders in their disciplines and communities, linking research with practice and knowledge with ethical decision-making in the pursuit of the life-more-abundant for both the individual and society.

Institution Accreditation

University of the Cumberlands is accredited by the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Inquiries concerning the accreditation status of the University may be directed to the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or by calling 404-679-4500.

University of the Cumberlands complies with all applicable federal and state non-discrimination statutes and does not engage in prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, age, or handicap. The University may discriminate on the basis of religion in any position of employment in order to fulfill its purpose.

Program Overview

History: The faculty and administration of University of the Cumberlands initiated and began developing a Physician Assistant Program in 2008. This program was established to extend the institution's historical service to the region and build upon the strengths of its current science programs. The University's Master Program in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) has been carefully researched, organized, and articulated so that it may be a worthwhile learning experience for degree candidates. The MPAS faculty who has been assembled look forward to the opportunity to pursue fulfillment of the program mission in this region.

Mission: The mission of MPAS is to educate competent, compassionate and caring Physician Assistants to be an integral part of the modern professional health care team for underserved areas of Kentucky, the nation and on an international level.

Vision: MPAS strives for professional excellence in an environment of compassion and team cooperation with the common goal of producing professionals who serve as a vital part of the health care team. It is our intent to prepare clinicians whose lifestyle reflects a commitment to lifelong learning, leadership and service to their community.

Goals: In accordance with its mission, the MPAS strives to graduate clinicians fully prepared for employment as competent and caring physician assistants. In order to do this the program has outline several goals aligned with the ARC-PA competencies. It is thus the purpose of the program to:

1. Prepare physician assistants with a strong knowledge base in biomedical and clinical sciences supported by the ability to apply analytic thinking to clinical situations.
2. Instill students with the interpersonal communication skills necessary to develop effective information exchange with patients, their families, and professionals in the healthcare system.
3. Teach students to provide effective patient care necessary for treatment of health problems and the promotion of physical, psychological, and spiritual wellness.
4. Develop physician assistants knowledgeable in legal requirements and respectful of the diversity of the PA profession in order to graduate PAs possessing a high degree of professionalism, commitment to Christian ethics, and integrity.
5. Provide students with the opportunity to understand practice-based learning and improvement by engaging each student in critical analysis of their own experience and medical literature so that they continuously self-improve.
6. Expose students to clinical practice that encompasses the societal, organizational and economic systems that tie into healthcare delivery in order that they may be prepared to deliver optimal patient care.

Professional Accreditation Statement: The Physician Assistant Program at University of the Cumberlands received Provisional Accreditation through the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) in September 2009. Provisional Accreditation is the status of accreditation granted for a limited, defined period of time to a new program that, at the time of the site visit, has demonstrated its preparedness to initiate a program in accordance with the Standards. Provisional Accreditation does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. All students who matriculate during Provisional Accreditation period are permitted to sit for the PANCE examination.

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Faculty: The faculty coordinates, directs, and oversees the curriculum and the academic progress of each student. The faculty maintains an open-door policy to enhance accessibility,

communication, and professional exchange. The faculty is a talented and diverse team with considerable amount of educational and clinical experience.

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Program Details

Physician Assistant Studies Degree Requirements

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Degree (MPAS) is earned through the continuous twenty-four-month program of studies consisting of 101 master’s level credit hours. These hours are divided into sixty-one credit hours of classroom focused instruction and forty credit hours of clinical rotations. A complete list of courses with course descriptions is located in the program academic catalog.

Physician Assistant Program Expenses

1. Program Tuition/Fees:	59,000
*First Year	29,500
*Second Year	29,500
TOTAL	59,000

*Estimated Tuition/Fees based on rates as of 2009-2010 academic year. Price may be adjusted for the 2010-2011 academic year. Cost in all categories is subject to change without notice. The most current information on graduate level tuition can be obtained through the University Business Office.

2. Institutional Fees:	1, 236
*First Year	618
*Second Year	618
Total	1,236

*Fees include Malpractice Insurance Premiums, Lab Fees and Tech Fees. Price may be adjusted for the 2010-2011 academic year. Cost in all categories is subject to change without notice. The most current information on graduate level institutional fees can be obtained through the University Business Office.

