



Class of 2027

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

POLICIES AND COMPETENCIES HANDBOOK

2025-2027

(Last Revised 5/28/2025)

Table of Contents

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	4
MISSION STATEMENT	4
THE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION (A3.06)	4
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND STANDING (A3.14a-g)	5
Successful Completion of the Didactic Phase	5
Maintaining Good Academic Standing	5
Probation, Dismissal, Withdrawal, Readmission and Deceleration	5
Probation	6
Dismissal from the Program during the Didactic Phase)	6
Withdrawal and Readmission	6
Deceleration	7
Academic Dishonesty	7
Professionalism Policy	7
Attendance and Absence Policy	8
Virtual Learning Policy	8
EXAMINATIONS	9
Written Examinations	9
Examination Review	9
Remediation	10
Practical Examinations	10
Device Policy for Examinations	10
FINAL COURSE GRADES	11
OFFICE POLICIES	11
SOCIAL NETWORKING GUIDELINES	12
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS	14
STUDENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING	14
Medical and Mental Health (A3.06)	14
College of Health Sciences Statement Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination for Students	15
Exposure to Hazardous Materials and Bloodborne Pathogens (A3.05a-c)	15
TITLE IX POLICY (A1.02g, A3.14f)	16
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES (A1.02j, A3.14g)	16
FACULTY ADVISERS	17
Letters of Recommendation	17
CLASS CANCELLATIONS	17
LEAVE OF ABSENCE	17
CLASSROOM MAINTENANCE	17
CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE	17
STUDENT IDENTIFICATION (A3.04)	18

STUDENT TEACHING (<i>A3.02</i>)	18
STUDENT WORK POLICY (<i>A3.02, A.03a-b</i>)	18
MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE PA PROGRAM	18
Observation	19
Communication	19
Motor and Sensory Function	20
Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities	20
Behavioral and Social Attributes	21
Ethical and Legal Standards	21
PERSONAL EXCUSED ABSENCES (Student Well-Being Days)	21
Rationale	21
Personal Time Off Policy	22
Scope of Applicability	22
Process and Notification	22
Documentation	23
Appeal	23
Counseling Services	23
RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY	23
Rationale	23
Scope of Applicability	23
Policy	23
Definitions	24
Student Procedures for Requesting a Religious Accommodation	25
BEREAVEMENT POLICY	25
Rationale	25
Bereavement Policy	25
Process and Notification	26
Counseling Services	26
NON-DISCRIMINATION ASSURANCE	26

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Physician Assistant Program reserves the right in its sole judgment to issue and change rules and regulations and to make changes of any nature in its program, calendar, admission policies, procedures and standards, degree requirements, and academic schedule whenever it is deemed necessary or desirable. This may include without limitations: changes in course content, the rescheduling of classes, canceling of scheduled classes and other academic activities and requiring or offering alternatives in any such case giving such notice as is reasonable and practical under the circumstances.

In addition, the University reserves the right to make whatever changes in admissions requirements, fee charges, tuition, instructors' regulations, and academic programs it deems necessary prior to the start of any class, term, semester. The University also reserves the right to divide, cancel or reschedule classes and supervised clinical practical experiences if factors so require.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Arcadia Physician Assistant Program is to successfully educate compassionate and highly qualified medical professionals who are patient-centered and lifelong learners. We are committed to diversity, global awareness, and invested in preparing our students to excel in professionalism, leadership, and service.

THE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION

The training program upon which you are about to embark will be challenging and exciting. The best educational experience occurs when students and program personnel work together to achieve the goals of both the student and the program.

Teaching is the primary responsibility of the principal and instructional faculty. It is the faculty's responsibility to promote an environment which is conducive to the mastery of knowledge and skills necessary to enter the PA profession. Although clinicians themselves, faculty (including the Program Director and Medical Director) are NOT permitted to offer medical advice or provide medical treatment, except in an emergency, to students.

Learning is the responsibility of each student. Each student must be aware of the specific technical, academic, and behavioral standards required to successfully complete this program. Students must be able to effectively integrate the information and skills taught in the Program per our [Program Competencies](#). It is necessary for each student to dedicate the time and effort needed for individual success. Any student who experiences difficulty which causes interference with their success should seek assistance from faculty, faculty adviser, course directors, or Program Director.

Physician Assistant training may differ significantly from other educational experiences a student may have previously undertaken. In addition to achieving competence in the application of a significant body of didactic knowledge and psychomotor skills, the student must embody high standards of [professionalism](#) as referenced in the Professionalism in PA education and the Medical Field: Arcadia PA Program Guide. The curriculum is designed to assist students in developing an independent and self-directed approach to learning. This is consistent with the expectations of a graduate physician assistant, who will continually expand their knowledge base and expertise.

It is essential for each student to be able to organize, prioritize, and synthesize a large amount of material. Every student must pursue a consistent study routine which allows them to master a vast body of knowledge. Students will be assessed in their mastery of this knowledge by a variety of methods, to include written, oral, and practical examinations, written research assignments, group projects, and other activities.

All students accepted into the Physician Assistant Program are expected to abide by the regulations set forth by the Program as well as Arcadia University as specified in the Arcadia University [*Graduate Academic Policies*](#).

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND STANDING

Successful Completion of the Didactic Phase

To enter the clinical phase of the program, a student must have:

- No course grades below “C”
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 (B-)
- Successfully completed the core competency examination with a score of at least 70% after no more than two attempts (a third attempt is at the discretion of the Physician Assistant Program’s Academic Review Committee (PAARC)).
- Demonstrated appropriate professional attitude and demeanor ([*see Ethical and Legal Standards*](#))
- Permission of the Physician Assistant Program
- Tuitions/fees paid in full
- Completed and submitted to Student Health Services a satisfactory yearly physical examination and required screenings and immunization updates
- Demonstrated adherence with all required medical screenings and clearances
- Demonstrated maintenance of standards of professional behavior and technical standards
- Current CPR and ACLS certification, not to expire during the clinical phase
- Students must maintain CPR and ACLS certification for the entire clinical phase of the Program.

Many of the program’s clinical sites require criminal background and/or child abuse history clearance forms. All students are required to submit to a complete criminal background check, a sexual offender history clearance and drug screen. Students who fail to pass the background/sexual offender check or drug screen may not be allowed to enter or continue in the program. Students may be required to submit to additional drug and / or background testing at the discretion of any clinical site and the PA Program.

Maintaining Good Academic Standing

The University reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for unsatisfactory academic performance, academic dishonesty, conduct detrimental to the University, to the welfare of patients, or to the welfare of other students, faculty, or staff. The Department also reserves the right to dismiss a student if it is determined that a student’s conduct is not consistent with the professional behavior of a future Physician Assistant.

Failure to maintain good academic standing may result in dismissal from the program. All courses in the Physician Assistant curriculum are required and sequential. Students must receive a minimum grade of “C” in all courses before progressing in the program.

