



PA CLINICAL MANUAL

PA Class of 2026 | 2025-2026

Des Moines University
Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

Des Moines University, College of Health Sciences
8025 Grand Avenue, West Des Moines, IA 50266

DMU PA CLINICAL FACULTY AND STAFF

DMU PA Clinical Team: ClinicalAffairsPA@dmu.edu



Dr. Holland Taylor, DMSc, PA-C
Program Director and Department Chair
(515) 271-1685
holland.taylor@dmu.edu



Laura Delaney, MPAS, PA-C
Director of Clinical Education, Associate Professor
(515) 271-1060
laura.delaney@dmu.edu



Dr. Craig Clark, MD
Medical Director, Associate Professor
(515) 271-7494 | craig.clark@dmu.edu



Dr. Angela Grundmeyer, DMSc, PA-C
Clinical Coordinator, Associate Professor
(515) 271-1633
angela.grundmeyer@dmu.edu



Kenna Willey, MSPAS, PA-C
Clinical Coordinator, Associate Professor
(515) 271-1063
kenna.willey@dmu.edu



Heidi Kennedy, AAS
Clerkship Coordinator
(515) 271-1569
heidi.kennedy@dmu.edu



Kassy Hegland, BA
Academic Assistant
(515) 271-1706
kassandra.hegland@dmu.edu

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Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide the Des Moines University (DMU) Physician Assistant (PA) Student with a practical guide to the clinical year. The contents of this document are also provided to each preceptor in the Preceptor Handbook. Please note that all students are expected to follow the policies outlined in the DMU Student Handbook and this Clinical Manual.

Please contact a member of the Clinical Team with questions or concerns about the clinical year or the clinical courses.

Navigating the challenges of being a student within a service-oriented profession, particularly one where educational experience directly impacts the well-being of individuals, presents considerable complexity. Many students feel uneasy when tasked with conducting examinations on patients already under multiple healthcare providers' care. Nevertheless, the primary objective remains maximizing learning opportunities within the limited timeframe available. It is imperative for PA students to align their efforts with the specified program or course learning objectives while maintaining a profound respect for the rights and dignity of the patients they serve.

Developing confidence and a sense of professional identity is an ongoing task. This becomes particularly important in community preceptorships, where patients and other healthcare providers may be less familiar with the concept of physician assistants. However, it is essential to remember the great seriousness with which healthcare responsibilities should be delegated. Professionalism, communication, cooperation, gratitude for teaching, safety, learning, and, above all, absolute concern for patient care help promote trust.

Accreditation Review Commission on Education for The Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA)

Accreditation standards set forth by ARC-PA governs the program. The standards exist so that each student receives the necessary level of education to graduate. Please visit the ARC-PA website for more information about [ARC-PA and Standards](#).

Policies

This is a live document, meaning that content can be updated at any time, and students are held to the most recently published document. A notice will be sent of an updated published document.

Students are accountable for upholding DMU policies. Please stay apprised of policy changes by reading announcements posted on the DMU Pulse. Policies are accessible through [DMU's Policy Stat.](#) (A1.02j, A3.02)

Health Insurance and Clinical Rotations

As stated in the DMU Student Handbook, all students must maintain an active health insurance policy during their entire matriculation at DMU. Proof of active health insurance is one requirement for starting and participating in Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs). This is required not only by DMU but also by all facilities where students will rotate. Potential health hazards, such as accidental needle punctures, make it imperative that the student has personal coverage since neither the SCPE site nor DMU is responsible for medical costs.

Various health insurance options exist, including the DMU Health Insurance Plan. Students are required to maintain health insurance coverage during their clinical year. Medicaid, or state insurance, is not an accepted insurance plan for rotations, as it may not provide adequate coverage for out-of-state rotations. Clinical rotation schedules, while planned in advance, are subject to change throughout the year, potentially requiring placements in states where Medicaid is not accepted. Students must secure alternate health insurance that ensures continuous coverage in all potential rotation locations to meet program requirements and safeguard their well-being.

Shadowing

Any shadowing experiences students choose to schedule independently, such as for an interview or personal interest, must occur during a term break and are not affiliated with or sanctioned by DMU, nor covered under the DMU's malpractice and liability insurance policy. The program does not arrange, assist with, or endorse shadowing experiences outside the scope of the established curriculum. PA students are not permitted to participate in shadowing experiences at another site or health system during scheduled rotation periods. Students are responsible for ensuring their independent activities do not conflict with program expectations, scheduled rotations, or other academic responsibilities.

Statement of Accommodations

DMU students requesting accommodations should contact the Center for Educational Enhancement (CEE) in person, by phone (515) 271-1516, or by email at AcademicSupport@dmu.edu. For more information, refer to the DMU Student Handbook or the CEE department page on Pulse.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

Students will be provided with experiences/assignments that enable them to achieve course learning outcomes. (B3.03) The student is responsible for seeking out opportunities while on SCPEs to achieve the course objectives and learning outcomes. Clinical course objectives and evaluation criteria are in the syllabus on the appropriate Desire2Learn (D2L) course site. Students should review the objectives and outcomes to set course goals for every clinical rotation. These goals should be shared with preceptors.

SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Required and Elective Courses

A series of 44 weeks of required, or Core, and Selective courses make up the clinical year. A list of the required (B3.07) and Selective courses appears below.

