

Clinical Handbook



Physician Assistant Institute
University of Bridgeport
30 Hazel St
Bridgeport, CT 06604
ubpaclinicals@bridgeport.edu
203-576-4180

Lauren Weindling, MPAS, PA-C

Program Director
Assistant Professor
p: 203-576-2398 | f: 203-576-2402

Michelle Lea, MPAS, PA-C

Director of Clinical Education
Assistant Professor
p: 203-576-4180 | f: 203-576-2402

Christine Rowland, MSPAS, PA-C

Assistant Director of Clinical Education
Assistant Professor
p: 203-576-2400 | f: 203-576-2402

Pamela Adelman, MBA

Clinical Coordinator
p: 203-576-2446 | f: 203-576-2402

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Preface

Students are responsible for the information contained within the current versions of the following references:

- Key to UB
 - <https://www.bridgeport.edu/key-to-ub/>
- University of Bridgeport Catalog
 - <https://www.bridgeport.edu/academics/course-catalog>
- PAI Student Handbook
 - [Physician Assistant Institute \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Clinical Manual
 - [Physician Assistant Institute \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Site Specific Clerkship Policies

The policies and procedures contained herein are subject to change without prior notice. The provisions of this Clinical Manual do not and are not intended to create either an expressed or an implied contract with any student. The University reserves the right in its exclusive discretion to add, modify, delete, amend, or grant exceptions from the applicability of its provisions of the Clinical Manual.

Clinical Phase

The clinical phase of the curriculum includes clerkships in seven areas of medicine: Behavioral Health, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Women's Health, plus one Selective Special Population clerkship and one Elective clerkship. Clinical clerkships occur at various facility types to include neighborhood health centers, hospitals, private and group practices, correctional, and residential facilities. Students will be placed at clerkship sites within a 75-mile radius to the University of Bridgeport (UB), which may include neighboring states. In the case of elective and selective rotations, students may be placed outside of the 75-mile radius due to non-availability of the rotation type requested. Students are assigned a main preceptor, who may be a board-certified physician (MD or DO), physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. During the clinical experience, students may also work with other healthcare providers on the treatment team. The preceptor coordinates the patient care experience and monitors and evaluates student progress and performance. Students must be in compliance with the clinical clerkship policies at all times.

Goals of the Clinical Phase

During the clinical phase, PA students transition from the classroom setting to a hands-on learning environment to prepare for a lifetime of learning. Students should focus on the program and clinical clerkship learning outcomes that can be found in the PAI Student Handbook and course syllabus. Student goals for the clinical year are as follows:

- Apply didactic medical knowledge and skills to supervised clinical practice
- Advance clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Expand and strengthen the medical fund of knowledge
- Perfect the art of history-taking and physical examination skills
- Refine oral presentation and written documentation skills
- Broaden understanding of the PA role in health systems and healthcare delivery
- Apply principles of diversity and inclusion to patient-centered care
- Develop interpersonal skills and professionalism necessary to function as part of a medical team
- Experience a wide variety of patient demographics, types of patient encounters, and clinical settings representative of the breadth and depth of PA scope of practice
- Prepare for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam

Student Responsibilities

- Understand the rules and regulations of the clinical site and maintain professional behavior and conduct.
- Maintain BLS and ACLS certification.
- Maintain compliance with all HIPAA policies and regulations.
- Maintain compliance with all required health and security documentation for clinical participation.
- Review clerkship learning objectives and personal goals with the preceptor.
- Meet the learning objectives as directed by preceptors and clerkship syllabus.
- Communicate with preceptors any information regarding the evaluation, treatment plan, and/or documentation of all patients. The preceptor will retain full responsibility for the care of patients and will maintain administrative and professional supervision of the student.
- Ensure all documentation is countersigned by the preceptor. No student may execute an order without authorization of preceptor and preceptor countersignature.
- Utilize Electronic Medical Record (EMR) login credentials assigned only to them by the clinical site.
- Attend all call-back sessions.
- Establish reliable transportation to and from the clinical site.