3. Living, Transportation, and Conference Travel Expenses: Varies

Students are responsible for arranging their own housing accommodations, transportation, and any expenses associated with relocations and travel to/from clinical assignments for clinical rotation courses. All Program participants can anticipate temporary relocation for at least one of their required clinical practice experiences during the final year of the Program. A campus parking permit (\$15 per academic year) is required.

During both years, students will be attending one or two preselected Physician Assistant conferences. Students will be responsible for travel, conference registration fees, lodging, and meals during the conference.

4. Textbooks and Information Resources: Varies

Each student will be required to purchase textbooks. The approximate cost will be \$1500. Most of these resources will need to be purchased at the onset of the program and used throughout the duration of the 24 months.

A trainee subscription to UpToDate (~ \$195.00 per year), an online evidence-based peer reviewed medical information resource, is also required. A one-time fee of \$75 is required for a TYPHON PAST membership (used for clinical experience tracking). Membership into KAPA (one-time fee of \$25) and AAPA (one-time fee of \$75) is required. Subscription and Dues will be provided through the institution and charged to the student's account.

5. Personal Computer:

Each student must have a laptop computer for use throughout the program.

6. Medical Equipment:

Each student must purchase a high quality Stethoscope, a half length white lab coat, Tuning Fork 512 cycles, Tuning Fork 256 cycles, and a reflex hammer The total cost of these items may range from \$150 to \$200.

7. Name Badge:

Students will be provided one student ID by the institution which will also serve as their ID badge for use in the clinic and at certain times in the didactic year.

8. Insurance: varies

Medical Insurance:

All graduate level medical students participating in clinical rotations are required to have adequate medical insurance. Students must present evidence of an individual, family, or government plan with adequate coverage in order to waive out of the mandatory student health insurance policy.

It is the student's responsibility to file the required waiver with the University of the Cumberlands Business Office by the required deadlines. If your waiver is not received by

the required deadline, you will be enrolled and charged for our current student medical insurance plan.

Fall Term (Aug. 8-Jan. 7)	Flat Fee	\$391
Spring + Summer Term (Jan. 8-Aug. 7)	Flat Fee	\$539

*Changes to rates are determined in the Fall of each year.

Malpractice Insurance:

Malpractice insurance premiums are included in the institutional fees.

Worker's Compensation Insurance:

Many clinical practice sites require students to provide proof of compensation coverage in addition to personal health insurance coverage. If assigned a clinical rotation at a facility that mandates this added insurance, the cost of purchasing the required policy must be borne by the student.

9. Background Check:

Each student must obtain and provide the Program with a copy of a cleared background check. This will need to be done once before matriculation and again before clinical rotations. The student is responsible for any costs associated with this background check. For further information about the process, please refer to the KY police webpage at: http://www.kentuckystatepolice.org/background_check_forms.htm.

Student Health Services

Core faculty will not participate as health care providers for any student in the PA program. If a student approaches faculty for health care they will refer him/her to another available provider not associated with the program. The following list of local providers is given so students may select a physician to meet medical needs during their time at the University.

1. Cumberland River Clinic, 402 Cumberland Avenue, Williamsburg, KY
2. Durham Lee G, MD, 475 North Highway 25 West, Williamsburg, KY
3. Wilkens Charles H, MD, 475 North Highway 25 West, Williamsburg, KY
4. DelMundo Cecile, MD, 821 North Highway 25 West, Williamsburg, KY

Student Security and Safety

The Program and the University strive to assure the security and safety of students in all locations in which instruction occurs throughout the curriculum. Students should assume responsibility for notifying the Program and/or University when security or safety concerns arise.

Orientation

All students are required to attend the two-day program orientation. During the orientation vital program information will be given and questions answered. Each student will have a copy of the handbook containing program policies and procedures, and will be given assistance in understanding the program policies and practices. It is at this time that students will have opportunity to meet the course instructors and learn program expectations. There will also be

a study skills workshop as well as training in the use of health-related internet databases and the University of the Cumberlands medical resources located in the Hagan Memorial Library.