SCPEs in the following specialties may count toward one section of the Internal Medicine course requirements: Cardiology, Rheumatology, Gastroenterology, Pulmonology, Geriatrics, Endocrinology, Nephrology, or Hospitalist.

Courses must be completed in various settings that provide required experiences with different patient populations; therefore, the Selective component may be less than 8 weeks. (B3.03, B3.04)

Courses and Course Directors

Course ID	Course Name	Required Weeks	End of Rotation Exam	Course Director
MSPA 2302	Behavioral and Mental Health	4	Completion of course	Laura Delaney, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2303	Emergency Medicine	4	Completion of course	Angela Grundmeyer, DMSc, PA-C
MSPA 2310	Global Health Selective	Up to 8	NA	Laura Delaney, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2311	Surgical Selective		NA	Laura Delaney, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2312	Primary Care Selective		NA	Laura Delaney, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2313	Specialty Medicine Selective		NA	Laura Delaney, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2333	Women's Health		2	Completion of course
MSPA 2334	Pediatrics	2	Completion of course	Kenna Willey, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2335	Surgery	4	Completion of course	Kenna Willey, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2336A	Internal Medicine A	4	NA	Angela Grundmeyer, DMSc, PA-C
MSPA 2336B	Internal Medicine B	4	Completion of course	Angela Grundmeyer, DMSc, PA-C
MSPA 2337A	Family Medicine A	4	NA	Kenna Willey, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2337B	Family Medicine B	4	Completion of course	Kenna Willey, MSPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2338	Primary Care	4	NA	Angela Grundmeyer, DMSc, PA-C
MSPA 2350A	Foundations of Clinical Practice A	19	NA	Laura Delaney, MPAS, PA-C
MSPA 2350B	Foundations of Clinical Practice B	20		Angela Grundmeyer, DMSc, PA-C
MSPA 2350C	Foundations of Clinical Practice C	9		Kenna Willey, MSPAS, PA-C

Student Personal Contact Policy

The DMU PA program does not require students to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. (A3.03) If a student has a contact for a prospective preceptor or site, the student may submit their contact's information to the clinical team for review. A prospective preceptor or site must have a connection to the student but cannot be a relative. Cold calls asking for SCPEs should never be made. **Students must not set up, schedule, or confirm a SCPE.** The PA program reviews, evaluates, and approves the preceptor and sites for educational suitability. Scheduled clinical rotations will not be changed, switched, or rescheduled to accommodate personal contacts.

Clinical Year Scheduling

During the Clinical Year Introduction presentations, the Clinical Team requests each student complete additional profile details in Exxat, sharing their specialty areas of interest and location connections. These forms are designed to better understand each student's goals and visions for their clinical year. The information is used as a guide for faculty in student placements. The information provided does not guarantee any component of a student's clinical year.

The Clinical Team will request availability from established sites. (B3.01) The Clinical Team will work with these sites to optimize the student's schedule.

Students will be able to access their schedule on Exxat once it is released. Any changes made after this will occur in Exxat, and students will receive notification of these changes.

Once SCPE agreements are made, they are final and will not be changed *unless* requested by a site or at the discretion of the Clinical Team. Scheduled clinical rotations will not be changed, switched, or rescheduled to accommodate personal contacts.

Students can only participate in SCPEs with sites that have established affiliation agreements with DMU (A1.01, A3.01). Students may only enroll in one clinical course at a time. Students must contact ClinicalAffairsPA@dmu.edu to determine if learning experiences at alternate or additional sites are permissible.

A student deficient in logged experiences or clinical skills may warrant a change of clinical experiences or assigned selected assignments relevant to the clinical course.

If a student is assigned to a SCPE site and chooses not to attend the SCPE, the student may apply for a voluntary leave of absence after they have visited with financial aid and, if approved, sit out the duration of that SCPE. The SCPE will be rescheduled at a time and site at the discretion of the Clinical Team to occur sometime after the Summative Assessment Week, and completion of the program will be delayed.

International SCPEs

The DMU Global Health Department offers international rotation opportunities. International rotations must only be used for Selective rotations. (B3.02) Students will be informed about availability as planning progresses. Opportunities are granted via an application and selection process. The cost of all international experiences is the student's responsibility. Students may refer to the [Travel – Non-Local and International Regulations policy](#) for immunization and international travel recommendations. (A3.07) Please see the DMU Department of [Global Health website](#) and Global Health Pulse page for more information.

PREPARING FOR SCPEs

Clinical Site Requirements and Personal Records

Clinical sites have requirements that must be completed in a timely manner prior to participating in the SCPE. Failure to complete the necessary requirements for SCPEs may result in a cancellation of the rotation. Students must frequently check Exxat for their scheduled SCPEs to ensure compliance with all site requirements. Clinical sites often change or update their requirements, therefore the student must communicate with the clinical site for any additional details, information or requirements beyond what is listed in Exxat.

If students do not complete site requirements within the required timeframe, the SCPE will be canceled and then made up after the Summative Assessment Week activities, pending site availability, at the discretion of the Clinical Team. Students should refer to the [Student Leave of Absence](#) policy.