The range of activities expected of a student may include:

- Collecting, recording, and recalling complete data (detailed histories and complete physical examination) on all patients in all settings.
- Writing appropriate orders for diagnostic tests, studies, and medications.
- Performing routine procedures.
- Assisting in the performance of operative procedures.
- Suturing uncomplicated lacerations.
- Making daily rounds to observe and document patient progress.
- Participating in on-call activities and clinical responsibilities.
- Preparing preceptor-assigned reports on cases, clinical conditions, procedures, or presentations for the medical team's educational enrichment.
- Initiating meetings with preceptors to receive feedback on a regular basis.

Students are not permitted to:

- Initiate patient care that has not been outlined and supervised by the preceptor.
- Evaluate, treat, or dismiss a patient without review and discussion of the patient's condition with the preceptor.
- Dispense or independently sign prescriptions for any medications.
- Initiate disclosure of, or draw conclusions from, findings or treatment plans with the patient without prior discussion with the preceptor.
- Change standing orders without consultation and approval of the preceptor.

- Participate in a treatment modality, diagnostic procedure, or other activity that is beyond the student's level of training or level of competence without prior approval or discussion with the preceptor.
- Discuss a patient by name with anyone except other members of the health care team, without patient's consent.
- Discuss a patient in a public place such as an elevator or hallway.
- Utilize a preceptor's EMR login credentials to enter clinical information.
- Perform duties that do not achieve the purpose, goals, and objectives of the clinical clerkship, including personal requests from either patients or preceptors. Should such requests be made, the Director of Clinical Education must be notified immediately.
- Students and preceptors should not engage in relationships of undue familiarity.

Preceptor Responsibilities

Preceptor responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Orient each student at the onset of the rotation with the practice/site policies and procedures, including safety and emergency policies and procedures.
- Review the expectations and objectives for the rotation.
- Provide ongoing and timely feedback to the student regarding clinical performance, clinical knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and critical thinking skills.
- Supervise, demonstrate, teach, and observe clinical activities to aid in the development of clinical skills and professionalism and to ensure high-quality patient care.
- Delegate increasing levels of responsibility based on a student's experience and competence.
- Participate in the evaluation of clinical skills and medical knowledge base through the following mechanisms:
 - Direct supervision, observation, and teaching in the clinical setting
 - Immediate evaluation of presentations (both oral and written)
 - Assignment of outside readings and research to promote further learning
- Demonstrate cultural humility in all interactions with patients, families, health care teams, and systems.
- Dialogue with faculty during site visits to evaluate student progress and facilitate the learning process.
- Review and add supplementary documentation to student notes to evaluate the student's clinical reasoning and documentation skills.
- Model ethical patient care.
- Complete and return the student evaluation forms to assess performance and improvement throughout the supervised clinical experience within one week of course completion.
- Promptly notify the PAI of any circumstances that might interfere with student safety or wellness or accomplishing the above goals.
- Students and preceptors should not engage in relationships of undue familiarity.

Program Communication

Students are responsible for staying in contact with the program and being responsive to communications. Communication will be sent through email or the Canvas shell. Students in the clinical phase are expected to respond to communication from the PAI within 24 hours of receiving the message. Please refer to the e-mail policy described in the PAI Student Handbook. All communications should be directed to the ubpaclinicals@bridgeport.edu mailbox.

The Director of Clinical Education is the primary point of contact for students throughout the clinical phase. Should an emergency arise, students should contact faculty/staff in the following order:

1. Michelle Lea, Director of Clinical Education
 - a. E-mail: mlea@bridgeport.edu
 - b. Office: 203-576-4180
2. Christine Rowland, Assistant Coordinator of Didactic and Clinical Education
 - a. E-mail: crowland@bridgeport.edu
3. Pamela Adelman, Clinical Coordinator
 - a. E-mail: padelman@bridgeport.edu
 - b. Office: 203-576-2446
4. Lauren Weindling, Program Director
 - a. Email: lweindli@bridgeport.edu
 - b. Office: 203-576-2398

Fees

Students are responsible for all costs associated with the clinical phase, including housing, personal living expenses, travel, and parking. Students are also responsible for any additional costs associated with site-specific screenings such as additional drug screens, background checks, and onboarding documents.

