



UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT INSTITUTE

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**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017-2018**

## PREFACE

All students are responsible for being familiar with and complying with the current version of the Physician Assistant Institute (“PAI”) Handbook (the “Handbook”), which contains policies and procedures for the PAI generally, as well as specific PAI components. All students are also responsible for being familiar with and complying with the current version of the *Key to UB* and the *University of Bridgeport (the “University”) Catalog*. Please refer to the *Key to UB* and the *University Catalog* for full University policies and procedures. Online editions of the *Key to UB* and the *University Catalog* contain the most current version of these materials. This handbook is designed to supplement the *Key to UB*, available at: [http://www.bridgeport.edu/docs/StudentLife/KeytoUB/Key\\_to\\_UB.pdf](http://www.bridgeport.edu/docs/StudentLife/KeytoUB/Key_to_UB.pdf)

The January 2017 edition of the PAI Handbook replaces any previous version of the PAI Handbook. While this Handbook covers policies for the entire curriculum, there are more specific guidelines for the clinical year with which students must comply. These more specific clinical year guidelines are contained in a separate Clinical Year Handbook, which will be distributed and reviewed during the clinical year orientation.

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## **Physician Assistant Institute – General Office Information**

### **PAI Office Hours:**

The PAI office hours are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (Monday through Friday).

### **Faculty Office Hours:**

Appointments may be made through the program office at 203-576-2400.

### **PAI Contact Information**

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## **I. OVERVIEW OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT INSTITUTE**

### **University of Bridgeport - Physician Assistant Institute Mission Statement**

The mission of the University of Bridgeport Physician Assistant Institute is to develop clinicians with: dedication to patients; commitment to life-long education; respect for the profession; a global perspective on health care; volunteerism as a professional core value and an integrative approach to practice for the benefit of all patients. This mission to educate the physician assistant is reflected in our motto: Adiuvaré, Mederi, Communiter; TO HELP, TO HEAL, TOGETHER.

### **PAI Goals**

- Provide compassionate and effective patient care for diverse populations.
- Exhibit culturally competent communication skills.
- Demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving clinical sciences, applying this knowledge to patient care.
- Develop the skills necessary for self-reflection and life-long learning.
- Work effectively in inter-professional teams to enhance patient safety. Incorporate considerations of cost, patient safety and advocacy.
- Demonstrate ethical principles and cultural sensitivity. Acquire a work ethic where patient needs replace self-interest.
- Participate in scholarly and service-based activities necessary to build the profession.
- Possess a mutual respect for health care advocates providing alternatives modalities of care.

### **Functions and Tasks**

- Acquire an accurate and relevant history in an efficient hypothesis driven fashion
- Perform an accurate and targeted or complete physical exam.
- Synthesize available data to define each patient's central clinical problem.
- Plan and implement therapeutic measures
- Deliver appropriate hypothesis driven oral presentation and documentation in electronic or written format.
- Demonstrate the understanding of relevant pathophysiology of common medical conditions to generate a differential diagnosis using evidence based medicine.
- Taking ownership of the patient and is a patient advocate. Be available to counseling patients regarding disease prevention. To be knowledgeable of referral services for both medical and financial resources.
- Recognize the need to seek guidance when appropriate. Work collaboratively with the interdisciplinary healthcare team and respond productively to feedback.
- Perform life-saving maneuvers such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

## **History of the PAI**

The University of Bridgeport was founded in 1927 as a Junior college. Twenty years later, in 1947, the Institution was chartered as a four-year university granting a baccalaureate degree. Since this time, over thirty graduate and doctoral programs have been instituted. In response to the changing health care environment and lack of universal access to healthcare, UB founded the Physician Assistant Institute in 2009. PAI matriculated its first class January 2011, celebrating its first commencement May 2013. The 28-month Master's program has the unique focus of integrated medicine, global health and volunteerism. It aims to foster a learning environment of evidenced-based medicine in diverse patient populations. The PAI joins the rapidly expanding Health Science Division at the University consisting of Institutes in Chiropractic, Naturopathic, Acupuncture, and Nutrition and Dental Hygiene, and soon a School of Nursing.