All students are expected to upload the clinical year requirements, documents, records and certifications listed under their Compliance in Exxat, except for the Liability/Malpractice Insurance document, which the program will upload for each student. Storage of these documents on Exxat improves accessibility for both the students and the Clinical Team. Student information remains confidential and is only accessible to the program's clinical faculty, staff, and when a student shares their profile with a clinical site from within the Exxat platform. Students are advised to retrieve and download all personal records after their clinical year for their personal files.

A few of the requirements are beyond the standard site requirements, such as state-specific background checks, and, therefore, are not mandatory for all students. **Students must frequently check the individual site requirements.**

Background Checks and Drug Screens

Des Moines University has partnered with [Certiphi Screening](#) to manage background checks and drug screens. Students must complete criminal background checks and a drug screen prior to SCPEs. For additional information, students may refer to the [Criminal Background Check policy](#).

Beyond the background check with Certiphi and the drug screen done prior to the clinical year, the student is responsible for the cost of any additional screenings (e.g., additional background checks, drug screenings, or lab work) required by a clinical site.

Some states, such as Wisconsin, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota, may require additional background checks. It is the student's responsibility to determine whether an additional background check is required for any SCPE. The student should ask the site contact if an additional background check is needed during the initial conversation with the site.

If a site requires a background check and the student fails to complete it on time to participate in the SCPE, the SCPE will be canceled, and that SCPE will be made up sometime after the Summative Assessment Week. In the event of SCPE cancellation, completion of the program will be delayed.

Student Immunizations and Records

Each student is required to have up-to-date immunizations throughout the program. Individual records are available from the student or DMU Student Health upon request.

The student is responsible for any additional vaccination or immunization requirement beyond DMU's requirements.

If a student receives any immunizations at a site other than DMU, the student **MUST** provide documentation to their CastleBranch record for this information to be included in their immunization record. If a new record is uploaded into CastleBranch, the student must provide an updated copy to their Exxat Compliance.

TB Tests

TB skin tests will be performed and read just before the start of the clinical year. For further information on immunization requirements, please see the policy on the Student Pulse for any clinic or hospital that needs proof of immunizations. Please note that if the requirement states a two-step TB test is needed, some additional steps will be required.

Influenza

Influenza vaccines/flu shots are generally required at each clinical site. It is the student's responsibility to schedule and receive the yearly influenza vaccine annually before October 1st. Influenza documentation is to be uploaded to Exxat Compliance.

N95 Respirators and Fit Testing

Students are required to complete N-95 Fit testing before the clinical year. For Fit Testing procedures, refer to the [Fit Test Information](#) Pulse page. Documentation of the fit test is to be uploaded to Exxat Compliance.

Physical Exams

Students are required to maintain an active physical exam throughout the clinical year. Documentation of the physical exam is to be uploaded to Exxat Compliance.

Malpractice Insurance

The University provides Liability insurance for the student while on an approved clinical preceptorship. The claim's policy has annual limits of \$2 million per loss event, \$4 million aggregate per year. Proof of liability/malpractice medical insurance coverage is sent to each clinical site and available to students on the homepage of Exxat. If students participate in a SCPE in Colorado, please contact the Clinical Team for the appropriate liability/malpractice document.

Pre-SCPE Contact

It is required that the students contact their upcoming site/preceptor by phone or email prior to the start of the scheduled SCPE. Unless otherwise specific in Exxat, the primary contact listed in Exxat must be contacted four to six (4-6) weeks prior to the SCPE start date. The students should introduce themselves and ask about first-day details and information about the SCPE. Students should also ask about any required paperwork, training, registration, other affiliated health systems, and other activities that should be completed. Preceptors have been informed that they may refuse to accept the student if these contacts are not made. If students do not contact the site and complete site requirements within the required timeframe, the SCPE will be canceled and then made up after the Summative Assessment Week activities, pending site availability, at the discretion of the Clinical Team.

When contact is made with each site prior to the start of the SCPE, the following information should be discussed:

1. Verify beginning and end dates of the SCPE, inform them of End of Rotation Exam date, on-campus assessments, and program-approved travel time, if applicable
2. Verify the preceptor's name, site address, and email address
3. Time and location to meet the preceptor on the first day
4. Any additional documents or documentation needed, including additional affiliation agreements, agreement letters, privileges, and subsequent paperwork to be credentialed at the facility or any other facility in which the student may work during the experience; need for additional criminal background check, or any additional labs (TB) required
5. Student work schedule (if available); the expectation is that students will have scheduled clinical time for each week they are assigned
6. Appropriate attire (must be OSHA compliant, wear white coat and name tag)
7. Equipment needed (if any)
8. Is there any orientation, EMR Training, or study material required prior to the start of the SCPE
9. Housing availability (if applicable); parking; dining/food storage/etc.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Student Identification

The PA student will introduce themselves as a physician assistant student and wear an identifying name tag at all times when in a clinical setting; to be clearly identified in the clinical setting and to distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners. (A3.06)

Email

DMU student email accounts should be checked frequently. Non-DMU email accounts should not be used for correspondence. Students are required to check their DMU email account daily for any important emails or communication. Students are responsible for all information in emails. Important information is sent frequently, including last-minute schedule or preceptor changes. Professional and prompt replies are expected.