Occasionally, clerkships outside of a 75-mile radius may require a rotation fee . An example of this would be for rotations outside of the continental United States where boarding and travel/transportation assistance is provided. If a rotation fee is required, the student will be notified in advance and will have the option to accept or decline the rotation.

Clinical Site Placement

The PAI clinical team is responsible for obtaining clinical sites and preceptors. At no time are students required to acquire or solicit clinical experiences. It is the sole responsibility of the clinical team to identify, contact, and evaluate sites and preceptors. Students may make suggestions for sites and preceptors but are not required to do so.

Student-suggested sites and preceptors will be reviewed, evaluated, and approved for educational suitability by the clinical team.

Students' clinical placements are assigned by the Director of Clinical Education in consideration of clinical site, learning objectives, specialty, preceptor availability, and quality of educational experiences. The PAI will make every effort to accommodate requests regarding assignments to clinical sites but cannot guarantee such assignments. Once placed, students may not request changes, adjust their clinical site, or switch sites with another student. Unforeseen changes or adjustments to the schedule may be made based on site availability and students involved will be notified if modifications are required.

Student Conduct

Students must abide by the University and program regulations for student conduct as well as the policies and procedures as determined by the clinical affiliate site. A student at any point may be removed from a clinical site for inappropriate conduct as described in the student conduct policy or as defined by the clinical affiliate. Unprofessional conduct may result in course failure or dismissal. Please refer to ABC committee policies in the Student Handbook and Key to UB for further information regarding rules for student conduct.

Sexual and Gender-based Interpersonal Violence and Harassment

The University of Bridgeport is committed to providing an environment free from gender-based discrimination and harassment. Consistent with the University's commitment to equal opportunity and non-discrimination, the University strictly prohibits Sexual Assault, Sexual Exploitation, Dating, Relationship or Domestic Partner Violence, Stalking, Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment, or Retaliation against a person for the good faith reporting of these forms of conduct or participation in an investigation or proceeding under this Policy.

The University of Bridgeport's Title IX contact: <https://www.bridgeport.edu/title-ix/team>. Please see the Key to UB for a complete version of this Policy.

Student Attire and Identification

Students are required to maintain a professional appearance in dress and hygiene. Generally, men are to wear dress slacks, shirts, and ties unless otherwise instructed by their preceptors. Women are to wear dresses, skirts, or dress slacks and blouses/sweaters. No open toed shoes per OSHA standards, excessive jewelry or makeup, acrylic nails, t-shirts, or sweatshirts as outer clothing will be worn. Piercings should be of the ears only (unless for cultural or religious purposes) and tattoos covered when feasible. Jeans and shorts are unacceptable attire. Scrubs are authorized to be worn only if directed to do so by the clinical site. If permitted, scrubs must be of solid color, pressed, and free of stains or damage.

Students must be clearly identified as a UB PAI student while in the clinical setting. UBPAI student ID and/or hospital student IDs should also be visible at all times.

Students are to wear a clean and pressed half-length white lab coat with UB patch and embroidered name.

All students must identify themselves as a “PA student” to preceptors, medical staff, patients, and families. Under no circumstance should a student encourage or fail to correct the misconception that they are a physician, medical student, or other health care provider.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory for all clinical clerkships and call back days. Students are required to remain on-site with the medical team and follow the preceptor’s schedule, not to exceed 80 hours per week. Students may be required to participate in on-call, overnight, or weekend shifts, which may include school or federal holidays.