## **Technical Standards**

A physician assistant student must possess a number of abilities and skills. The use of a trained intermediary is not acceptable in many clinical situations in that it implies that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. Therefore, each student must be able to:

- Observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close at hand, with or without standard medical instrumentation.
- Acquire information from written documents and to visualize information as presented in images from paper, film, slides or video.
- Comprehend X-ray, EKG and other graphic images with or without assistive devices.
- Speak, hear and observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communication.
- Communicate effectively with patients and their families in both written and oral modalities.
- Possess motor skills necessary to perform palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests and emergency therapeutic procedures, including airway management, placement of intravenous catheters, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, application of pressure to control bleeding, and suturing of wounds.
- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, synthesize and comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand spatial relationships of structures according to standard medical care.
- Exercise good judgment and complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients promptly. Develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients.
- Tolerate physically taxing workloads, function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the practice of clinical medicine.

## Curriculum Physician Assistant Institute

		Credits
Semester 1 (Spring)	<b>MSPA 511 ANATOMY I</b> <b>MSPA 521 Physiology I</b> <b>MSPA 526 Pathophysiology</b> <b>MSPA 551 History &amp; Physical Exam</b> <b>MSPA 611 Clinical Medicine I</b> <b>MPAS 570 Pharmacology I</b> <b>MSPA 608 Global Health &amp; Preventive Medicine</b>	3 2 2 2 3 2 2 <b>(16)</b>
Semester 2 (Summer)	<b>MSPA 527 Pathophysiology</b> <b>MSPA 512 Anatomy II</b> <b>MSPA 522 Physiology/Biochemistry II</b> <b>MSPA 552 History &amp; Physical Exam II</b> <b>MSPA 571 Clinical Pharmacology 1I</b> <b>MSPA 612 Clinical Medicine II</b> <b>MSPA 632 Integrative Medicine &amp; Practice 1</b> <b>MSPA 642 Medical Seminar 1</b>	2 2 2 2 2 <b>6</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>(19)</b>
Semester 3 (Fall)	<b>MSPA 613 Clinical Medicine III</b> <b>MSPA 556 Patient Education, Nutrition &amp; Counseling</b> <b>MSPA 528 Pathophysiology</b> <b>MSPA 523 Physiology/Biochemistry III</b> <b>MSPA 633 Integrative Medicine &amp; Practice II</b> <b>MSPA 643 Medical Seminar II</b> <b>MSPA 572 Clinical Pharmacology III</b>	6 2 2 2 1 2 2 <b>(17)</b>
Semester 4 4 (Spring)	<b>MSPA 614 Clinical Medicine IV</b> <b>MSPA 620 Fundamentals of Surgery</b> <b>MSPA 602 Information Literacy &amp; Medical Writing</b> <b>MSPA 634 Integrative Medicine &amp; Practice III</b> <b>MSPA 644 Medical Seminar III</b> <b>MSPA 621 Technical Skills</b> <b>MSPA 603 Medical Ethics &amp; Professional Practice</b>	<b>5</b> <b>2</b> 2 1 2 2 2 <b>(16)</b>
Semester 5 (Summer)	<b>MSPA 652 Pediatrics Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 653 Surgery Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 654 Emergency Medicine Rotation</b>	4 4 4 <b>(12)</b>
Semester 6 (Fall)	<b>MSPA 651 Internal Medicine Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 655 OB/GYN Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 656 Family Medicine Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 698 Capstone Project</b>	<b>4</b> 4 4 2 <b>(14)</b>
Semester 7 (Spring )	<b>MSPA 657 Psychiatry Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 658 Elective Rotation</b> <b>MSPA 695 Graduate Practice Logistics</b>	4 4 3 <b>(11)</b>
<b>CURRICULUM TOTAL</b>		<b>105</b>

## The Didactic Curriculum

The didactic phase is comprised of classroom and laboratory instruction in basic science, behavioral science and clinical medicine. The scheduling of classes is generally Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 and 5:00, although some classes require evening, early morning or weekend sessions. Students should have no other commitments during these hours. Attendance is mandatory, consistent with the “Attendance Policy” as stated in Chapter II *.Key to UB*

At the beginning of each course, students receive a syllabus and course outline describing the purpose of the course, the format, the objectives (course content), and required readings. Students also receive instructional learning objectives, which provide the basis for examinations and guide the student in studying. The curriculum is overseen by core faculty and may include University of Bridgeport basic science and health professional faculty, practicing physician assistants, physicians and providers whom have expertise in their respective specialty.