Program Policies and Procedures

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all scheduled lectures, laboratories, case study activities, etc. It is their responsibility to arrive on time, to be prepared, and to remain for the entire class period. The student must make known any foreseeable absence to the course instructor and/or Program Director in writing at the earliest possible time (e-mail is acceptable). The course instructor and/or director will inform the student if this will be considered an excused absence.

If an absence is excused, course work may be made up within 3 days.

Unexcused or excessive absence may lead to dismissal from the program. Incomplete course work due to absence may result in a failing course grade. Following any absence, a health care provider's documentation of the reason for absence and fitness to return to full Program activity may be required by the Program Director. If absenteeism hinders the student's academic performance appropriate action will be taken.

Absences in excess of **16 hours per semester** are considered excessive and in violation of the Program's professional behavior standards. The student may be subject to disciplinary action or program dismissal.

Accommodations/Disabilities Policy

University of the Cumberlands accepts students with learning disabilities and provides reasonable accommodations to help them be successful academically. Students with disabilities may incur additional costs for services not provided by the University in order to be successful in their studies. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires the University of the Cumberlands to provide reasonable accommodations that afford an equal opportunity for students with learning disabilities. However, the University is not required to provide accommodations which lower its academic standards. MPAS Studies must meet the technical standards published in the MPAS Didactic Student Handbook.

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs serves as the Disability Services Coordinator. For accommodations to be awarded, a student must complete a Disability Form and provide documentation of the disability. Such documentation may include

- A "Section 504" report or Individualized Educational Plan from a high school no more than two years old.
- A psychological /educational assessment no more than three years old, performed by a licensed psychologist, educational testing specialist, or appropriately trained physician.
- A psychiatric assessment (DSM-IV or DSM-IV TR) no more than three years old, provided by a board certified psychiatrist.

When all paperwork is on file, a meeting between the student and the Coordinator will be arranged to discuss possible accommodations before accommodations are formally approved by the Special Accommodations Committee. Students must then meet with the Coordinator at the beginning of each semester before any academic accommodations can be certified for that term.

Campus Drug and Alcohol Policy

The use or possession of alcoholic beverages and the use, possession, or distribution of illegal controlled drugs and any other substance that is inconsistent with the philosophy of the University is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in the imposition of one or more of the disciplinary sanctions set forth in the Disciplinary Sanctions section of the University Student Handbook, **and** may result in severe criminal penalties under local, state and federal law. A detailed explanation of such penalties is found in the University Student Handbook. In addition to procedures carried out by the institution, the program will follow the procedure outlined below concerning student drug/alcohol use:

1. The program director should be notified in writing upon any suspicion of drug or alcohol abuse by a student.
2. The program director is responsible for meeting with that student and making a referral, if appropriate, to student services.
3. Student services may refer that student for evaluation and treatment by a licensed substance abuse counselor.
4. If a student refuses treatment for behaviors that are hindering academic and professional performance, he or she may be dismissed from the program at the discretion of the program director and Dean of Student Affairs.

Personal Counseling Policy

Students experiencing a personal problem, whether it is interfering with academic performance or not, are encouraged to contact their instructor/advisor. If the instructor is unable to resolve the issue with the student the student will be referred the program director who will, if the issue remains unresolved, refer the student to Academic Affairs and the Director of Counseling and Career Services. The Director of Counseling and Career Services will determine if the student needs to be referred to for further personal counseling. (Confidentiality waivers are signed and records filed with the agency to which the student is referred.)

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is University policy to afford equal opportunity in employment and admissions to all individuals. No person, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation or handicap shall be excluded or denied benefits or otherwise discriminated against in employment or admission or participation in education programs or activities. Discrimination shall not be tolerated in any service or operation including, but not limited to, recruiting, testing, counseling, awarding financial aid, research, etching, assignment of work-study and assistantships, granting of degrees, or participation in student activities.