This is a 24-month program. At the discretion of the program director, students in the clinical phase may take up to a three-month leave of absence only. All degree requirements must be completed within 30 months from the start of the program, any exception to this will be at the discretion of the program.

Probation, Dismissal, Withdrawal, Readmission and Deceleration

Academic progress is monitored closely. If a student is identified to be in academic jeopardy, the student may be counseled by the faculty, faculty advisor, the Course Director, the Director of Advising and Mentoring, the Director of Didactic Education, the Assistant Director of Didactic Education, and/or the Program Director.

Probation

If a student fails to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.70 in any semester, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must then achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 during the probationary semester. Students may be placed on academic probation for demonstration of unprofessional behavior, defined as conduct contrary to the *Minimum Technical Standards for Admission, Continuation, and Graduation* for the PA profession as detailed in this Handbook.

Students on academic probation may not be eligible for participation in international or distant experiences/rotations or to be recipients of certain distinguished honors or awards.

Dismissal from the Program during the Didactic Phase

(Please refer to the Clinical Phase Handbook for academic requirements and causes for dismissal in the clinical phase of the Program.)

1. If a student fails to obtain a minimum grade of “C” in any course, he/she will be dismissed from the program at the completion of the semester term.
2. Failure to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 for two (2) consecutive semesters will result in the student’s dismissal from the program.
3. During the time of academic probation, subsequent demonstration of unprofessional conduct, defined as conduct contrary to our [Professionalism Policy](#) in this Handbook, will result in dismissal from the program.
4. All students MUST achieve the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 to enter the clinical phase of instruction. If this minimum GPA requirement has not been met by the end of the didactic phase, students will not be allowed to enter the clinical phase and will be dismissed from the program.
5. Successful completion of the core competency examination with a score of at least 70% after no more than two attempts (a third attempt is at the discretion of the PAARC. Students who do not score at least 70% on the core competency examination after two attempts or three attempts if approved by the PAARC will be dismissed from the program.

Withdrawal and Readmission

The PA Program does not admit students with advanced placement. However, students who have withdrawn or have been dismissed from the program may be readmitted and granted credit for some of the courses they have successfully completed. A student who wishes to formally withdraw from the Program must complete the [Withdraw from University Form](#). Dismissal from the program does not guarantee readmission. The readmission process begins with a student request for readmission which must be submitted to the Program Director no later than **six months** after the date of their dismissal or withdrawal. Students who are dismissed from the program after October 31st of the didactic year, must submit a request for readmission by April 1st of the following year in order to be considered for admission into the next year cohort of students. If a student dismissed after October 31st of the didactic year fails to respond by April 1st but still responds within the six month time frame, may be considered for admission into the next academic year of the program.

The student’s readmission request must include an explanation of the reasons leading to the student’s dismissal or withdrawal from the program and an articulated plan for overcoming similar or other obstacles to future success. The request for readmission is evaluated by the PAARC and a decision is made regarding granting readmission. If the decision is made to readmit, the PAARC develops a readmission plan after careful review of the student’s academic record. Plans for remediation address numerous factors including grades, continuity of the academic experience, cohort support, and other pedagogical concerns. The plan is presented to the student requesting readmission. If all parties agree to the terms, an agreement is drawn up and signed by the student. Readmission is not guaranteed; the student must demonstrate an understanding of the obstacles they

encountered and a realistic plan for their success as determined by the PAARC, which includes the Program Director.

Any student who is readmitted to the Program will be placed on academic probation as a condition for readmission. The readmitted student will remain on academic probation at the discretion of the PA Program Director.

In the event, the PAARC does not decide to readmit a student, a dismissed student may appeal to the Graduate Academic Standing and Appeal Committee (GASAC) per the [Graduate Academic Policy](#).

Deceleration

Deceleration refers to a student who remains matriculated in the program but does not remain with their entering cohort. The Program does not offer deceleration to students. Instead, students not meeting academic standards, as outlined in this handbook, are dismissed from the Program, and offered the opportunity to apply for readmission outside of the general applicant pool via the process outlined in the Readmission section above.

The [refund policy](#) applies only to tuition charges; fees are not refundable. During the fall and spring semesters, students who formally withdraw from one or more courses within the first five weeks of classes are entitled to a refund according to the schedule listed below. Refunds are calculated on the basis of the date on which notification was received by the Registrar's Office.

A student considering withdrawal after the seventh week of a semester is encouraged to contact the Office of Student Accounts in order to obtain a detailed estimate of the financial implications of the withdrawal. This is extremely relevant when a student loan is involved.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is grounds for immediate dismissal.

The term “academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to:

- Receipt or exchange of information (**by any means**) during any examination (online, written, oral or practical).
- Soliciting or obtaining knowledge of test items prior to the administration of examinations, or producing any written record of test items after examinations.
- Preparing written or electronic materials such as examination notes, copies of test items, examination topic item lists etc., following the administration of examinations, regardless of how they are obtained.
- Submission of written assignments as original writing without proper footnoting, citations, and/or referencing.
- Misuse of AI tools—such as unauthorized use on assessments, failure to cite appropriately, or submission of fully AI-generated work as your own—will be treated as violations of academic integrity policies, potentially leading to disciplinary action.

See the [Code of Academic Responsibility](#) in the Arcadia University Graduate Academic Policies for more information.

Professionalism Policy

The PA Program is committed to guiding and supporting students as they transition into their roles as practicing clinicians. By thoughtfully aligning the AAPA's guide to ethical practice for PAs with our program's core

values, we have developed our Program's [Professionalism Policy](#) to help students become leaders who consistently demonstrate strong ethical principles in their actions and care for their communities and patients.

Attendance and Absence Policy

The Arcadia University Physician Assistant Program considers student education to be a participatory activity. Student attendance and participation in scheduled courses is expected and can be used in faculty's assessment of student performance. The college supports and understands the right of the faculty to expect student attendance and participation in many curricular components and the need to impose consequences if those expectations are not met (this may include the use of a classroom sign in sheet or lecture embedded learning points where student participation indicates attendance).

Students are expected to demonstrate personal responsibility in participating in coursework and integrity in seeking excused absences. Communication regarding unexpected health issues or personal emergencies must be communicated in a timely, professional, and honest manner.

Receiving an excused absence from a course activity does not affect the expectation the student will meet the course requirements as outlined in the course syllabus.

In the spirit of professional behavior and the mastery of defined educational objectives, students are **expected to attend all class sessions** (e.g., lectures, laboratories) whether in person, or broadcasted live via platforms like Zoom or Zoom webinar, at the scheduled time of the session. Students are also expected to take all examinations during their originally scheduled times. Students will be provided breaks during scheduled lectures in order to utilize bathroom services, eat lunch, etc. Students should minimize the need to interrupt lecturers outside of these scheduled breaks by utilizing the bathrooms or eating prior to scheduled lecture times.