As medicine is an ever evolving field covering a breadth of information students are responsible for the core content (objectives) listed in each syllabus. **Faculty members will determine the method of teaching and evaluation for the courses they teach.** Some evaluation methods will be traditional, such as written tests, and others will not. Students are expected to meet the competencies determined by each instructor, in the manner required.

To prepare students to practice as physician assistants, the course load during the didactic year is rigorous with substantial reading assignments. Reading before each class is essential. Reviewing course topics each evening is the best preparation for written examinations. The course objectives found in the syllabus are a guide for comprehensive preparation and gaining foundational clinical knowledge.

There are a number of skills that physician assistants need including the core competencies defined by Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education. These include:

**Patient Care:** Identify, respect, and care about patients' differences, values, preferences, and expressed needs; listen to, clearly inform, communicate with and educate patients; share decision making and management; and continuously advocate disease prevention, wellness, and promotion of healthy lifestyles, including a focus on population health.

**Medical Knowledge:** Established and evolving biomedical, clinical, and cognate (e.g. Epidemiological and social behavioral) sciences and the application of knowledge to patient care.

**Practice-Based Learning and Improvement:** Involves investigation and evaluation of one's own patient care, appraisal and assimilation of scientific evidence, and improvements in patient care. *Additional documentation is required to be awarded AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ for this ACGME core competency.*

**Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** That result in effective information exchange and teaming with patients, their families and other health professionals.

**Professionalism:** Commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles and sensitivity to a diverse patient population.

**Systems-Based Practice:** Actions that demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care and the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value.

The summative exam at the end of the curriculum assesses these skills.

## **The Clinical Year**

The clinical year is comprised of seven six-week clerkships in internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, primary care, emergency medicine and surgery, as well as one six-week elective. Clerkships are conducted off campus in various settings such as hospitals, private offices and clinics. The PAI has sole responsibility for obtaining clinical sites and preceptors. At no time are students required to find clinical experiences. Sites may be both in and out of state and it is the student's responsibility to obtain housing and transportation.

Students are required to report to the site as instructed by their preceptors. Some rotations will require students to work during weekends, holidays, overnight, or late into the evenings. Students return to campus for "call back" days, which are held periodically throughout the clinical year. These daylong sessions consist of oral presentations, end of rotation examinations, and special lectures related to clinical medicine. A separate handbook will be distributed during a clinical year orientation at the end of the didactic year detailing the specifics for the clinical year.

## **Tuition, Fees, and Refund Policy**

Please refer to the University Website at:

<http://www.bridgeport.edu/financial/tuition-and-fees/tuition-and-fees-main-page/tuition-and-fees-health-sciences/>

## **II. PAI POLICY**

### **University-wide Policies**

UB PAI adheres to all the University policies regarding non-discrimination, as fully stated in Chapter One (Disability Services) and Chapter Six (Title IX/Non-Discrimination Policy).

**Title IX/Non-Discrimination Policy:** The University of Bridgeport is committed to preventing or eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination in its education programs or activities in accordance with its commitment to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The University prohibits discrimination in admissions, educational programs and services, and employment on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, genetic information, veteran status and any other basis protected by law.

The University of Bridgeport's Title IX Compliance Coordinator is Molree Williams-Lendor (203) 576-4534, email: [titleIX@bridgeport.edu](mailto:titleIX@bridgeport.edu).

**Disability Services:** The Office of Disability Services offers a private and confidential atmosphere for students to talk about their disabilities and accommodation requests. We are committed to providing services to qualified students with disabilities so that they receive an equal educational opportunity. In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the

Americans with Disabilities Act and Connecticut state laws, we provide reasonable accommodations to reduce the impact of disabilities on academic functioning or upon other life activities in the University setting. The University respects the student's right to disclose or not to disclose a disability. However, the University is not responsible for providing services or accommodations for students who do not disclose a disability to the Office of Disability Services in a timely fashion.

The Office of Disability Services is located at Carstensen Hall, Room 115. For further information call (203) 576-4454 or email [disabilityservices@bridgeport.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@bridgeport.edu).

## **Work Policy**

The PAI strongly discourages any type of outside employment during the course of studies in the program. PAI responsibilities are not negotiable, and will not be altered due to student work obligations. Furthermore, working has been the chief cause for academic difficulty in past years.