Mailing Address and Phone Number

The PA Program and the Registrar's Office of the University must have a current mailing address and phone number where students may always be reached and receive mail. The student is responsible for keeping current contact information with the Registrar's office to avoid delays in receiving mail. If an urgent or emergent issue arises and the University cannot reach the student, the emergency contact as listed with the Registrar (in Colleague) and/or Exxat will be contacted.

Housing

The program does not arrange housing at any site, and housing costs are the student's responsibility. Refundable housing is strongly recommended as rotation schedules, including cancellations or reassignments, may change unexpectedly. DMU will not reimburse any costs related to housing or other expenses incurred due to a canceled or rescheduled rotation or unforeseen changes in the rotation schedule. Students are encouraged to carefully review cancellation policies and consider flexible options that allow for changes or refunds when securing housing to minimize potential financial losses.

Transportation

The student must have access to reliable transportation during the clinical year. Public transportation and cab services cannot be considered reliable transportation. It is strongly recommended that students ensure any travel arrangements, such as plane tickets, are refundable or include flexible cancellation policies. Rotation schedules may change unexpectedly, including cancellations or reassignments. DMU will not reimburse any costs related to travel, including airfare or other transportation expenses, or other expenses incurred due to a canceled or rescheduled rotation or unforeseen changes in the rotation schedule. Students are encouraged to explore travel options that allow for changes or refunds to minimize potential financial losses.

Travel Time

Travel time between SCPEs will take place over the weekend. Additional travel time may be subtracted from SCPE time **if approved in advance** by the preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education. One travel day is equivalent to traveling ~600 miles per day by car. When traveling to distant locations, travel time includes the weekend to limit time lost from the clinical experience.

Pets and Children

Students are not to take any pets or children with them on any SCPE.

Hours and Availability

The student should be available when the preceptor requests and devote full-time effort to each SCPE. It is not looked upon favorably when students ask to leave early. Duties may include hospital rounds, nights, or weekend hours, working holidays, on-call duty, and clinic responsibilities. Students are expected to be present during those hours directed by the preceptor. A 36-50+ hour work week can be expected during the clinical year. If the preceptor takes an unexpected day off and excuses the student

for the day, the student is to try to make up that time or ask if there is another provider who can precept them for that time. **The Clinical Team must be notified of any scheduled time that is not at the clinic.** Students can expect additional coursework to be assigned at the course director's discretion. Students are expected to arrive on time, early if possible, and be attentive during the clinical experience. Required on-duty hours/days may not be known until the first day of the SCPE and may be subject to change.

Telemedicine Rotations

For patient privacy, students participating in a telemedicine rotation are required to use the Des Moines University telemedicine room located at DMU32: 3200 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50312. The location details in Exxat will specify instructions for the use of this space.

Student Absences

In the event of an unanticipated absence due to illness or another urgent/emergent personal matter, the student must immediately contact the preceptor and the Clinical Team via ClinicalAffairsPA@dmu.edu and/or a phone conversation with a Clinical Faculty.

As per the DMU [Student Leave of Absence Policy](#), students needing to miss 1-3 days of SCPEs for unanticipated reasons must work directly with the course director or Director of Clinical Education so that *arrangements can be made to make-up any missed time on the SCPE*. Students must send a make-up plan to the ClinicalAffairsPA@dmu.edu address detailing the make-up time arrangements as soon as possible.

If the student will be unable to participate in a SCPE for 4-21 days, per the DMU Student Leave of Absence Policy, the student is are required to complete an Extended Absence Contract. Please see the complete DMU [Student Leave of Absence Policy](#) for more information. Any absence beyond the 21st consecutive day will require an official leave of absence.

Term Breaks

During the clinical year, there are two scheduled CHS term breaks. The dates of those breaks are pre-determined by the program and the Registrar's office in accordance with the DMU calendar. There are no other scheduled vacations, breaks or time off during the clinical year. Spring Break does not apply during the clinical year.

Unexcused Absences

Whether it be a few minutes or a full day, an "unexcused absence" is defined as any unapproved missed time during one scheduled workday. Any absence, whether anticipated or not anticipated, for which the student either did not seek or did not receive program approval will be considered "unapproved" and will result in APC referral and/or disciplinary action and must be made up after the Summative Assessment Week, which will result in a late graduation/completion of the program. For each incident of an unexcused absence, a full week will be made up after the Summative Assessment Week activities at the discretion of the Clinical Team.

Personal Days

Given the relatively short period of time dedicated to clinical SCPEs, the program encourages students to schedule job interviews outside of the time they are scheduled to be on-site for their SCPEs. To

maximize instructional time, the Clinical Team asks students to seek opportunities to make up any missed time.

The program allows students to request up to two (2) non-consecutive, separate personal days away from clinical SCPEs during the clinical year. These two days must be taken during different SCPEs and should not be requested during a month with a Clinical Checkpoint.

Personal days will not be permitted:

- during Bootcamp, which is the first three weeks of the second Fall term
- during a two-week core rotation
- the first day of a new rotation
- the last day of a rotation if an End of Rotation Exam is scheduled
- during a Clinical Checkpoint
- during the Summative Assessment Week
- during any make-up or repeat course or rotation

In the event of an anticipated absence, the student must seek and receive permission from both the preceptor and PA Program Clinical Team. Students must request a personal day via the [request form](#). Requests for personal days during the clinical year should be made in as far in advance as possible. If the Program approves this request, the Clinical Team will inform the preceptor that the request has been granted. Any approved absence must be made up in a manner mutually approved by the program Clinical Team and preceptor.