Recorded lectures: certain lectures may be recorded ahead of time and will be clearly indicated on the schedule. Students are encouraged to watch the recording at the scheduled time to ensure they keep up to date with course content. Students may opt to watch the recorded content at a different time, but are ultimately responsible for having all content completed in time for scheduled assessments, etc.

If attendance is not possible due to an acceptable reason, the student must request an excused absence by utilizing a personal excused absence (Student Well-Being Days). Not all requests for an excused absence are approved; requests based on events such as weddings, vacations, and family celebrations may be denied.

An excused absence does not relieve the student from responsibilities for missed mandatory class sessions and examinations. It is possible an excused absence will not be granted for a mandatory class session due to scheduling of equipment and faculty. It is the student's responsibility to refer to the course syllabus to understand daily requirements, responsibilities, and the consequences of not completing these requirements.

Students must submit his or her excused absence request at least one week in advance of the scheduled mandatory class session(s). The request for an excused absence will be considered and the student will be notified of a decision in a timely fashion. Retroactive excused absence requests will not be accepted except in extenuating circumstances approved by the Program on a case by case basis.

Virtual Learning Policy

Instruction may take place virtually, when necessary, through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, etc. Students are held to the same Attendance and Absence Policy as they would be if the learning event occurred in person. Arcadia University's Physician Assistant program has adopted the following virtual learning etiquette and behavior expectations as the minimum requirements for students during these virtual sessions: Students must:

1. Display professionalism at all times, including being prepared to engage in scholarly discussions.
2. Avoid sharing Zoom/classroom information, links, or passwords to anyone outside of their cohort or PA Program unless directed to do so by PA faculty/staff.
3. Recordings of Zoom sessions are to be used only for personal academic use. They are not to be shared, distributed, or published.
4. Have a computer with video and audio capabilities and know how to operate the features on their device before class begins.
5. Upon entering the Zoom/online classroom, mute their microphones (if not already muted by the Host). In addition, students should rename their display name as “First Name” “Last Name.” This will assist us in maintaining the safety and security of our Zoom/online sessions.
6. A student’s cameras should be on during lectures unless the student is participating in the lecture via the Program’s lecture hall.
7. When possible, use a headphone device when engaged in the virtual session in order to reduce ambient noise and distractions.
8. Choose an appropriate physical environment or virtual background prior to entering the Zoom/online classroom and avoid those that are distracting to other participants.
9. Students should still utilize appropriate attire during virtual learning sessions.
10. Use the chat window for questions and comments relevant to the class. This is not for socializing or posting comments that distract from the discussion, which will be considered disruptive.
11. If students have unstable internet access, it is recommended students attend virtual sessions on campus where more reliable internet services are available.
12. Understand that these virtual rules of engagement also serve as an initial warning to all students and any violation of this “Virtual Learning Etiquette Policy” can result in the student receiving a professionalism warning/infraction as outlined in the [Professionalism Policy](#).

EXAMINATIONS

Written Examinations

Google calendar is used to communicate the didactic year schedule to first year students, including quizzes, examination schedules will be provided at the start of each semester. Once the time is up, **NO** additional time will be allowed to continue working on the examination and the exam must be submitted. The proctor determines the seating arrangement for examinations. During examinations, cell phones must be placed in the off or silent position and placed in your bags, away from your desk.

Examination Review

Upon completion of written examinations, the course director(s) will validate exams within seven days in order to post student grades. Students will not be permitted to review a specific examination but may meet with the course director to discuss any topics of concern. Upon completion of the validation of an exam, the course director will provide a summary of the examination validation including any overall topics which the majority of students performed poorly or to clarify questions which allowed for multiple answer responses or provide additional clarity for students. Students may access their own personal strengths, weaknesses and opportunities report through Exemplify (Examsoft) platform and may request a meeting with the course director for further review.

Remediation

The remediation process is designed to help students achieve expected competencies and core academic and technical skills as outlined in each syllabus. Each syllabus within the curriculum outlines the assessments (both formative and summative) for that course, and clearly specifies the passing parameters for each assessment.

Students who do not earn a grade of C or higher on an examination, summative assessment, or Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) will be **required** to remediate and meet with the course director. The course

director will determine an appropriate remediation plan to include identification of the deficient knowledge and skills, process for correcting the deficiency, and the resulting measurable outcome. Remediation processes may include, but are not limited to, review of curriculum materials, additional readings or video assignments, self-reflection, and simulation. The processes for measuring the outcome of the remediation may include, but is not limited to, oral discussion of content, retesting of content with a different version of the exam, skill proficiency demonstration, and simulation assessment. The remediation plan and outcome will be documented by the course director and placed in the student's file.

Any student scoring lower than 70% on an exam will be required to meet with a course director. Students may be prompted to prepare for this meeting by reviewing various course content in order to demonstrate remediation efforts prior to and during the meeting. Students scoring between 70-75% may choose to meet with the course director and should schedule a meeting with course directors accordingly. Students who score 80% or higher have demonstrated the minimum recommended knowledge base on lecture subject material and are discouraged from meeting with course directors unless the student strongly feels the need to meet to discuss topic material and not a specific question on an examination. All students should be prepared to discuss his/her/their understanding of the material and concepts prior to any meeting with a course director in order to ensure an interactive and purposeful learning experience.

Remediations must be completed within the timeframe specified by the course director, otherwise, the ability to remediate will be revoked. Students who do not complete remediation requirements may be referred to the PAARC.

Practical Examinations

In addition to written examinations, students must pass all practical examinations in Physical Diagnosis I and II as outlined in the course syllabi.

Device Policy for Examinations

At this time students are required to take all Program examinations using a student owned laptop, this device must meet the [University/Computer Recommendations](#). The Program will be using the PAEA End of Rotation Exams, and these will be taken on student-owned laptop computers also. These devices are subject to be searched by faculty should questions regarding academic dishonesty arise.

Examination Remediation Policy

The remediation process is designed to help struggling students achieve the expected competencies and core academic and technical skills as outlined in each syllabus. Each syllabus with the Physician Assistant Program curriculum outlines the assessments (both formative and summative) for that course, and clearly specifies the passing parameters for each assessment.

Students who do not earn a passing grade on an examination, summative assessment, or OSCE will be **required** to remediate and meet with either the Course Director(s) or the Director of Didactic Education or the Director of Clinical Education or the assistant Director of Didactic Education or the assistant Director of Clinical Education. The faculty member will determine the appropriate remediation plan to include identification of the deficient knowledge and skills, process for correcting the deficiency, and the resulting measurable outcome. Remediation processes may include, but are not limited to, review of the curriculum materials, additional readings or video assignments, self-reflection, and simulation. The process for measuring the outcome of the remediation may include, but is not limited to, retesting of the content with a different version of the exam, skill proficiency demonstration, simulation assessment, and/or assignments related to knowledge proficiency. The remediation plan and outcome will be documented and placed in the student's programmatic file.