Students may not negotiate for time off solely with their preceptor. Any student who requires time off for personal or other reasons must follow the attendance policy as outlined in the PAI Student Handbook. All excused time must be pre-approved by the Director of Clinical Education by a time-off request in Typhon at least one week prior to the requested date. Once approved, the student must also notify and obtain approval from their preceptor. A student will not be authorized to take more than two personal days during the clinical phase of training. In the event of an emergency, both the preceptor and PAI must be notified by email or phone as soon as feasible and prior to the expected student arrival time. Absences the day before or day of call-backs will not be approved without a healthcare provider note.

If the student requires more than three excused absences from a single clinical clerkship, efforts will be made to reschedule the missed time with the clinical site or an alternate location. If this cannot be accomplished, the situation will be referred to the Program Director for review and academic planning.

Absence request procedure in Typhon:

1. Select My schedule
2. Select Request Event
3. Enter event information and date(s)
4. Select either Excused Absence, Personal Day, or Sick Day
5. Save to submit for approval

Consent for Disclosure

Students are asked to sign a General Consent and Authorization to Release Information form to allow the disclosure of health clearance, immunization, background/toxicology screenings, and other required documents to participate in the clinical clerkship. Declination of consent may result in a delayed start or inability to participate in the clinical experience.

Health Requirements

Students are required to adhere to the health requirements of the University, PAI, and the clinical sites as described in the Health Requirements and Vaccination section of the Student Handbook. Students may be required to provide evidence of re-vaccination if immunity is

insufficient. Hepatitis B surface antigen titers may be required to prove absence of active diseases for certain clinical clerkships. Students are responsible for international travel health requirements as relevant. Failure to maintain updated records and health standards may result in delay or inability to start or complete clinical clerkships.

Drug Screening and Background Checks

Refer to the drug screening and background check policies in the PAI Student Handbook.

Exposure Policy and Incident Reporting

Should a student be exposed to bodily fluid and/or a bloodborne pathogen without appropriate personal protective equipment, the student must follow the clinical clerkship Bloodborne Pathogen Policy and refer to the University of Bridgeport Student Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, posted on the [PAI Student Portal](#).

The student is responsible for immediately reporting the incident to the Director of Clinical Education. The student must follow up with Student Health Services within 24 hours to create an incident report.

Patient Rights and Confidentiality

Patients are essential partners in the education of PA students. All efforts will be made to observe strict confidentiality, respect patient privacy and dignity, and honor their preferences regarding treatment. All students must complete HIPAA training before their clinical year and maintain current HIPAA training throughout their clinical phase. However, patients must be informed that a PA student will participate in their care, and their consent must be obtained. Consent is given through standardized forms at admission or on a person-by-person basis. The students should be clearly identified as PA students and must also verbally identify themselves as such. If the patient requests a physician, PA, or other licensed clinician and refuses the PA student's services, the request must be honored. Patients must know that they will see their regular provider, and they should have an explicit opportunity to decline student involvement.

All information regarding a patient's health is privileged information. All students must strictly adhere to each institution's policy governing patient rights and confidentiality and to all federal, state, and local regulations. Students must not discuss any information regarding a patient in a manner or location that might reveal the identification of the patient to individuals not directly involved in that patient's care. Patients' health records, inclusive of progress notes, lab or radiology reports and images must not be removed from the clinical site. For case logs, all identifying information must be removed to protect patient confidentiality. No photography/videography of patients and their health record is permitted unless written consent is obtained from the patient and clinical site policies are followed. Refer to the Rules for Student Conduct in the Student Handbook for further information.

Electronic Devices

To ensure safety and security of the patient care environment and to ensure patient and employee privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the use of personal cell phones/electronic communication devices by PA students during clinical hours is prohibited. Students may use cell phones/electronic communication devices only during lunch or break periods in private spaces away from all patients, common patient care areas, and/or common clinical areas. Personal cell phones/electronic communication devices are to be turned OFF and stored away and are NOT to be kept on the person.

Social Media

No photography/videography or discussions may be posted to social media that pertains to clinical encounters and/or patient information. Refer to the social media policy section of the PAI Student Handbook.