Students who choose to volunteer or be paid employees during the course of their physician assistant training cannot use their affiliation with the PAI in any aspect of that employment. Any activity undertaken by the student, independent of the PAI, is not covered by the liability insurance offered for clinical work associated with physician assistant training. Furthermore, students may not be required to perform clerical or administrative work for the PAI.

**Students may not substitute for regular clinical or administrative staff during the clinical year.** Should such a request be made of a student, it should be reported to the program director immediately.

## **E-Mail**

E-mail is the preferred mode of communication between the PAI faculty/staff and students. *All students must* use their UB e-mail account, and must check this account **daily**. Students should empty mailboxes to allow for regular e-mail from PAI staff and faculty. Failure to check an e-mail account is not an allowable excuse for missing a PAI event or notification.

## **Dress Code**

Physician assistants are professionals, and during the clinical year have very strict dress guidelines. During the didactic year, some courses have guest lecturers from hospitals, including those which are our clinical sites. Making a good impression, both individually and for the program, is important. General guidelines include:

Acceptable: Collared shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops and turtlenecks are acceptable attire. Women's dress length should be appropriate for professional wear. Most suit jackets or sport jackets are also acceptable attire. Men should wear slacks, dress shirts and a tie.

Unacceptable: Tank tops; midriff tops; shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons or slogans; halter-tops; tops with bare shoulders; sweatshirts; plunging necklines, and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket or dress; bare-back dresses; sheer blouses, tank-tops, muscle shirts and tube tops; denim or jeans; shorts or hats. Scrubs are prohibited outside of the hospital.

Breeches of the dress code will be addressed individually with the student's advisor. Persistent breeches will be brought before that Progress and Promotions Committee.

### **Student Teaching in PAI Curriculum**

Some students may be particularly knowledgeable in an area of medicine or possess advanced clinical skills because of prior health care related experience. Although such expertise is commendable, PA students are not permitted to participate in the teaching of any component of the curriculum.

### **PAI Faculty Providing Student Health Care**

No faculty member, including the Program Director and the Medical Director, are permitted to provide health care for UB PA Students. Provision of health care includes giving medical advice. PAI faculty can refer students for medical and mental health care, if needed.

### **Confidentiality**

In accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education, student materials, grades, records and files are considered confidential. For the University's FERPA policy, please see the "Family Education Rights and Privacy Act" and "FERPA: Notice for Directory Information" in Chapter Six of the Key to UB.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance and punctuality is mandatory for all PAI activities. Absences or lateness must be reported to the course instructor and the PAI secretary (203-576-2400) prior to the start of class. It is unacceptable to report an absence or lateness of another student. Excessive absences whether excused or unexcused, and chronic lateness, will be referred to the Progress and Promotions Committee (PPC). Please be advised that merely reporting an absence does not constitute approval.

The first unexcused absence will result in a conference between the student and his/her advisor. A second unexcused absence will result in a conference with the director. A third unexcused absence will result in referral to the PPC.

The student is responsible for obtaining all information related to any missed class time and to make up any work missed due to an absence. Instructors are not obligated to provide material to students due to an unexcused absence or to provide the opportunity to make up missed material due to an unexcused absence.

### **Academic Integrity, Policy, Principles and Procedures**

Please refer to Chapter Two of the *Key to UB*, available at:  
[http://www.bridgeport.edu/docs/StudentLife/KeytoUB/Key\\_to\\_UB.pdf](http://www.bridgeport.edu/docs/StudentLife/KeytoUB/Key_to_UB.pdf)

### **Professional Conduct**

Professional behavior is expressed through respect for instructors, PAI faculty and staff, fellow students, patients and colleagues. Professional behavior is evaluated throughout the course of study, but is formally evaluated once a year during advisement sessions. Breeches in

professionalism may result in appearing before the Progress and Promotion Committee. The Progress and Promotion Committee may recommend professional probation or dismissal from the PAI.

Examples of unprofessional behavior include but are not restricted to:

- Poor attendance or tardiness
- Plagiarism or cheating
- Inability to accept constructive criticism
- Lack of respect for the rights of patients to competent, confidential service
- Failure to follow protocol, or directions of supervising physician, physician assistant or PAI faculty
- Performing unauthorized procedures or administering services not permitted by the supervisor, the facility, or the PAI
- Violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Failure to perform all or part of assigned tasks and responsibilities
- Leaving the clinical setting without permission of supervising physician or physician assistant
- Performing any activity which is beyond the scope of the role of a student
- Failure to identify as a physician assistant student
- Failure to report all observed unethical conduct by other members of the health profession, including other students.