Students must pass the remediation with the same minimum passing standard specific in the syllabus for the original assessment. Remediations must be completed within the timeframe specified by the faculty member, otherwise, a professionalism infraction will be recorded in the student's academic record. If the remediation attempt is not successful, the student will be referred to the PAARC for further disposition which may include remediation through a different modality.

FINAL COURSE GRADES

Final course grades are not rounded to the whole number. They are based on a percentage scale of 0-100%:

Grading Criteria	
A	93.45-100%
A-	89.45-93.44%
B+	86.45-89.44%
B	83.45-86.44%
B-	79.45-83.44%
C+	75.45-79.44%
C	70.00-75.44%
F	< 70%

OFFICE POLICIES

Because of the heavy traffic in our office area, we would like to remind you of the following policies which have been established for the Program offices:

- Students are not permitted to use office telephones, copy machines, fax machines, computers, stationery, or supplies. Program Support Specialists cannot duplicate materials nor do other work for students.
- Students are not permitted to use the office area as a lounge. There are lounges available on the second floor of Brubaker Hall and on the first floor of Easton Hall in Glenside and in the PA Program department at the Christiana campus.
- “Guests” in the classroom are disruptive to effective learning and are discouraged. No “guests” are permitted in the classroom without prior approval from a principal faculty member. If granted permission, all guests must be introduced to the entire class.
- The Program cannot accept or deliver messages or allow students to place or receive phone calls at the PA office, except in an emergency. In addition, the student cannot use the Program address for receipt of personal mail or deliveries (including food items unless prior approval has been granted by a principal faculty member).

SOCIAL NETWORKING GUIDELINES

Arcadia University's Physician Assistant Program recognizes that online social networking has become an increasingly important means of facilitating communication. While social networking has provided unique opportunities to interact, it has also created a forum for potential issues for future medical professionals. As professionals bound by social contracts and professional obligations, Arcadia University Physician Assistant students must be cognizant of the public nature of social networking forums and the permanent nature of

postings therein. Even though these sites offer terrific potential to bolster communication with friends and colleagues, they are also a forum for lapses of professionalism and professional behavior that may be freely visible by many people, despite the impression of privacy these sites portray. As a result, Arcadia University's Physician Assistant Program has drafted the following guidelines to aid students in the safe and responsible navigation of these sites.

The following information outlines "best practice guidelines" for physician assistant students during their medical training. They apply to all students who participate in social networking sites and online weblogs. Students should follow these guidelines whether participating in social networks personally or professionally, or whether they are using personal technology or technological resources owned or operated by Arcadia University or the Arcadia University Physician Assistant Program.

Definition: A social networking site is a space on the internet where users can create a profile and connect that profile to others (whether it be individuals or entities) to establish a personal or professional network. Examples include, but are not limited to; Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

A weblog is a website, usually in the form of an online journal, maintained by an individual or group, with regular commentary on any number of subjects which may incorporate text, audio, video clips, and any other types of media.

Potential Consequences of online unprofessional behavior: The permanence and written nature of online postings cause them to be subject to higher levels of scrutiny than many other forms of communication. Therefore, the postings within social networking sites are subject to the same standards of professionalism as any other personal or professional interaction and will be treated as if made in a public forum.

The use of social networking sites or weblogs can also have legal ramifications. Comments made regarding the care of patients, or that portray you or a colleague in an unprofessional manner, may be used in court as evidence of a variety of claims (including libel, slander, defamation of character, negligence, and others) or in other disciplinary proceedings (e.g. State Medical Licensing Boards). Libel, slander, and other forms of defamation refer, generally, to the communication (written, oral, tangible, etc.) of a false statement about a person that injures his/her reputation. Other potential consequences include the revocation of a residency selection, or sanctions by a professional licensing board.

Also, the statements and photos posted within these sites are potentially viewable by program directors or future employers. It is not uncommon for program directors to search for the social networking profiles of potential residents and to use the discovered information in making selection decisions.

Individuals have been denied residencies and other employment opportunities as a result of what is found on social networking sites.

With respect to confidentiality, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) applies to social networking sites, and violators may be subject to the same prosecution as with other HIPAA violations.

In addition, cyber stalking and other inappropriate postings can be considered forms of sexual harassment. Relationships online with other students are governed by Arcadia University's sexual harassment policies. Cyber bullying, cyber shaming and other forms of harassment are also reportable offenses. Please refer to the professionalism guidelines adhered to by Arcadia University Physician Assistant students.

Best Practice Guidelines for Online Social Networking: The lines between public and private as well as personal and professional are often blurred in online social networks. By identifying yourself as an Arcadia

University student or Arcadia University Physician Assistant student, you may influence perceptions about the university or the physician assistant program by those who have access to your social network profile or weblog. All content associated with you should be consistent with your position at the school and with the University and the Program's values and professional standards.

Unprofessional postings by others on your page may reflect very poorly on you. Please monitor others' postings on your profile and strive to ensure that the content would not be viewed as unprofessional. It may be useful to block postings from individuals who post unprofessional content.

Help monitor your peers by alerting colleagues to unprofessional or potentially offensive comments made online to avoid future indiscretions and refer them to this document.

Always avoid giving medical advice as this could result in a violation of HIPAA and may cause danger to others. Make sure that you differentiate medical opinions from medical facts and articulate what statements reflect your personal beliefs.

Due to continuous changes in these sites, you should closely monitor the privacy settings of your social network accounts to optimize their privacy and security. Restrict your settings so that only individuals you have authorized to access your profile can see your information. Also, you should not share or post any identification numbers or demographic information online.

Others may post photos of you and may "tag" you in each of the photos. It is your responsibility to make sure that these photos are appropriate and are not professionally compromising. As a general rule it is wise to "un-tag" yourself from any photos, and to refrain from tagging others unless you have explicit permission from them to do so. Privacy or account settings may allow you to prevent photos from being "tagged" with your information or may prevent others from seeing your tags.

Online discussions of specific patients should be strictly avoided, even if all identifying information is excluded. It is possible that someone could recognize the patient to which you are referring based upon the context.

Under no circumstances should photos of patients/cadavers or photos depicting the body parts of patients/cadavers be displayed online. Remember, even if you have permission, such photos may be downloadable and forwarded by others. Once you post, the actions of others could lead to legal or professional consequences for you personally.

Do not have interactions with patients on social networking sites. This provides an opportunity for a dual relationship, which may damage the healthcare provider-patient relationship and may have legal consequences.

Do not infringe upon another's copyrighted or trademarked materials. If you post content, photos, or other media, you are acknowledging that you own or have the right to use these items.

Refrain from accessing social networking sites while in class, at work, or in clinical-work areas.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Arcadia University provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you require accommodations or other academic supports due to a chronic medical condition, a physical, psychological, psychiatric or learning disability, you should contact [Disability Support Services](#) in the Office of

Academic Development (Knight Hall Room 131) at the following numbers: 215-572-2122, 215-572-4686, or 215-572-4086, or [Counseling Services](#) at Heinz Hall Room 38 or call 215-572-2967.