Preceptor Review and Countersignature

The supervising preceptor must reexamine all patients evaluated by a PA student. The supervising preceptor must review and countersign all notes submitted by the student. The student must sign each note with their name and title (PA-Student) and not the abbreviation “PA-S” to prevent confusion. The supervising preceptor must countersign the note immediately. The student is not authorized to initiate any orders for a patient without consultation and the signature of the supervising preceptor. Students are not permitted to sign any prescriptions. Failure to adhere to these policies will result in a disciplinary hearing before the Academic Background and Conduct Committee (ABC), which may result in dismissal.

If access to an EMR is not available, hand-written notes are submitted to the preceptor. Type or write legibly and use only black ink. Errors must have a single line drawn through them and must be initialed. Never erase, white out, or cross out as to make the entry illegible. These notes are signed, with: Name, “PA Student” clearly printed below the signature. All notes must be dated.

Clerkship Course Requirements

- **Canvas Modules**

Canvas contains a list of modules for each clinical clerkship course with associated assignments. Course assignments are due by the Call-back Day at 11:59pm Eastern Time, except for goal-setting assignments which are due by the first Sunday of the clinical rotation. Late work will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

- **Call-back Day**

The last Friday of each clinical block is a mandatory Call-back Day. All students will be required to return to campus on this day to attend lectures, complete their End of Rotation Examination, or present their summative assignment. Attendance is required and absences will be excused only with a healthcare provider’s note or preapproval due to

extenuating circumstances. For students attending an out-of-state clerkship, it is the student's responsibility to establish an alternate plan in coordination with the Director of Clinical Education.

- **Summative Assignment**

Student summative assignment presentations may be required for elective and selective courses as outlined in each course syllabus and rubric. All summative assignments must be uploaded to Canvas by 9am Eastern Time on the day of Call-backs. Students will present summative assignments on Call-back Days unless out-of-state clerkship plans are coordinated in advance.

- **Clinical Hours**

Students must upload their clerkship shift schedule to the appropriate Canvas module as soon as they receive it. Students will log their hours in Typhon by clocking in and out daily. Students who fail to do so may be assigned an unexcused absence and will lose professionalism points.

- **Clinical Case Logs**

Students must log each clinical cases and procedures that they encounter during their clerkships. Cases should be logged under the main preceptor for the clinical site and exclude any personally identifying information of the patient such as name or birth date. The PAI clinical team will monitor logs to ensure that clinical experiences align with student learning outcomes. Case logs should be completed daily, but no later than five days from the clinical encounter. After five days, the case log will be locked, and no further edits can be made. Incomplete case documentation will be marked as "Not Approved" and will not count towards final case numbers. If patient case logs are consistently below average totals, professionalism credits will be deducted. Students should maintain copies of their patient logs for personal use. The PAI will not provide copies to the student or clinical site.

Evaluations

- **Student Evaluation of Clinical Clerkship, Course, and Preceptor**

At the completion of every rotation, each student is required to complete an evaluation of the clerkship site, course, and preceptor in Typhon. The evaluations help the faculty make decisions regarding the clinical year for future classes. Therefore, thoughtful input, suggestions, and constructive criticism is useful for the continual assessment and improvement of the program.

The evaluations are due by 11:59pm est on the Call-back Day.

- **Mid-Rotation Evaluation**

Mid-way through the clinical clerkship, the student is required to sit down with the preceptor to discuss the student's performance and provided constructive feedback. This session is documented on the Mid-Rotation Evaluation Form. The blank form

can be found in Canvas and should be uploaded to Assignments in Canvas by 11:59pm est on the third Wednesday of the rotation. This is a non-graded exercise but provides the student and program invaluable feedback on the student's progress in meeting program objectives and learning outcomes. The student should contact the Director of Clinical Education immediately if they are unable to coordinate a meeting with their preceptor

- **Preceptor Evaluation**

At the conclusion of the rotation, preceptors will submit a final evaluation of each student's performance based on student learning outcomes and required skills as outlined in the course syllabus. The evaluation is entered into Typhon and is graded using a five-point Likert scale. Students may not discuss their final preceptor evaluation grade directly with the preceptor. All grade inquiries should be directed to the clinical team.