Professionalism extends to behavior in the classroom. The following behaviors are unacceptable:

- Disrupting class by engaging in unauthorized conversation with others during a lecture
- Leaving the classroom during lectures
- Using personal e-mail, open chat discussions, or Facebook while in class
- Neglecting to turn off cell phones.

### **The Impaired Practitioner**

Students are required to be familiar with and comply with laws governing the conduct of licensed physician assistants. Specifically, the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health has adopted legislation addressing the reporting of impaired physicians and physician assistants. This impairment often is due to drug and alcohol abuse, among other factors. The Legislation is available at: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/fc/2015HB-06287-R000648-FC.htm>

### **Social Media Policy**

It is strictly prohibited to take photographs of patients, including in the operating room, even if the patient is not identified. Similarly, the posting of diagnostic images or any form of patient data on a social media platform such as You Tube, Facebook, iTunes, LinkedIn, Twitter or blogs is strictly prohibited.

Witnessing any violation of this policy should be immediately reported to the program director. Similarly, private postings on Facebook or any other form of social media regarding PAI personnel, including faculty and fellow students, may be subject to disciplinary action. Assume all postings are visible to the program faculty. Violation of this policy will result in consideration by the Progress and Promotion Committee which may impose discipline, up to and including dismissal from the PAI.

## **Student Advisement**

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who is available for counsel on matters concerning academic performance, professional behavior or personal issues. Formal student advisement will occur at a minimum of twice during the program. Should a student become concerned about a personal matter, s/he should contact her/his advisor or the program director. The faculty can facilitate the acquisition of counseling services offered by the UB counseling and Disability Services.

## **Class Representatives**

Each year one or two students are elected by their class to serve as liaison between the cohort and PAI administration. Class representatives convey concerns or information to and from the class. This is a voluntary position; students must be in good academic standing in order to serve as class representative.

## **Director Meetings**

Didactic and clinical year classes will regularly meet with the Program Director to discuss problems that arise with the PAI, including within individual courses. These meetings are mandatory. All students are free to suggest topics to be addressed at these meetings, and may approach the director regarding conflicts that need to be discussed by the class at any time. Students may discuss issues of a more personal nature with the Program Director in private at any time by appointment.

## **Universal Precautions**

While the risk of infection due to contact with infectious tissue or fluids is far greater in the clinical year, students use sharp objects during the didactic year as well, and therefore should learn to practice universal precautions. The principle of universal precautions has been adopted to protect clinicians from exposure to infectious disease because any patient may harbor microorganisms that could cause infection if transmitted. Although blood-borne pathogens are of particular concern, all body fluids secretions, and excretions are included in universal precautions. Since infected patients may be asymptomatic, it becomes necessary to use basic precautions with every patient. Observance of universal precautions will help to provide better protection for every staff member. Students should also familiarize themselves with the hospital/clinical sites specific policies regarding universal precautions. The material below reviews guidelines and preventative techniques.

1. Avoid direct contact with: blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin and lesions
2. Avoid injuries from all sharp objects such as needles or scalpels
3. Avoid direct contact with items, objects, and surfaces contaminated with blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions
4. Dispose of all sharp objects promptly in special puncture resistant containers
5. Dispose of all contaminated articles and materials in a safe manner prescribed by law
6. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly, especially if they become contaminated with blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions
7. Depending on job duties and risk of exposure, use appropriate barriers, which can include: gloves, gowns, aprons, caps, shoe covers, leggings, masks, goggles, face shields and resuscitation devices. These barriers are to be used to protect:
  - a. Skin, especially non-intact skin (where there are cuts, chapping, abrasions or any other break in the skin)

- b. Mucous membranes, especially eyes, nose and mouth.

**NOTE:** *Protective apparel, including gloves, must be removed after each use and are to be PROPERLY disposed of, and not worn from one patient or activity to another.*

### **Change of Name, Phone Number or Address**

Any student who changes his or her name, address, telephone number or social security number must immediately notify both the PAI and the University of Bridgeport Registrar. The Registrar can be found at Wahlstrom Library Garden Level (telephone 203-576-4634).