The clinical team will track and monitor personal days. The DMU [Student Leave of Absence Policy](#) provides further details regarding expected and unexpected absences. Any student absence not granted as a personal day will be considered an unexcused absence.

Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine

While the University strongly embraces Osteopathic principles and philosophy, PA students on clinical SCPEs are not to engage in the practice of osteopathic manipulative medicine.

Student Dress Code

The DMU PA student is a member of a graduate professional school and represents DMU at all times. It is important to remember that maintaining a professional image contributes to patient trust and enhances confidence. Therefore, appropriate attire must adhere to professional standards. The student is expected to be well-groomed, clean, and dressed in a discreet fashion. Professional attire is required whenever the student represents their College or University in a clinical setting or at an off-campus event. The DMU white coat may be worn if requested by a clinical site. The student identification badge must be visible at all times while on campus, during clinical rotations, and while participating in community service activities. Specific clinical rotations or teaching encounters may have particular dress codes, and the student is expected to comply with them.

If the student's manner of dress violates these codes, they may be asked to leave the rotation or learning encounter. Students who do not abide by the dress guidelines detailed above or who in any manner demonstrate unprofessional dress and/or behavior will be referred to the Program APC and/or University Integrity Committee with progressive disciplinary action followed.

Clinical Attire

- Students doing clinical work or other internships in a hospital/clinic must dress in a professional, identifiable manner.
- Students should wear clean dress pants (which does not include jeans or leggings) with a clean shirt/blouse, tie (for men), and white clinic jacket with the Des Moines University Physician Assistant Program patch affixed on the left sleeve, and the University name tag.
 - Some clinical sites may require scrubs and should be modest and professional.
- Closed-toe shoes and socks must be worn at all times. Shoes shall be sturdy, low-heeled and with a non-slip sole. Tennis shoes or boots of clean and conservative nature will be permitted.
- Male students shall be clean-shaven, except for a mustache or beard, which must be neatly trimmed.
- Students with hair below the shirt or jacket collar shall fix their hair in such a manner that it will not interfere with their clinical duties.
- The selection of jewelry should not pose a risk or be distracting to the student, faculty, patient, or caregiver.
- Fingernails shall be clean and trimmed to a moderate length and no artificial nails are allowed.
- Fingernail polish is not allowed during any surgery or surgical-specialty SCPE.
- Students must follow direction from clinical sites regarding visibility of tattoos.
- Students should avoid the use of perfume and cologne.
- OSHA regulations will always be followed.

The student's manner, attitude, behavior, and dress must reflect their professional status. Appearance makes a strong impact and is important to patient care. Variations of this dress code may be allowed if in accordance with a particular hospital or clinic dress code.

Social Networking

It is not recommended to be "friends" with patients. Always adhere to HIPAA regulations. Pictures, information, and postings on social media sites are visible to everyone, including prospective employers and other professionals. Anything that refers to drugs, alcohol, discrimination or racial profiling, firearms, etc., is inappropriate and should be avoided. Please see the Student Use of Social Media Guidelines in the DMU Student Handbook for further information.

Cell Phones

It is inappropriate to use cell phones while on duty at a site. Personal cell phone use, either by talking or texting, should only occur when away from the work area. Be aware that using electronic devices to log patients and research information may look like texting to a bystander. Students should inform their preceptor that they may be using their electronic device for logging and to access references only if needed during their on-duty time.

Reference Material

Students should take their own reference material with them on SCPEs. Some sites may have extensive libraries available to students.

DURING SCPEs

Safety, Security, and Incident Reporting

Student safety is of the utmost importance. If there are concerns about safety or security while on SCPEs, students should communicate with the primary site contact and/or preceptor, and the PA program Director of Clinical Education. All immediate safety and security concerns should be first directed to local authorities by calling 911.

Any student involved in an accident or incident in which a patient or student has been adversely affected must notify the supervising preceptor or precepting facility and the PA Clinical Team by calling (515) 271-1502. This will first ring to Dr. Taylor. If she is unavailable, it will then ring to Mrs. Delaney's office line and then her cell phone. If no answer, please leave a voicemail for Mrs. Delaney. (A1.02g)

Students should report any incident via [Injury, Illness and Incident Reporting](#) form on Pulse. In addition, the student must submit, within two days, a written account of the incident and their involvement in it to the Director of Clinical Education. Following review, the program administration will assure that appropriate action is taken in the matter.

For any non-urgent safety concerns, students should contact the Director of Clinical Education by phone (515) 271-1060 or ClinicalAffairsPA@dmu.edu.

For additional safety reminders and guidelines, see the posted [Safety Tips For PAs](#) on the PA Program Resources Pulse Page.

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure

If a student is directly exposed to bloodborne pathogens (e.g., needlestick or exposure to bodily fluids), the student should follow the procedures as outlined by the facility at which they are rotating. Also, the student should contact the PA Program Director of Clinical Education within 24 hours of the incident and complete the [Student Injury Report Form](#), which can be found under the "Injury, Illness, and Incident Reporting" Pulse page.