Harassment Policy

University of the Cumberlands prohibits harassment and intimidation on the basis of one's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin. Examples of conduct prohibited by these policies include, but are not limited to, repeated insults, humor, jokes, and/ or anecdotes that belittle or demean an individual's or group's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin and physical conduct or verbal innuendo which, because of one's sex, race, color, religion, or national origin creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Prohibited conduct specifically related to sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Persistent, unwelcome flirtatious advances and/or propositions of a sexual nature;
- Repeated unwelcome comments of a sexual nature about an individual's body or clothing;
- Unwanted displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
- Unnecessary touching, such as patting, pinching, hugging, or repeated brushing against an individual's body;
- Suggestions that submission to or rejection of sexual advances will affect decisions regarding such matters as an individual's employment, work assignments or status, salary, academic standing, grades, receipt of financial aid, or letters of recommendation;
- Sexual assault.

It is the perception of the target of the behavior that sexual harassment is defined; or in other words, harassment is in the eye of the beholder. The law defines sexual harassment from the point of view of the target of the harassment and as such excludes any consideration of intent.

Any person (student, staff, or faculty) wishing to file a complaint regarding harassment should do so to a member of the Committee to Investigate Harassment Issues. The complaint should be in writing and detail the specific incident and/or incidents and the specific individual and/or individuals involved. An investigation of the complaint will be completed within 45 days.

The Committee will render its decision and notify the complainant of the Committee's decision and action within 90 days. Decisions regarding the complaint will be reported to the President of University of the Cumberlands. Records of all complaints, investigations, reports, and recommendations are maintained by the Committee to Investigate Harassment Issues.

Evaluation of Professional Behavior

Professional behavior includes: demonstrating respect for everyone, holding oneself to ethical and moral standards of behaviors, and developing the knowledge and skills that enable provision of competent and compassionate care for their patients. At a minimum, University of the Cumberlands Physician Assistant students are required to abide by the profession's Code of Ethics. Faculty who believe a student is in direct breach of the code of ethics will make this aware to the Program Director. Contact and discussion with the student will take place and a course of action will be taken to remediate the problem. Unwillingness to resolve the dispute and continual failure to demonstrate the qualities defined in the AAPA Professional Code of

Ethics will serve as grounds for dismissal. The rubric used in evaluating professional behavior is found in Appendix A of this document.

Student Employment

Students are strongly discouraged from seeking or maintaining employment while enrolled in the Program. If a student does work and encounters academic and/or disciplinary problems, the student may be counseled to cease employment. Under no circumstances will employment be considered as a reason for excused absence from the student's didactic or clinical education commitments nor will student employment considerations mitigate evaluation of outcomes.

Matriculated PA students will not be employed by the Physician Assistant Program under any circumstances. Students will not be allowed to perform clerical or administrative work for the Program.

During clinical rotations, students will not be used to substitute for regular clinical and/or administrative staff. If a student is asked to substitute for regular staff on a rotation, he/she should inform the Clinical Coordinator or Program Director immediately.

Retention Standards

Earning an MPAS Degree is predicated on the faculty's determination that a student is *suitable* for the practice of medicine in terms of his/her personal professionalism, personal conduct, and academic achievement. Grades alone are not sufficient to warrant promotion to the next semester, clinical phase, or graduation. The faculty reserves the right to dismiss any student when the student's documented behavior is not in keeping with the standards of the medical profession or when the student's presence in the PA Program is considered detrimental to the student in question, the other students in the college, or to society in general.

Participation of Students as Human Subjects

All students are required to participate in physical exam training in a professional and cooperative manner. They will be asked to wear clothing that will allow physical examination by another student. Students will be asked to drape patients properly. Students will never be asked to perform pelvic/rectal examination procedures on one another.

Students demonstrating unprofessional behaviors (including but not limited to inappropriate physical contact, unpreparedness, unwillingness to participate, inappropriate patient draping, or unsuitable verbal comments) will be counseled by the course instructor. Students continuing to demonstrate unprofessional behaviors will be counseled by the program director and documentation of the incident will be placed in the student file. If the issue remains unresolved, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will be notified and appropriate action will be taken including but not limited to a failing grade for the course or dismissal from the program.