If you have any temporary or chronic medical problems that may impair your ability to provide medical care or pose a risk to yourself, to patients, or to your fellow students, please inform a faculty member immediately.

STUDENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Student safety is of utmost importance to the PA Program and University. The PA Program has developed Clearance Guidelines that establish policy all students must follow in order to enter the clinical setting during any phase of PA training. These guidelines were developed based on [CDC guidelines](#) and common clinical site requirements outlined in contractual agreements and are posted in the PA Class course in Canvas.

Public Safety at the Glenside Campus

To maintain a safe environment for the University community, the university employs a trained public safety staff at the Glenside campus. [Public Safety](#) Officers patrol the campus 24 hours a day and operate an around-the-clock communications system. The contact number for non-emergent public safety inquiries is 215-572-2800 (ext. 2800 on campus). For emergencies on the Glenside campus, call 215-572-2999 (ext. 2999 from a campus phone).

Public Safety at the Christiana Campus

The Christiana campus main building doors are operated via keypad with unique codes overnight from 6 p.m. – 8 a.m. daily. The building complex is staffed with a security guard. The campus suite main doors are locked 24 hours a day and **require a keycard for access**. Students must use their university issued ID badge to gain access to the Christiana campus. There are 5-closed circuit cameras located throughout the suite and monitored by campus security from the Glenside campus.

- For emergencies on the Christiana campus, call 911
- Call 215-572-2999 for phone escort (public safety will remain on the phone with you until you reach your destination).

Medical and Mental Health

Students may find they need to tend to medical or mental health concerns while enrolled in the PA program. The Program encourages PROMPT attention to these matters, as you cannot properly learn to care for others if your health and wellbeing are compromised.

Students at both the Glenside and Christiana campuses can access medical care through [Student Health Services](#) 215-572-2966 and mental health care through [Student Counseling Services](#) 215-572-2967, both services are located at Heinz Hall. Faculty are not allowed to offer advice, diagnose, or treat any matriculated student for any acute or chronic medical conditions.

In addition to the above support services, students may request to utilize a personal day per the personal day policy in order to invest in themselves and their well-being. Students who do not follow the requirements to request the personal day may not be granted its approval and could be considered to have an unexcused absence from class.

College of Health Sciences Statement Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination for Students

Most clinical sites that accept students in our Department of Medical Science now require that students receive COVID-19 vaccination prior to attending their site for clinical training; while sites accepting students in our Department of Physical Therapy have required this to a lesser extent, we anticipate that the requirement will only become more prevalent over time. While Arcadia does not currently require COVID-19 vaccination for

matriculation, students should be aware that, at present, if they do not receive the vaccine, their options for clinical site placements, and, consequently, pathways for program completion, may be severely limited.

Exemptions based on medical need or sincerely held religious belief may be available at clinical sites, and CHS personnel will support students in seeking an accommodation on these bases from any site to which the student has been assigned to complete their training. However, the University has no authority over outside entities and the policies that they choose to enforce, or decisions made pursuant to those policies. Therefore, Arcadia cannot guarantee that required clinical training experiences will be available for the unvaccinated student to complete their degree.

While the University will attempt to work with students who are unable to get the vaccine for medical or religious reasons in terms of program completion, students must be aware that an inability to participate in clinical experiences will most likely result in their inability to successfully complete clinical phase requirements and therefore not graduate from the College of Health Sciences program in which they are enrolled.

Students who refuse the vaccine for other reasons are not entitled to any programmatic accommodations, including any changes to the clinical year schedule. But any student in the Department of Medical Science has the option to request a maximum 12 week leave of absence during their clinical phase of training as outlined in the Clinical Phase Handbook. Each request will be reviewed by the PAARC with decisions being rendered on an individual basis.

Students should refer to the [University COVID-19 website](#) for the most current information.

Exposure to Hazardous Materials and Bloodborne Pathogens

Students will be exposed to inherent risks while participating in clinical training including possible exposure to blood, tissue or other body or laboratory fluids that may contain human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and/or hepatitis C virus (HCV). This policy is based upon the available data and Public Health Service recommendations for postexposure management of health care workers who have occupational exposure that may place them at risk of acquiring HIV and other blood-borne pathogen infection (*A3.08*).

The following outlines the procedure to follow if exposure to bloodborne pathogens occurs while a student is participating in clinical rotations:

1. Act as quickly as possible.
2. Wash the exposure site thoroughly with soap and water (or water only for mucous membranes).
3. Notify the preceptor of your rotation AND, if applicable, the nursing supervisor who should request source-person clinical information and blood work (e.g., HBsAG, HCV antibody, HIV) unless HIV, HBV and HCV status is already known.
4. The site may require you to complete an incident report.
 - a. Do NOT fill out a workman's comp or employee health claim
5. It is very important to report all exposures and get follow-up care promptly
 - a. This follow up care begins by you going to the nearest emergency department.
 - b. After being seen emergently by a healthcare professional, follow-up with your primary care provider is recommended to determine if you need post-exposure prophylaxis. If you do not have a PCP the insurance plan utilizes the MultiPlan Provider Network and you can contact them for a referral at the following phone number: (800) 557-6794.
6. Notify the PA Program (by contacting a clinical coordinator or the Director of Clinical Education) as soon as possible, no later than the next business day.
7. Send bills directly to your insurance company.

8. Complete the needlestick/splash claim form (Appendix B) and email to Nancy Woehrle at woehrlen@arcadia.edu. An Arcadia representative will then complete the “Policyholder Representative” signature box and then it will be faxed to [\(972\) 492-4946](tel:(972)492-4946).
 - a. Please note you will need to put the policy number on the claim form also: Policy No. N04964366.
 - b. If you have any questions, you can use the following phone number: [\(972\) 492-6474](tel:(972)492-6474) to follow up.
 - c. This insurance coverage is considered secondary or excess coverage, meaning if your current health insurance does not cover any or all the expenses this plan will reimburse you up to the maximum benefit level (A3.06c).

If you are exposed to bloodborne pathogens while on a clinical training experience during your didactic year, a faculty member will be on premise. Follow steps one and two above and notify the faculty member immediately. They will help you seek emergency care. You will need to seek follow up from a primary care physician and submit your medical bills to your insurance company.

[See the University Health and Safety Plan](#) and [Bloodborne Pathogen Policy](#) (for additional information on exposure to hazardous materials.

TITLE IX POLICY

Arcadia University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination. The University's [Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) details our commitment to preventing and addressing such behavior. We understand the impact that sexual harassment and sexual misconduct can have, and are committed to doing our part to foster an environment that is safe and equitable.