Preceptor and Safety Acknowledgement

By the first Friday of each SCPE, the student should seek site-specific safety information from the preceptor or a qualified site representative. The student will be sent an electronic survey within Exxat to complete regarding the findings for the safety information from the site. The student may also use this survey and contact the Clinical Team to document any non-urgent safety concerns.

To complete this survey, students must also confirm or obtain their preceptor's correct information, including their email address. If a preceptor's name, credentials, and email are not provided, a final evaluation will not be sent for completion. If a final evaluation is incomplete, credit will not be given for that SCPE.

The information entered by the student in the Preceptor and Safety Acknowledgement is reviewed by the program, which tracks the receipt of information, ensures compliance with the requirement, and alerts the clinical team to any concerns expressed by the student. The student's professional responsibility is to ensure that this survey is completed for each rotation. Failure to consistently complete these surveys in a timely manner will result in a referral to the APC.

Preceptor/PA Student Scope of Practice

The following outlines guidelines pertaining to tasks that a PA student may undertake under a preceptor's guidance. It is important to emphasize that these guidelines serve as a framework rather than definitive directives. The preceptor's discernment regarding the student's readiness for specific responsibilities should dictate the delegation of tasks and the level of supervision warranted.

In most clinical settings, the PA student and the preceptor see patients together during the first day(s) of the SCPE. As skills develop, the student may progress to seeing the patient alone, discussing the case with the preceptor; and then the preceptor and PA student see the patient together. This is usually a rapid progression during the SCPE due to the short length of the clinical SCPEs. Thus, it is highly important that the student be allowed to progress as quickly as their expertise and perceived level of responsibility will allow.

In Iowa, as in most states, a PA student may perform medical services when rendered within the scope of an approved PA Program and with provider supervision. The legal requirements vary by state, so please check the state's law if there are any questions.

Typical tasks assigned to PA students by preceptors may include:

1. Taking a history and performing physical examinations
2. Assessing common medical problems and discussing recommended management
3. Performing and assisting in routine diagnostic and therapeutic procedures
4. Counseling patients about health care only under direction of the preceptor
5. Assisting the preceptor in the hospital or long-term care facility and making rounds, recording progress notes as the health system/clinic allows, carrying out specific orders of the preceptor as allowed by the facilities' regulations
6. Following protocols or standing orders of the provider

Student Roles and Professionalism

Successful clinical students are professional and proactive in their learning. Every clinical course is an opportunity to learn, regardless of whether that is the area students will pursue after graduation.

Students are expected to be engaged, professional, have a positive attitude, and are eager to learn in every clinical setting. It is important for students to professionally ask for and receive constructive criticism and feedback to grow as a professional. Maintaining professional boundaries with patients, preceptors, and clinic staff is an important part of the student role.

Professionalism Assessment

Clinical faculty will evaluate students' professionalism in each clinical course based on preceptor evaluation(s) and feedback, punctuality and attendance, timeliness of assignment submissions including mid-course and preceptor/site evaluations, timeliness, and thoroughness of patient encounter logs, written and verbal communication, and any other interaction with the student or feedback received regarding student performance and behavior during the clinical course. See clinical course syllabi for specific information regarding the Professionalism Assessment Rubric and grading.

Preceptor Responsibilities

First and foremost, the preceptor's priority is their patients. The preceptor's responsibility is also to ensure the safety of patients and learners and a supportive environment for student learning and growth in the clinical setting.

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

- Be aware of the regulations regarding physician assistant students and the preceptor's employer and/or facilities with whom the preceptor associates.
- At least four (4) weeks prior to the SCPE start date, inform all facilities with whom the preceptor associates that a PA student will be rotating with the preceptor.
- Orient students at the onset of the SCPE with the practice/site policies and procedures and review the expectations and objectives for the course.
- Provide ongoing and timely feedback regarding clinical performance, knowledge base, and critical thinking skills, including a student-initiated mid-course and final evaluation. Please see the "Student Evaluation" section in this manual and in the course syllabus.
- Supervise, demonstrate, teach, and observe clinical activities to aid in the development of clinical skills and medical decision-making.
- Delegate to the student increasing levels of responsibility for clinical assessment and management as appropriate to the student's experience and expertise.
- Participate in the evaluation of clinical skills and medical knowledge base through the following mechanisms:
 - Direct supervision, observation, and teaching in the clinical setting.
 - Direct evaluation of presentations, including both oral and written
 - Assignment of outside readings and research to promote further learning
- Communicate with program personnel during site evaluation and as needed.
- If allowed by the site, preceptor must audit and co-sign charts to evaluate the student's ability to write appropriate and complete progress notes, histories, physical examinations, assessments, and treatment plans and/or review weekly written SOAP notes.
- Complete and promptly return the evaluation forms provided by the program via Exxat reflecting on student knowledge and skills as well as their improvement throughout the SCPE.
- Promptly notify the Director of Clinical Education of any circumstances that might interfere with the accomplishment of the course outcomes or diminish the overall training experience.
- Maintain an ethical approach to the care of patients by serving as a role model for the student.
- Demonstrate cultural competence through interactions with patients.
- Comply with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the related regulations to each. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, color, sex, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or handicap in either the selection of program participants for participation in the program, or as to any aspect of the clinical training; provided, however, that with respect to handicap, the handicap must not be such as would, even with reasonable accommodation, in and of itself preclude the program participant's effective participation in the Program.
- Maintain in confidence health professions student files and personal information and limit access to only those employees that need to know and agree to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to the same extent as such laws and regulations apply to DMU. For the purposes of the Agreement, pursuant to FERPA, DMU hereby designates facility as a school official with a legitimate educational interest in the educational records of the health professions students who participate in educational rotations at Clinical Site to the extent

that access to the records is required by clinical site to carry out its responsibilities.