### **Bedside Experiences during Didactic Year**

Shadowing, or accompanying practicing physician or physician assistants while they perform their duties at work, is considered a pre-professional activity. Bedside activities are incorporated into some courses during the professional curriculum and are described in course objectives. Students may not use their UB PAI identification, or represent themselves as UB PAI students through their white jacket and insignia, for any unauthorized bedside experiences.

### **Preparing for the Clinical Year**

UA PAI has excellent clinical sites. Yet some of these are a distance from campus and some not in Connecticut. It will be very difficult to complete the clinical year without driving a car. Take the didactic year to ensure that you have a working driver's license and access to a car. Housing and transportation costs are not provided by UB PAI.

### **Progression from the Didactic to the Clinical year**

Several conditions must be met in order to progress from the didactic to the clinical year:

1. Successful completion of all didactic year courses
2. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be earned for the didactic year
3. All incomplete grades, probationary issues or pending assignments must be resolved
4. A faculty evaluation of professional behavior evaluation must be satisfactorily completed.

### **The Summative Exam**

The Summative Exam is a graded, final assessment given within the last six weeks of the curriculum. It examines basic competence in the following areas:

- a. Medical Knowledge: Demonstrate knowledge of etiology, risk factors, signs and symptoms of a medical condition
- b. Affective skills: Demonstrate effective communication to elicit and provide information; demonstrate compassionate and respectful behavior when interacting with patients
- c. Oral and written communication: Accurately and adequately document information regarding care; orally present a patient encounter with precision and poise.
- d. Critical thinking: Demonstrate the ability to conduct a complaint-focused interview and physical exam; develop an accurate and detailed differential diagnosis

- e. Patient care: Obtain essential and accurate information; counsel and educate patients and their families; provide education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance; develop and implement patient management plans.

The format of the summative examination is clinical simulation using standardized patients. Students are given a chief complaint and perform a focused history and physical examination on the standardized patient. The student then orders laboratory tests for which results will be given. Interpretation of the tests is integrated into a SOAP note, which includes a differential diagnosis and plan. The final phase is oral presentation of the patient to a faculty member.

This examination is pass/fail. In the event of failure, students will be given the opportunity to retake the examination. Should a student fail a second time, s/he will appear before the Progress and Promotion Committee. The student may be asked to delay graduation for six weeks in order to remediate deficiencies.

### **Graduation Requirements**

Graduation is dependent upon successful completion of the following:

1. All courses in the physician assistant curriculum including all clinical rotations
2. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be earned
3. Successfully pass the summative examinations
4. Meeting all patient and procedural log requirements
5. Faculty review of professional behavior throughout the entire program.

Eligibility to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination is contingent upon successful completion of all program requirements.

## **III. ACADEMIC POLICY**

### **Student Evaluation**

A variety of evaluation tools are used to evaluate student competency, including tests, written and oral presentations, discussion boards and group projects. All examinations are the property of the PAI. The type of evaluation used in each course will be delineated in the course syllabus. Although some courses may be pass/fail, most course work will be evaluated by a letter grade.

Please see “Academic Regulations and Policies” of the Catalogue for an explanation of letter grades:

[http://www.bridgeport.edu/files/4314/3533/1765/UB\\_Catalog\\_2014-2016\\_dist.r2.pdf](http://www.bridgeport.edu/files/4314/3533/1765/UB_Catalog_2014-2016_dist.r2.pdf)

### **Examination Policy**

Each course director is responsible for examining each student to assess the degree to which the student has met the course objectives. While many examinations will be written, the examination format is the prerogative of the course director. The PA Program makes every effort to secure optimal testing accommodations within the parameters of our control. The following policies concern all examinations, regardless of format:

1. Examination scores will be cumulative for the course

2. Course work, assignments and presentations must be handed in on the date and time indicated by the instructor. No late assignment will be accepted.
3. Unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion or receipt of any examination question is strictly prohibited.

### **Maintenance of Good Academic Standing**

For the PAI, the cumulative grade point average (GPA) for good academic standing and for degree conferral is 3.0 (higher than the University's general good academic standing standard). Students with academic difficulty will be identified by the faculty and remedial measures will be recommended (see next section). Should the cumulative grade point average fall below 3.0 at the end of any semester, the student will be referred to the Progress and Promotions Committee and be placed on academic probation. Failing to meet the conditions of probation may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the program.