Personal Attire

It is the responsibility of the student and faculty to dress appropriately by remaining clean, modest, professional and well-groomed at all times. Students whose dress and grooming do

not adhere to this standard may be given a written warning. Continued display of inappropriate dress and/or grooming is considered unprofessional and will be documented in the student file and may have a negative effect on the student's professionalism grade.

Students may be requested to wear their University of the Cumberlands name tag during some lectures and should have them readily available.

CPR

American Heart Association CPR certification will be required prior to clinical rotations. A copy of the CPR certification card must be supplied to the program and placed in the student's file by the end of the didactic year.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence from the Program may be granted by the Program Director for medical or personal reasons. Requests for leaves of absence must be made in writing to the Program Director and the Dean of Academic affairs. Decisions regarding the resumption of course work are dependent upon receipt of documentation that satisfactory resolution has occurred of the problem necessitating the leave of absence.

Withdrawal

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the program in accordance with the University's general policies and procedures. Written notice of intent to withdraw must be provided to the Program Director prior to initiating the formal withdrawal process through the Academic Affairs office. A detailed explanation of the University withdrawal policy and treatment of Title IV Aid at the time of withdrawal is published in the program academic catalog.

Refund Policy

Should circumstances necessitate that a student in the MPAS program withdraw from the University, the University's standard policy on refunding tuition and fees will apply. This policy for traditional semester-length courses applies for both Pre-Professional candidates and for candidates enrolled in Didactics courses or in Clinical Rotations. A detailed explanation of the refund policy can be found in the program academic catalog.

Physical Examination

All students accepted for admission to the Physician Assistant program are required to submit a completed *Health History Questionnaire* form prior to matriculation. This form will verify tuberculosis screening and current immunization or laboratory evidence of immunity for those infectious recommended by the CDC for Health Care Workers.

Name and Contact Information Changes

It is every student's responsibility to keep the Program Administrative Assistant informed of current contact information throughout their program and enrollment. Changes of name, address and telephone number must be reported within seven days of occurrence. Students are required to use the email address provided by the University.

The Program will not be held responsible for consequences incurred as a result of our inability to contact students in a timely manner due to contact information changes that were not reported to the Program.

Program Evaluations

Students are required to complete all course/instructor evaluations. Student input is a vital and integral component of the program's ongoing self-assessment and improvement process and is an absolute requirement for program accreditation. All evaluations will be completed in a confidential manner.

Academic Policies and Procedures

Academic Dishonesty Policy

At a Christian liberal arts university committed to the pursuit of truth and understanding, any act of academic dishonesty is especially distressing and cannot be tolerated. In general, academic dishonesty involves the abuse and misuse of information or people to gain an undeserved academic advantage or evaluation. The common forms of academic dishonesty include:

- cheating - using deception in the taking of tests or the preparation of written work, using unauthorized materials, copying another person's work with or without consent, or assisting another in such activities;
- lying - falsifying, fabricating, or forging information in either written or spoken presentations;
- plagiarism - using the published writings, data, interpretations, or ideas of another without proper documentation.

Episodes of academic dishonesty are reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The potential penalty for academic dishonesty includes 1) a failing grade on a particular assignment, 2) a failing grade for the entire course, or 3) charges against the student with the appropriate disciplinary body.

Grading Policy

Grades are calculated on a percentage basis. All final course grade percentages are rounded to the nearest integer. Final course grades are assigned according to the following standards:

<u>Percent Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	
89.5 – 100	A	student has exceeded expectations
79.5– 89.5	B	student has met expectations
69.5-79.4	C	student is below expectations
Less than 69.5	F	student has failed expectations

An "I" may be temporarily awarded to individuals who fail to complete course requirements within the defined time. A final grade of "F" in any PA course is a non-passing grade and results in automatic and immediate dismissal from the PA Program. The student may rejoin the

program the following year at the discretion of the program director. The program must be completed within three years. Students exceeding the three year time limit must reapply in order to enter the program.

Testing Format, Policies, and Procedures

Computerized testing: If a technologic failure should occur during a computerized exam the faculty will make every effort to be equitable in making decisions about how to adjust for these technical difficulties.