Please know that all faculty on campus are mandatory reporters. This means that if you disclose an experience of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct to us outside of a classroom discussion, a writing assignment, or a University-approved research project, we must share what you have reported to us with Arcadia’s Title IX Coordinator. This does not mean that you will have to pursue an investigation, or go through a grievance process. Even if you do not choose these options, the Title IX Office can provide supportive measures and other resources to you. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, please know that you are not alone. If you would like to speak to someone confidentially, confidential resources are provided on the Office of Equity and Civil Rights [OECR website](#).

What is Title IX? [Title IX link](#).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

See “Dismissal Appeal Process” on the [Graduate Academic Policies](#) or the [Arcadia University Graduate Forms](#). Policies for registering a grievance that cannot be addressed with the Program, please visit the [Office of Equity, and Civil Rights \(OECR\)](#).

FACULTY ADVISERS

All students are assigned a faculty adviser and are encouraged to seek assistance when necessary for personal or academic reasons.

Letters of Recommendation

All requests for letters of recommendation should be emailed to the student’s advisor. Please fill out the [LOR Request Form](#) and be sure to include all requested information. In addition to the Request Form, you should also include a draft of your letter of recommendation. This draft should include why you feel to meet the

qualifications for scholarship, award, clinical position, or residency program. Students must allow a reasonable amount of time for faculty to fulfill this request (typically 10 business days).

Credentialing Paperwork:

Requests for credentialing for employment need to be submitted to: pacredentialing@arcadia.edu

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

If there is a lecture change/cancellation or a scheduled examination needs to be changed, the class will receive notification by email and/or an announcement via Canvas if the change occurs within two weeks of the scheduled event. The Google calendar will be updated to reflect the change as well.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence (up to 12 weeks) will only be granted after successful completion of the didactic phase of the Program. Requests for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the PA Program Director and should indicate the reason for the leave and expected duration. The PA Program Director may approve one (1) leave of absence. Granting of a leave of absence is a rare and unusual event reserved only for exceptional circumstances.

In the event of an emergency or tragedy in either the didactic or clinical phase of the program, a student may be granted an excused absence for up to five (5) consecutive and cumulative class days at the discretion of the Program Director. This is not considered a leave of absence.

CLASSROOM MAINTENANCE

Every effort must be made to keep the classroom and student lounge clean. Students may bring food into the classroom in a respectful and responsible manner (allergens, smell, etc) provided it is cleaned up afterwards. If this privilege is abused it will be changed. Beverages are permitted provided they are in covered containers. Consumption of food is to be reserved for break time only. It is disruptive to eat while someone is lecturing in class. When leaving the classroom, any valuables and personal effects should be taken with you. In some lecture rooms the temperature can vary. Students may choose to bring a blanket if it is too cold or a small portable fan if it is too warm, however, these personal items should be removed when leaving the classroom. It is important students recognize the University and the Program have visitors at times. It is important the classrooms are well maintained in order to be presentable at all times.

CHANGE OF NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE

It is your responsibility to inform the PA Program staff and appropriate University Offices (e.g. Registrar, Business, Public Safety) of any change in name, address, telephone, and Exxat profile. This notification should occur as soon as the name change is in effect. In addition, students should upload documented proof of the name change to their Exxat/Prism student file.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

While at clinical sites, you must clearly identify and introduce yourself as a physician assistant student. You must wear your Arcadia issued name tag and a short, white laboratory coat with an Arcadia University PA Program patch to distinguish you from physicians, medical students, and other health professionals. Individual sites may issue and require you to wear their identification badge. If this is the case, you must wear the

institution's badge and your university issued name tag unless specifically directed otherwise by the clinical site.

STUDENT TEACHING

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program are not permitted to teach components of the program curriculum, although they are expected to make presentations before the class as part of their learning experience and participate in classroom discussion and active learning sessions. Students are encouraged to support their classmates and work collaboratively through study groups and informal peer tutoring.

STUDENT WORK POLICY

Due to the intensity of the PA program, students are discouraged from outside employment while enrolled in the PA program. Students are prohibited from applying compensated clinical experience toward academic credit. Students cannot be required to work for the PA Program, although they may be selected to voluntarily work for the graduate assistantship program, which serves to support instructional faculty in the classroom and manages the note taking service for PA lectures during the didactic year. Graduate assistantships are a merit-based opportunity offered to students at the time of acceptance into the program.

While in the clinical setting, students may not provide services within a preceptor's practice apart from those rendered as part of the clinical training arranged by the program. Students are not permitted to substitute for faculty, clerical or administrative staff while in the clinical setting. Students may not receive compensation for any work performed within the preceptor's site or practice.

Outside Volunteer and Paid Work Experiences

Students who are involved in volunteer or paid work during their course of study in the PA Program cannot use their affiliation with the Program in any aspect of that job. Volunteer and paid work time cannot be used toward meeting clinical rotation requirements. Work outside the PA Program undertaken by the student, independent of the Program, is not covered by the liability insurance required for clinical work associated with the educational experience of the Program.

MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE PA PROGRAM

Technical standards are defined as the attributes considered necessary for students to complete their education and training and subsequently enter clinical practice. These standards are prerequisites for entrance to, continuation within, and graduation from the Arcadia University Physician Assistant Program. They are also prerequisites to licensure by various state professional boards. Reasonable accommodation will be offered for persons with disabilities in conjunction with Disability Support Services and the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (<https://www.ada.gov/>).

Competency in technical standards will be assessed regularly throughout the Program. The Program has the ethical responsibility for the safety of patients with whom students and graduates will come in contact, and to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent PAs. Thus, it is critical that persons admitted to the Program possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice medicine.

Students must verify that they meet these Technical Standards prior to or at the time of matriculation to the Program and maintain them during their PA training. Students are obligated to alert the Program in a timely fashion of any change in their ability to fulfill the Technical Standards. Students are subject to dismissal if they do not possess the minimum physical or cognitive abilities, or sufficient mental or emotional stability to

complete the entire course of study; if they do not participate fully in all aspects of PA training; if they are not deployable as competent PAs (with or without reasonable accommodation); or if they otherwise do not meet the Technical Standards.

Students must possess aptitude, ability, and skills in the following six (6) areas:

1. Observation
2. Communication
3. Motor and Sensory Function
4. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities
5. Behavioral and Social Attributes
6. Ethical and Legal Standards

The functions described below are critically important and must be autonomously performed by the student. It should be understood that these are standards for minimum competence in the program:

Observation

Students must be able to observe demonstrations, participate in physical examination sessions and clinical skills workshops, and observe the difference of normal versus pathological states. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan.

Students must be able to accurately observe a patient near and at a distance, noting nonverbal, as well as verbal signs. Specific vision-related criteria include, but are not limited to, detecting, and identifying changes in color of fluids, skin, culture media, visualizing and discriminating findings on x-rays and other imaging tests, and reading written and illustrated materials. Students must be able to observe and differentiate changes in body movement, observe anatomic structures, discriminate among numbers and patterns associated with diagnostic tests such as electrocardiograms and competently use diagnostic instruments such as an otoscope, ophthalmoscope, and microscope.