### **Remediation of Academic Difficulties**

Students who fail to demonstrate the requisite knowledge or skills necessary to perform at an acceptable level for a course may be required to remediate those deficiencies. Remediation is a process intended to correct a student's academic deficiencies and includes such activities as special assignments, examinations, tutoring, assessment and development of study skills. Where appropriate, referral to the Office of Disability and Counseling may be recommended as well.

### **Course Failure**

PAI maintains three different types of courses: (1) stand-alone courses i.e. courses which have one course director who delivers all course content); (2) clinical medicine courses (MSPA 611, MSPA 612, MSPA 613, and MSPA 614), which are made up of multiple modules within each course; and (3) clinical year courses. Failure of each course is described below:

#### **Failure in Stand-alone Courses**

Course failure in stand-alone courses (all courses other than Clinical Medicine courses) is defined as earning a final grade below 70% in any stand-alone course. This can occur one of two ways:

- 1) Earning a grade of less than 60% in the course; or
- 2) Failing a reassessment exam. A student who earns a final course grade of 60-69% will be offered a comprehensive reassessment exam. Earning a passing grade on a reassessment exam will result in a final course grade of "C" regardless of the grade earned on the exam. Should the student fail the reassessment exam with a grade less than 70%, s/he fails the course.

Course failure will result in referred to the Progress and Promotion Committee for determination of continued academic status. Repeating a course during the following year will be considered.

A student is allowed to reassess only two stand-alone courses with a comprehensive examination during the entire didactic curriculum. A third course failure will result in dismissal.

## **Failure in Clinical Medicine Courses**

Each of the Clinical Medicine Lecture courses (MSPA 611, MSPA 612, MSPA 613, and MSPA 614) is made up of multiple modules, representing various disciplines of medicine. A passing grade of 70% in **each module** is required in order to pass the entire course. Should a student fail any one module s/he will be offered a reassessment in the failed module. The highest grade that can be awarded for a module reassessment is 70%, regardless of the grade earned on the reassessment examination. Only two modules can be remediated each semester. A third module failure or failing a module reassessment with a grade of below 70% will result in failure of the course.

Should a student fail a Clinical Medicine course, a comprehensive examination for the entire Clinical Medicine course will be offered. Students must pass this exam with a grade of 70% or better. Should the comprehensive exam be failed, the course is failed and the student will appear before the Progress and Promotion Committee. Students who achieve a passing grade on the comprehensive examination will receive a course grade of "C".

### **Failure of a Clinical Year Course**

Please see the Clinical Year Handbook.

## **The Progress and Promotion Committee**

The Progress and Promotion Committee (PPC) enforces academic and professional standards of the PAI. The PPC hears cases of academic and/or professional issues (e.g. course failures, professional breaches and potential dismissals). The PPC does not hear non-academic matters, cases of academic dishonesty, issues arising under Title IX, disability accommodations, or violations of the Code of Community Standards, which are subject to review under other University procedures.

The PPC consist of six members. It is chaired by a UB health science program director. Other members include three full-time PAI faculty, another UB health faculty member, and the PAI program director *ex officio*. If the PPC chair determines that there is a conflict of interest with any member, s/he has the right to replace that member prior to the start of deliberations.

The PPC shall notify the student in writing of the academic or professional deficiencies with which s/he is charged at least 10 business days before the PPC meeting. At least 5 days before the PPC meeting, the student may respond to the PPC in writing to object to the charges, wherein s/he may also offer an explanation for his/her performance and attach any relevant documentation/evidence. The student be may appear at the PPC meeting to present his/her objection (but must also be submitted in writing, as described above). At the hearing, the student may be afforded the opportunity to present testimony or documents to the PPC. The meeting is not subject to rules governing a legal proceeding and students are not entitled to legal representation during the meeting.

The PPC will determine if the student's academic or professional performance violates the Handbook or other University policy. Within 7 business days of the PPC meeting, the PAI Program Director will communicate the findings of the PPC, and will issue a written decision to the student ("Decision").