Testing Regulations: If a test proctor determines that a student is in violation of any of the following policies during an exam, the program director will be notified and immediate action will be taken. Based on the offense, the student may be asked to correct the problem, leave the testing site without finishing the exam, or be assigned a failing grade for the exam. If a student has violated a policy he may not be permitted to retake the exam.

- No personal materials, notes, books, cell phones, food or drinks, calculators, PDAs, etc. may be present during testing.
- Baseball caps, visors or other eye-shading headwear is not permitted during the exam.
- During computerized testing, all computer programs must be closed before logging in to the test site. The student must not attempt to access any other software programs during testing.
- Once a student completes a test he/she must leave the testing area

Test Absence: Students are expected to take examinations at the designated time. In the event of an illness, the student must contact the program director *BEFORE* the test to inform her/him of the anticipated absence. A student who has missed an examination due to excused illness or personal crisis will have *NO MORE* than 48 hours in which to complete that examination or the first day back in classes, whichever occurs first. Students with a prolonged illness or personal crisis will be reviewed individually and arrangements made accordingly. Student absences from scheduled examinations and laboratory sessions will be excused only under extraordinary circumstances. Examinations will not be administered prior to the scheduled examination time without the approval of the Program Director.

Remediation Policy

Remediation is initiated during a course when a failing grade is earned on a formative examination (written, midterm or practical examinations). Remediation is not offered for summative or comprehensive examinations in courses since these are intended to measure cumulative mastery of material. Remediation does not ensure that the student will successfully attain the required level of performance, but it serves to support students in their attempt at skill and content mastery. Students, who repeatedly fail examinations in one or more courses, may receive academic or career counseling through a meeting with their advisor.

Within one week of the written exam, the instructor or Academic Coordinator notifies the student in writing of the exam grade and the offer of remediation. The student will be asked to meet with the course instructor to pinpoint performance deficiencies, to assess the student's program and course status, and to identify external influences that may have contributed to poor performance.

After meeting with a student, the instructor will formulate a remediation plan to overcome the identified deficiencies. The process is as follows:

1. The student may be assigned a supplemental learning assignment (book review, case study or reading assignment) to remediate knowledge deficiencies.
2. The student will be offered a make-up examination of the same format (multiple choice, essay, practical) as the original exam. This examination will be administered within 5 business days of the notice of remediation. The student may accept or decline the offer for remediation.
3. A student who accepts remediation but who fails to remediate the examination by the deadline set by the instructor will forfeit the remediation and the original examination grade will remain.
4. Successful completion is determined by a grade of at least 70% on the re-test and will result in a replacement grade of 70%. Should the student fail to make at least 70% on the re-test, the original grade will remain. Completion of the remediation assignment does not guarantee a passing course grade. Failure to complete/pass the remediation assignment does not necessarily result in a failing course grade.

If a need is identified, the advisor will refer the student to the Director of Career Planning and Placement for career counseling or for referral for personal counseling. If a study skills deficit is identified, the advisor will refer the student to the Teaching and Learning Center for academic counseling.

All correspondence concerning remediation plans, actions, or outcomes will be placed in the student's file.

Academic Progress

Successful completion of each course is required in order to progress within the program. Students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 and achieve a course letter grade of "C" or better in all courses to make appropriate academic progress within the Program. Any individual who does not meet the specified end-of-semester GPA requirements will be placed on Academic Probation for one semester. See *Academic Probation*.

In addition, a student who earns a grade of C in one or more courses but who maintains the minimum GPA requirement will receive academic and career counseling with the student advisor. Students with a grade of "C" in multiple courses jeopardize their continued enrollment in the program.

Academic Probation

A student is placed on Academic Probation when the cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. Probationary status is determined and monitored by the Program Director in consultation with the Academic Coordinator and the Registrar. Normally a student has one semester to remove probationary status. After a probationary semester, a student with a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 normally will be suspended and not permitted to continue in the program. However, such a student may apply to the Program Director for re-entry into the program the following year. If readmitted to the program, the student must complete the program within three years of initial program enrollment.