Course Grading

- **Grade Components**

Clinical course grading is outlined in each clinical clerkship syllabus.

1. End of Rotation Exam or Summative Assignment – 55%
 - a. All core clerkships will conclude with a comprehensive examination based on course objectives and the NCCPA and PAEA Blueprint
<https://paeaonline.org/assessment/end-of-rotation/content>.
 - b. Elective and Selective clerkships will not have an End of Rotation Exam but will instead complete a summative assignment with an associated rubric.
2. Mid-Rotation Evaluation – Reduction only
 - a. Documented on the Mid-Rotation Evaluation Form.
 - b. Late submissions will result in a reduction of professionalism points (see below).
3. Preceptor Evaluation – 35%
 - a. An evaluation submitted by the preceptor utilizing a five-point Likert scale of the student's performance based on learning outcomes and objectives.
4. Clinical Modules and Documentation Assignments – 10%
 - a. Course specific modules are assigned in Canvas for each clinical clerkship. The assignments are used to enhance the learning experience.
5. Professionalism – Reduction only
 - a. Professionalism is an expectation. Non-compliance of any of the course requirements or program expectations will result in a one-point deduction from your final grade. Warnings will not be given. The following are areas which will result in professionalism infractions if not in compliance (not all inclusive):
 - i. Attendance and participation
 - ii. Adherence to procedures and policies
 - iii. Uploading clinical schedule to Typhon
 - iv. Submission of complete case logs in Typhon
 - v. Submission of clerkship paperwork as requested by the Clinical Coordinator

Failure Policy

- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

Students who are graded below “Meets Expectations” on an SLO, but pass the preceptor evaluation, must remediate the SLO. The student will meet with the Director of Clinical Education or an appointed faculty member to discuss the deficiency and establish a remediation plan. The remediation plan may include an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) or a Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE). Once the student has completed the plan and has established competence, the preceptor or faculty member will sign off that the student “Meets Expectations” on the SLO Remediation Form.

- **End of Rotation Exam (EOR) or Summative Assignment**

Students must pass the EOR exam or summative assignment with a 70% or greater. Students who fail must work with a remediation coach and the Director of Clinical Education, or their appointee, to remediate deficiencies. Students may attempt the EOR exam or submit/present their summative assignment one additional time. If passed, the second attempt will be calculated into the final grade as a 70% regardless of the exam/summative assignment score. Students who do not pass the reassessment will fail the clinical clerkship. An EOR exam reassessment is permitted for a maximum of two clinical clerkships. If a third clinical clerkship EOR exam is failed, a second attempt is not permitted, and will result in a clinical course failure. Refer to the course failure policy in the Student Handbook.

- **Preceptor Evaluation**

Students must pass the Preceptor Evaluation with a 70% or greater (using the Program conversion). Grades less than 70% will result in a clinical course failure. Students should refer to the Director of Clinical Education for concerns or questions regarding their grade and not directly with the preceptor.

- **Final Course Grade**

Inability to meet the following standards will result in a clinical course failure:

1. Score a 70% or greater on the Preceptor Evaluation
2. Score a 70% or greater on the EOR exam or Summative Assignment (see policy regarding reassessment above)
3. Overall weighted course grade must equate to a 70% or greater

A student will have the opportunity to repeat only one failed clinical clerkship. Failure of a second clerkship, or failure to receive a passing grade on a repeated clerkship, will result in dismissal from the program. Refer to the Failure of Clinical Clerkship Courses policy in the Student Handbook.

Academic Grievance Procedure

An academic grievance is a complaint by a student related to grade, alleging arbitrary and capricious grading. Please refer to the Academic Grievance Procedure section in the Key to UB. Students are encouraged to address any concern which may arise informally with the clinical team and attempt to resolve the matter prior to submitting a formal grievance.