Communication

Students must be able to relate effectively to patients while conveying compassion and empathy. They must be able to clearly communicate with patients to elicit information, accurately describe changes in mood, activity, and posture of patients, and understand verbal as well as nonverbal communication.

Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing. Physician Assistant education presents exceptional challenges in the volume and breadth of reading required to master subject areas and impart the information to others. Students must be able to communicate quickly, effectively, and efficiently in oral and written English in the classroom and later with all members of the health care team. Specific requirements include but are not limited to the following: rapidly and clearly communicating with the medical staff on rounds or elsewhere, eliciting an accurate history from patients, and communicating complex findings in appropriate terms to patients and to various members of the health care team. Students must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional cues, such as sadness and agitation.

Students must be able to accurately and legibly record observations and plans in legal documents, such as the patient record. Students must be able to prepare and communicate concise, complete summaries of both limited patient encounters and complex, prolonged encounters, including hospitalizations. Students must be able to complete forms in a timely fashion, and according to directions.

Motor and Sensory Function

Students must possess sufficient sensory and motor function to perform physical examinations using palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. This requires sufficient exteroceptive sense (visual, auditory, touch and temperature), coordination to manipulate patients and adequate motor and diagnostic instruments. These functions may be performed either independently or with reasonable accommodations and/or assistive devices to achieve these outcomes safely and effectively.

Students must be able to evaluate various components of the voice, such as pitch, intensity, and timbre. They must also be able to accurately differentiate percussive notes and auscultatory findings, including but not limited to, heart, lung, and abdominal sounds. Students must be able to accurately discern normal and abnormal findings, using instruments including, but not limited to, tuning forks, stethoscopes, and sphygmomanometers.

Students should be able to execute physical movements needed to provide general care and emergency treatments to patients. The student, therefore, must be able to respond promptly to emergencies within the hospital or practice setting, and must not hinder the ability of his/her co-workers to provide prompt care. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of a physician assistant include arriving quickly when called and assisting in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), administering intravenous medications, applying pressure to arrest bleeding, maintaining an airway, suturing wounds, and assisting with obstetrical maneuvers. As further illustration, CPR may require moving an adult patient, applying considerable chest pressure over a prolonged period, delivering artificial respiration, and calling for help.

Students should be able to learn to perform basic laboratory tests such as wet mount, urinalysis, etc., and diagnostic/therapeutic procedures such as venipuncture or placement of catheters and tubes. The administration of intravenous medications requires a certain level of dexterity, sensation, and visual acuity. Students must be able to measure angles and diameters of various body structures using a tape measure or other devices to measure blood pressure, respiration, and pulse, and interpret graphs describing biologic relationships. Clinical rotations require the ability to transport oneself to a variety of settings in a timely manner.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

Students must be able to learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction; small group, team, and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports; and use of electronic technology. Students must have the mental capacity to assimilate and learn a large amount of complex, technical and detailed information to formulate diagnostic and therapeutic plans.

Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of physician assistants, often requires rapid intellectual function, especially in emergency situations. These intellectual functions include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning analysis, judgment, and synthesis. Students must be able to identify significant findings in the patient's history, physical examination, and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, and choose appropriate medications and therapy.

It is essential the student can incorporate new information, from many sources, toward the formulation of a diagnosis and plan. Good judgment in patient assessment and diagnostic/therapeutic planning is also essential. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the extent of their knowledge to others.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly, without warning, and/or in unpredictable ways. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly completing all responsibilities during their academic training, as well as the responsibility attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. They must understand the legal and

ethical standards of the medical profession. Students must be able to work effectively, respectfully, and professionally as part of the educational and healthcare team, and to interact with instructors and peers, patients, patient families, and health care personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. Students must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept constructive feedback from others; and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes.

Ethical and Legal Standards

Students must be able to understand the basis and content of both general and medical ethics. Students must possess attributes such as compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility, and tolerance. Students must be able to recognize limitations in their knowledge, skills, and abilities and to seek appropriate assistance with their identified limitations. Students whose performance is impaired by abuse of alcohol or other substances are not suitable candidates for admission, promotion, or graduation. In addition, should a student be charged or convicted of any misdemeanor or felony offense while in the Program, s/he agrees to immediately notify the Program as to the nature of the legal difficulty. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal. Students must meet the legal standards to be licensed as a physician assistant.

PERSONAL EXCUSED ABSENCES (Student Well-Being Days)

Rationale

Arcadia University is a caring community committed to student success. Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant program need to adapt to significant changes, such as moving to a new area, separation from familiar social networks and support systems, establishing a new social network, managing an intensive academic course schedule, perhaps coping with a disability in a new environment and, for international students, living in a new country and adjusting to a different culture. For many, these changes are exciting and challenging and an intrinsic part of the attraction of attending higher education. However, they can also give rise to anxiety and stress.

Most personal problems experienced during the didactic year of the physician assistant program can be resolved quickly by talking to a faculty member, speaking to a friend or seeking help from a member of the student's support system. It is important not to label these experiences as "mental health" problems which are in reality normal emotional reactions to new experiences. However, a number of students may experience emotional or psychological difficulties that without appropriate professional support are more persistent and inhibit their ability to participate fully in higher education. These difficulties may take the form of a long-term mental illness or a temporary, but debilitating, psychological condition or reaction. In addition, some students may arrive with a pre-existing psychological problem, either declared or undeclared. Mental health problems can seriously impair academic performance and may lead to confused or disturbed behavior. Minor difficulties that interfere with a student's capacity to work may also result in distress and wasted effort and undermine academic progress. The Physician Assistant Program aims to provide a supportive environment which will help students with mental health difficulties to realize their academic potential and more specifically, to meet course requirements.

Personal Time Off Policy

Didactic Year: Under this policy, a student will have up to 5 (five) personal days from class lectures to use at their discretion. Students will be allowed to utilize no more than two days per semester (Summer, Fall, Spring) for a total of five days during the didactic year of the physician assistant program. These personal days are simply excused absences in the same way as if the student were physically ill with the exception of the need to complete any scheduled course examinations, practical examinations, problem based learning scenarios, student presentations or course assignment deadlines. While this policy excuses a student from class attendance, the student remains responsible for all material covered in class.

The program acknowledges that students may occasionally experience illness that prevents attendance or participation in academic activities. For short-term illnesses lasting one or two days, students may be excused without providing medical documentation, provided the absence does not coincide with a scheduled examination, practical, or other major graded event. Students are expected to notify paattendance@arcadia.edu as soon as reasonably possible, preferably before the start of the missed class or activity. While these absences will be considered excused, students remain responsible for all material and coursework missed during their absence.