## **Possible Sanctions Issued by the Progress and Promotions Committee**

The PPC may issue a number of different types of decisions. These include, but are not limited to: The PPC may find that the student's academic or professional performance is consistent with published standards. No sanctions would be necessary in that case. The PPC may issue a detailed plan of action concerning corrective action. The PPC may issue one of three sanctions. These include academic or professional probation, deceleration or dismissal.

### **Academic and Professional Probation**

Probation is a designation that alerts the student that either academic or professional circumstances are such that dismissal is possible. Academic probation is the result of failing to maintain good academic standing. Professional probation is a status designated when a student violates one of the tenets of professional conduct or the policies set forth in the Key to UB and herein those set forth by UB. Academic Probation will be removed once a student achieves good academic standing. The conditions of Professional Probation will be determined by PPC. A student on probation may not serve as class representative or as a member of the Medical Challenge Bowl team.

### **Deceleration**

The PPC may recommend deceleration into the succeeding cohort should a student fail a stand-alone course, or should the cumulative grade point average not meet good academic standing after repeating the course. Deceleration requires that a student discontinue the curriculum, work with his/her advisor to remediate difficulties, and retake the failed course the following year. He/she joins the subsequent cohort for the rest of the PAI curriculum. The transcript will reflect the course failure as well as the grade earned when repeated.

Students are eligible for only one deceleration during their tenure as PA students at the UB PA Institute. Therefore, once a student resumes course work, **any further course failure, either in the didactic or clinical year, will result in dismissal.**

### **Dismissal**

The PPC may order dismissal from the UB PAI, and thus the University, if a student fails to meet any academic and professional standards described in this handbook, or in University of Bridgeport *Key to UB* (subject to the limitations described above regarding the types of matters PPC hears).

In addition, dismissal will result should a student:

- Fail any course after returning from deceleration
- Fails any three courses in one semester.

Notification of dismissal will be made via e-mail and letter mailed to the address provided by the student. A student who refuses to accept the notification of dismissal loses the right to appeal the decision.

### **Appeal of Decision of the Progress and Promotions Committee**

In the event that the student is not satisfied with the Decision, then the student may submit a written appeal within 15 days of receipt of the Decision to the Office of the Provost. The appeal must contain: a copy of the original grievance and any documents filed in support thereof, the Decision,

and a statement outlining the reasons for the appeal and relief sought. The Provost may review and decide the appeal, or designate an associate or assistant Provost to review and decide the appeal. Upon considering the appeal, the Provost or his/her designee will notify the student in writing of his/her decision and the grounds therefor within 15 days following receipt of the appeal. The Office of the Provost's decision is final.

**IV. PAI FORMS**

**Professional and Behavioral Evaluation: Student Self-Assessment**

*Evaluate yourself on the following attributes. The maximum score per attribute is 5 points. Honest assessment will help you focus on areas that may need improvement and will give you the opportunity to compare yourself assessment to that of the faculty's assessment.*

ATTRIBUTE	POINTS 5 <i>Pts/Attribute</i>	COMMENTS
<b>Point Value:5-Far Exceeds Expectations / 4-Exceed Expectations / 3-Meet Expectations / 2-Below Expectation / 1-Does Not Meet Expectations</b>		
<b><i>Work Ethic</i></b>		<b>(20)</b>
1. Recognizes limitations.		
2. Accepts responsibility for own actions.		
3. Completes assignments on time.		
4. Makes an effort to exceed expectations and maintain high personal standards.		
<b><i>Department</i></b>		<b>(20)</b>
1. Demonstrates a positive attitude.		
2. Presents a professional demeanor.		
3. Demonstrates respect for faculty, staff and fellow students.		
4. Accepts and applies constructive feedback.		
<b><i>Communication</i></b>		<b>(20)</b>
1. Participates actively in class, labs and assignments.		
2. Write ups are clear, and concise with correct grammar, spelling and medical terminology.		



**University of Bridgeport - Physician Assistant Institute  
Division of Health Sciences**

**Acknowledgment of Student Handbook**

I have received a copy of the Physician Assistant Institute Student Handbook, have read its contents, and acknowledge understanding of the materials contained therein. I have read and understand the Academic and Behavior Policies for the University of Bridgeport Physician Assistant Institute. I acknowledge my personal and professional responsibility to comply with the requirements set forth by the University of Bridgeport in the UB Key and the Physician Assistant Institute Student Handbook.

Student's Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_