Supervision

During a student's time at the clinic or hospital, the preceptor must be available for supervision, consultation, and teaching, or designate an alternate preceptor. Although the supervising preceptor may not be with a student during every shift, it is important to clearly assign students to another provider who will serve as the student's preceptor for any given time interval. Having more than one clinical preceptor has the potential to disrupt continuity for the student but also offers the advantage of sharing preceptorship duties and exposes students to valuable variations in practice style, which can help learners develop the professional personality that best fits them. The preceptor should always be aware of the student's assigned activities to provide adequate supervision.

Students are not employees of the hospitals or clinics and, therefore, work entirely under the preceptor's supervision. Students are not to substitute for paid clinicians, clerical staff, or other workers at the clinical sites. (A3.05) The preceptor should provide direct supervision of technical skills with gradually increased autonomy in accordance with the PA student's demonstrated level of expertise. The preceptor and student must follow the facility regulation regarding PA student function within the facility. The PA student will not be allowed to see, treat, or discharge a patient without evaluation by the preceptor.

During the clinical preceptorship period, the preceptor becomes acquainted with the PA student's capabilities by allowing the student to interact on a one-on-one basis with patients. This interaction, of course, is at the discretion of the preceptor and should be based on the perceived level of experience and expertise of the student. This interaction should be covered overall by good supervision and be utilized as a personalized teaching tool by the preceptor. Students are instructed to respectfully decline engaging in activity for which they are not prepared.

Students may be supervised at one of two broad levels as determined by the supervisor:

- Direct observation: the supervisor is present with the student and the patient
- Immediately available indirect supervision: the supervisor, while not in the presence of the student and/or patient, is immediately available to the learner and/or at the site of care to provide direct supervision

Direction

When given direction by a preceptor, the student has several possible courses of action: (a) if the student agrees with the instructions of the preceptor, they may carry out the order exactly as directed; or (b) if the student disagrees in any way with the instructions of the preceptor, they should discuss the issues with the preceptor **away from the patient** and agree on a course of action or inform the preceptor that due to circumstances they do not feel qualified to carry out the order. **This conversation should never occur in front of a patient.** If a disagreement as described above occurs, the Clinical Team should be notified immediately.

Prescription Writing

Students may transcribe prescribing information for the preceptor, but the preceptor must sign all prescriptions. More specifically, the student's name is not to appear on the prescription. The preceptor **MUST** log into the system under their own password and personally sign and send the electronic prescription. These guidelines must not be violated by the student or the preceptor.

Medicare Policy

Please visit the [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#), which provides direct access to CMS rules regarding student documentation.

Patient Notes

If the preceptor and/or facility allow, PA students may enter information in the medical record. Students are reminded that the medical record is a legal document. All medical entries must be identified as “student” and must include the PA student’s signature with the designation “PA-S.” The preceptor cannot bill for the services performed by a student. Preceptors must document the services they provide and review and edit all student documentation. Although student documentation may be limited for reimbursement purposes, students’ notes are legal and are contributory to the medical record. Moreover, writing a succinct note and communicating effectively is a critical skill that PA students should develop. The introduction of EMRs (electronic medical records) presents obstacles for students if they lack a password or are not fully trained in using an institution’s EMR system. In these cases, students are encouraged to hand-write notes, if simply for the student’s own education, which should be reviewed by preceptors whenever possible for feedback.

Exxat and Patient Logging

DMU uses Exxat as the student patient logging system. Students are expected to be present and see patients according to the schedule given to them by their preceptors on each SCPE. If issues arise, please communicate them to the Director of Clinical Education.

Students will learn about and practice using the Exxat system before leaving campus on SCPEs. Exxat allows the student to document patients, diagnoses, and clinical skills experience. In the interest of continuity of patient care, providers document patients’ notes as patients are seen each day. Students should keep logs current so that up-to-date diagnosis and clinical skill exposure data can be reviewed anytime. Exxat logs should accurately reflect the date, encounter type, setting, age group, ethnicity, diagnosis, and procedures experienced with each patient encounter. The Clinical Team will routinely evaluate each student’s log to ensure adequate SCPE experiences. **If a student is found to be lacking exposure to an area, skill, or course objective, the student’s scheduled SCPEs may be changed to allow for appropriate clinical experiences, or an additional assessment(s) may be scheduled.**

Students are expected to remain current with patient encounter logging. It is suggested that encounter logs be completed daily to avoid falling behind. Patient encounter logs for each week (Mon-Sun) are due by Sunday each week at 11:59 pm. If a student cannot complete their logging for the week by this deadline, they must communicate this via email to the course director. Failure to provide this communication in a timely manner may result in a deduction in the professionalism assessment grade for that clinical course. If a student repeatedly fails to remain up to date on case logs *and* fails to communicate this as described above, upon the third such occurrence over the clinical year, the student will be referred to the APC. Please refer to the Foundations of Clinical Practice A, B, and C syllabi for additional logging expectations.