Appropriate use of Electronic Devices

Students will be expected to silence cell phones and put away iPods and all other electronic devices before the beginning of class. Use of cell phones, for calls or texting, use of e-mail, social networking sites or other web sites during class, and use of other electronic devices not required for that lecture will all be considered unprofessional behavior.

Academic Appeals

Both undergraduate and graduate students have the right to challenge a grade. If discussions with the course instructor and department chair do not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, students may file a formal written appeal with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will forward the appeal to the chair of the Academic Appeals Committee.

This formal written appeal must be filed by the end of the 4th week of classes in the next regular term following the term in which the course in question was taken. The Academic Appeals Committee then gathers information from the student, the instructor, and any other relevant parties. The Committee will deliver its recommendation on the complaint to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After reviewing this recommendation and concurring or amending it, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will inform the student and instructor of the disposition of the complaint no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the complaint was filed.

Records of all actions regarding academic grade appeals, including their final disposition, are maintained by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Academic Appeals Committee.

Program Policy Appeals

The Program recognizes the rights of a student to appeal decisions affecting student progress. Appeals must be based upon the Program's failure to follow established policies or procedures. Students must present evidence that supports their appeal of a program decision according to the appeal process as defined herein:

- All appeals must be submitted to the Program Director, in writing, within 5 working days of the grievance.
- Appeals will be reviewed and a decision will be rendered to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

- Students who wish to challenge the Program's decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to the Office of the Academic Vice President in writing within 10 working days of the Program's appeal decision.

Competencies Mastery

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) has developed a document titled *Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession* available online at <http://www.nccpa.net>. The Program has adopted this manuscript as a resource for defining the basic knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviors of enrolled individuals. A brief summary of these competencies is noted below.

Medical knowledge Comprehend pathophysiology, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion and disease prevention.

Interpersonal and communication skills Verbal, nonverbal, and written

Patient care Assessment, evaluation, and management of patients

Professionalism Express of positive values and ideals as care is delivered; Prioritize the interests of those being served above one's own; Know your own professional and personal limitations; Practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency, or mental illness; Demonstrate responsibility, ethical practice, and sensitivity to patient diversity; Adhere to legal and regulatory requirements.

Practice-based learning and improvement Engage in critical analysis of one's own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self-improvement in order to assess, evaluate, and improve personal patient care practices.

Systems-based practice Understand the larger system of health care, encompassing the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which care is delivered.

Demonstration of Knowledge:

The NCCPA has created an exam content blueprint for entry-level physician assistant certification to illustrate the breadth of competency expected of those who are seeking entry into the PA profession. It is highly recommended that each student visit the NCCPA website and print off the exam content blueprint to use as a study guide throughout the program.

Technical Standards

Technical standards refer to the physical, cognitive and behavioral abilities required of all Physician Assistants. Students admitted to the Program are required to sign a statement verifying that they have no disabilities which will prevent them from practicing as a Physician Assistant. If a student has difficulty with any of the items on the technical standards statement, the Program will determine if reasonable accommodations can be made to meet the needs of the student.

Students will be evaluated as to their ability to perform the Technical Standards throughout their educational experience. Individuals who do not satisfactorily demonstrate the required skills will be placed on Academic Probation, provided remediation and academic counseling,

and reassessed at the end of the semester. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress in future assessments will result in dismissal from the Program.

A list and description for the technical standards is located in Appendix C of this handbook.

Resources

Physician Assistant Program Facilities

The Physician Assistant Department is housed in the first floor the Correll Science Building and the facilities include two instructional classrooms, a procedures/skills laboratory, a physical assessment laboratory, faculty offices, anatomy laboratory, and student lounge. The labs are fully equipped with patient beds, examination tables, select diagnostic equipment, patient simulators, and anatomic mannequins to assist students in learning and practicing important physical assessment and therapeutic skills. The anatomy laboratory maintains a collection of anatomic models which demonstrate a myriad of normal and pathologic conditions. These resources must NOT be removed from the classroom.

University Conference Rooms

Multiple conference rooms are available on campus for student and program use including two in the Correll Science Complex.

University Computer Laboratories

Several computer laboratories are located on campus. The two library computer labs have several desktop computers with printer access. Students are provided a University of the Cumberlands user profile during orientation to utilize the campus computers and printers.

University Library

In the upper level of the campus library students have access to medical resources. The librarians are specifically trained in the needs of PA students.

University Internet Addresses

University of the Cumberlands: <http://www.ucumberlands.edu>

Program Website: <http://gradweb.ucumberlands.edu/medicine/mpas>

Physician Assistant Organizations

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA): <http://www.aapa.org/>

Student Academy of the AAPA (SAAAPA): <http://saaapa.aapa.org/index.htm>

Accreditation Review Commission on Physician Assistant Education: <http://www.arc-pa.org/>

National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA): <http://www.nccpa.net/>

Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA): <http://www.paeaonline.org/>

Appendix A - Professional Development Assessment Tool

As a PA student you are expected to achieve the highest level of professionalism. This is an example of an assessment tool that may be used to determine if you have achieved professional competency. Questions from this tool will be utilized by course instructors to determine the portion of the grade assigned to professionalism.

Scale for Assessment

	Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Not Applicable
Did the student represent oneself or one's role appropriately, whether oral or written?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student follow the dress code as regards to its identifying features, or writings?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student seek and follow supervisory input in the decisions for care and treatment of patients?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student exhibit emotional stability, maturity, empathy, physical and mental stamina?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student demonstrate the ability to learn and function in a wide variety of settings? This includes demonstrating cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses to provide the standard of care.	4	3	2	1	
Was there evidence that the student could communicate effectively, both verbally and written, using appropriate grammar, spelling, and vocabulary?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student act calmly in stressful situations?	4	3	2	1	
Was the student able to work cooperatively, preserving relationships with other members of the health care team?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student report any physical handicap or health issues that may affect their ability to provide medical care or put the patient in danger?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student uphold ethical standards for health care?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student extend a full measure of professional ability and dedication during all assignments and lab sessions?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student show respect for other students or faculty members?	4	3	2	1	
Was the student prompt and on time for classes?	4	3	2	1	
Did the student uphold the honor code and exhibit academic integrity?	4	3	2	1	

Appendix B - PANCE Review Study Notes

This study method is a very effective vehicle for students to prepare for the PANCE exam. By participating in the PANCE review study notes system, the student will be using multiple learning methods; such as, reading, writing, kinesthetic, and connecting the knowledge with in-class clinical discussions. Students will write an average of one page of notes for each topic assigned using the template outlined below. Students can use all reading resources. The textbooks utilized will depend on the topic assigned.

Recommended Template for PANCE Notes:

Pre-prep notes should include the following template approach:

1. Definition
2. Etiology
3. Basic Anatomy involved with the disease process
4. Pathogenesis
5. Clinical symptoms
6. Physical Examination (Description of the exams to be done, what tools are necessary, and what the practitioner is looking for during the exam)
7. Differential Diagnoses (at least 3)
8. Evaluation with a diagnostic approach
i.e. history, PE, laboratory studies, X-ray, CT, MRI, etc.
9. Treatment including specific pharmacologic measures and appropriate surgical measures if necessary

Appendix C - Technical Standards

University of the Cumberland's Physician Assistant Program Students must meet certain basic/essential requirements (referred to as the *Technical Standards*) that are necessary for obtaining employment and performing as a Physician Assistant. The *Technical Standards* each student must master include cognitive, physical and behavioral characteristics. Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities will be considered on an individual basis; but, a candidate must be able to perform in an independent manner. All students must possess the intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the program core faculty. The following skills are required of each Physician Assistant student, with or without accommodation:

Observation Skills

The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms 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 necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

Communication Skills

A candidate should be able to speak, to hear, and to 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 sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but 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 Skills

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 do basic laboratory tests, carry out 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 of patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the 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, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual

abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

A candidate must possess the emotional health and stability required for full utilization of her/his intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. Candidates 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. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admission and education processes