The ability to log patients into the system for each SCPE will end two weeks after a patient is seen. **If patient encounter logs are two weeks or more behind, SCPEs can be suspended to allow the student to catch up.** This may also result in a referral to the APC. Time lost from SCPEs to catch up on patient encounter logs will be made up after the Summative Assessment Week. Complete patient encounter logs are a requirement for graduation from the program.

Thank You Notes

Thank you notes are a professional expectation and should be given to the preceptor after each SCPE. Thank-you cards can be picked up by contacting the Clinical Team.

ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Formative Assessments

Formative Assessment: Intermediate or continuous evaluation that may include feedback to help students achieve goals. A one-to-three-day formative assessment will occur every three months during the clinical year.

- Clinical Checkpoint #1
 - One day virtual event after the third rotation block
- Clinical Checkpoint #2
 - Three day on-campus event after the sixth rotation block
- Clinical Checkpoint #3
 - Three day on-campus event after the ninth rotation block

Mid-Course Evaluation

The preceptor and PA student should regularly discuss the student's progress throughout the SCPE. The student is responsible for discussing the preceptor's expectations for the SCPE.

A **verbal** mid-course student evaluation is done when each SCPE is half complete. The student completes this along with the preceptor and should be a documented summary of the conversation, along with the student's personal reflections on their strengths and weaknesses and progress with their personal goals.

The student is responsible for initiating this discussion. The student should submit the mid-course evaluation within 48 hours of the midpoint of each SCPE, due by Sunday night at midnight, to the course assignment in Exxat. SCPE-specific and professionalism-oriented evaluation criteria can be found in the syllabi on D2L and should be reviewed by the preceptor as the foundation for this student assessment. See Exxat for the required format for the evaluation.

Failure to submit the mid-course evaluation within 48 hours of the midpoint of each SCPE will result in "0" points for this component on the respective course Professionalism Assessment and may result in referral to APC.

Summative Assessments

Summative Assessment: An assessment of the learner conducted by the program to ensure that the learner has the medical knowledge, interpersonal, clinical, and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for entry into the profession (or at the end of a unit, course, etc.)

- End of Rotation Exams
- Preceptor evaluations
- Course director evaluations

Preceptor Evaluation of Student

At the end of the SCPE, the preceptor completes the student's final evaluation. Two days before the last day of the SCPE, Exxat will email the preceptor with a link. The preceptor can click the link, complete the

evaluation, and submit it to Exxat. At least one preceptor evaluation of the student must be received from each SCPE.

If a non-applicable (N/A) rating is received in SCPE, the Clinical Team will determine the method for evaluating the student on that objective if it is not evaluated in another course and/or means. This will enable the faculty to verify the achievement of all PA program learning outcomes as set forth by ARC-PA.

End of Rotation Exams (EOREs)

The PA Program requires students to successfully pass PAEA End of Rotation Exams in Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, Surgery, and Women's Health. Reference individual course syllabi and the [PAEA End of Rotation Exam Content](#) pages for additional information. Students are expected to start their exam at the scheduled time.

Clinical Course Grading

Please see course syllabi for SCPE-specific grading information. The PA Program makes the final decision regarding the Pass/Fail status of all students' clinical courses. All required and selective preceptorships must be satisfactorily completed as determined by the PA Program before the student can graduate from the Program.

Professionalism Assessment Rubric

See individual SCPE course syllabi for details.

Program Summative Evaluation

See the Summative Evaluation section of the DMU Student Handbook.

- PA program summative exam
- Summative evaluation assignments and assessments

In addition, a student may have to repeat or do additional time in a SCPE and/or clinical course for different reasons, including, but not limited to the following:

- Incomplete or pending evaluations
- Insufficient Exxat logging
- Incomplete course assignments
- Negative comments received by a preceptor either verbally or on a final evaluation
- Unsatisfactory performance on Clinical Checkpoints, or final written or practical exams and other activities, as determined by the Program.

Student Evaluation of Course, Site and Preceptor

The student evaluates the course, the preceptor and site following each SCPE. Late in the SCPE, the student receives an email that provides a link for each evaluation. The evaluations must be completed before the student can view the student evaluation filled out by the preceptor.

All evaluations are due two (2) weeks after the completion of the SCPE. Credit for the SCPE will not be given until all evaluations are received. The student is responsible for receiving all evaluations. It is advised that the student monitor Exxat for documentation of receipt of student evaluations. Following up with a preceptor who has not submitted a student evaluation is best done early to receive accurate performance evaluations. Students will not be allowed to sit for final exams until all evaluations have been received.

Preceptors can view the student's evaluation of them and the clinical site. Students should provide professional, thorough, and constructive feedback on evaluations, remembering that other students may be scheduled later for that experience.

If a student wishes to communicate something to the program but does not want to include it in an evaluation, please email or set up an appointment with the Director of Clinical Education. Issues can only be addressed if they are known.

Make-Up Time

Any required make-up time will be made up after the conclusion of the Summative Week Assessments. Students making up SCPE time will be scheduled at the discretion of the Clinical Team, and scheduling is dependent on the availability of sites.