If a student's illness causes them to miss a scheduled examination, practical, presentation, or other significant assessment, they must notify paattendance@arcadia.edu and the course directors. In such cases, documentation from a licensed healthcare provider verifying the student's inability to participate on the specified date(s) is required. Detailed medical information or diagnosis is not necessary. Makeup assessments will be arranged at the discretion of faculty and according to course policies.

Student privacy is strictly protected. Documentation submitted will be handled confidentially and in compliance with applicable laws including FERPA, HIPAA (if applicable), and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as University non-discrimination policies. No student will face penalty or discrimination based on health conditions, including mental or behavioral health, disclosed or undisclosed.

Disclaimer: The Physician Assistant Program reserves the right to review specific situations to determine if exceptions to the established personal day policy are warranted.

Scope of Applicability

This policy is applicable to all physician assistant graduate students enrolled in the physician assistant program at Arcadia University.

Process and Notification

The student must notify the Director of Didactic Education, the Assistant Director of Didactic Education and the student's Academic Advisor of the request to utilize a personal day. The personal day request will not excuse a student from completing a scheduled course examination, practical examination, student presentation or course assignment deadlines. Any student requesting a personal day will be required to complete any course examination, practical examination, student presentations, physical diagnosis labs, interprofessional experiences, certification programs and/or course assignment deadlines scheduled during the day of the request but will be excused from the remainder of the day's scheduled events. The Director of Didactic Education and/or the Assistant Director of Didactic Education will notify the necessary and appropriate course directors of a student's personal day absence. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their course instructors about any missed course instruction including physical diagnosis course lab sessions, clinical skills course procedures and/or any certification programs. In keeping with this policy, course directors shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and may provide an opportunity for the student to complete other required work and/or alternative assignments. Students who have followed this policy should not incur academic penalties.

Documentation

Any student who wishes to utilize this policy is required to email their academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education, and the assistant Director of Didactic Education prior to 24 hours of the requested date. Failure to provide documentation via email will result in the absence(s) being considered unexcused.

Appeal

If an instructor fails to follow this policy, the student may appeal the instructor's decision in writing to the Program Director.

Counseling Services

Arcadia University's Wellness Center is available to assist students and provide counseling services if so desired by the student.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

Rationale

The University is committed to ensuring equal opportunity to all persons and to providing a learning and working environment that is respectful of the religious beliefs of its students, employees, prospective students and employees, and trustees. As part of this commitment, the University will provide reasonable Religious Accommodations to those in our community whose sincerely held religious beliefs conflict with a University policy, procedure, or academic or employment requirement, unless such an accommodation would create an undue hardship or would fundamentally alter the University's work, program and/or mission.

Scope of Applicability

This Religious Accommodation Policy ("Policy") applies to all students, employees, prospective students and employees, and trustees of the University.

Policy

The Program will evaluate requests for a Religious Accommodation on a case-by-case basis. "Religion," as defined in Section IV below, includes traditional, organized religions and also sincerely held religious beliefs, including those that are new, uncommon, not part of a formal church or sect, or only subscribed to by a small number of people. Social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not considered to be religious beliefs. Religious practices are individual and may vary by person, such as not working on Saturday or on Sunday. This Policy is intended to apply when a person's Religion is the reason for a practice or observance.

Generally it is not necessary for an individual requesting a Religious Accommodation to provide proof or documentation concerning their Religion or the specific religious practice at issue. In rare circumstances where University staff have a bona fide doubt that the belief or practice at issue is religious or sincerely held by the individual, the responsible University staff member may ask the requesting party clarifying questions. A Religious Accommodation may be requested when a person's Religion conflicts with a University policy, procedure, or academic or employment requirement. Religious Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following illustrative examples:

- Adjustments to a work or academic schedule to observe a Religious holiday, such as time off for employees or rescheduling an exam for students
- Modifications to dress and/or grooming requirements
- Time for prayer during the work day
- Providing a space for washing in compliance with religious observance

Individuals should request a Religious Accommodation in advance or as soon as reasonably practicable. A Religious Accommodation requested retroactively or in an untimely manner may not be reasonable. Upon receipt of a request for a Religious Accommodation, the Program will engage in an interactive process with the requesting party, discussing possible accommodations that would allow the individual to observe their Religion. It may not be reasonable for an individual requesting a Religious Accommodation to receive their preferred accommodation, so long as the Religious Accommodation reasonably permits the person to observe their Religion or participate in a religious practice.

The Program will not provide a Religious Accommodation if it causes an undue hardship on the conduct of the Program's business. In determining whether a Religious Accommodation would create an undue hardship, the Program will rely on objective information, not on speculative or hypothetical hardships to the Program that could result from providing the accommodation. The Program must consider the burden on its business as a whole in making this assessment, considering the University's size and operating costs, as opposed to the possible burden on any one University employee.

A Religious Accommodation may cause an undue hardship when it:

- Causes an undue administrative or substantial financial hardship for the University;
- Jeopardizes the health or safety of the individual who requires the accommodation or others; or
- Infringes on the rights of other employees, including those rights set forth in a collective bargaining agreement or other policy or law.

Students requesting a Religious Accommodation should follow the procedures set forth in this Policy. In accordance with the University's [Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy](#), it is prohibited to retaliate against an individual because they have requested a Religious Accommodation or participated in an approved Religious Accommodation. Any person who violates this anti-retaliation provision may be subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action.

Definitions

Essential function: A fundamental job duty of an employment position for staff and faculty, or a fundamental academic element of a course or program of study for a student.

Religion: Includes traditional, organized religions and also sincerely held religious beliefs, including those that are new, uncommon, not part of a formal church or sect, or only subscribed to by a small number of people. All aspects of religious belief and observance that are sincerely held will be considered as part of this Policy. Social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not considered to be religious beliefs.

Religious Accommodation: A reasonable change in the work or academic environment that enables a student or employee to practice or otherwise observe a sincerely held religious practice or belief without undue hardship or fundamentally altering the educational, workplace or mission of the University.

Undue hardship: More than a minimal burden on the operation of the University; may include those that are unduly expensive or interfere with the safe or efficient operation of the workplace or learning environment and/or would result in the inability of a person to perform an essential function of their position or course of study. The determination of undue hardship is dependent on the facts of each individual situation, and will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Student Procedures for Requesting a Religious Accommodation

Students should first communicate, via email, their request for religious accommodation directly with the Director of Didactic Education or the Assistant Director of Didactic Education during the didactic year of the

program and the Director of Clinical Education or the Assistant Director of Clinical Education. It is important to do this at the start of the semester and/or with at least three weeks advance notice. It is recommended that students include the following information in an email to their professor:

- the name of the religious observance or obligation
- the date(s) of the religious observance or obligation that conflicts with the assignment due date, exam date, etc.
- an explanation of the obligations and restrictions associated with the religious observance or obligation
- the specific academic accommodation(s) requested (e.g., an extension on an assignment, an alternate test date, etc.)

If a student requires additional support after discussing the student's religious needs with the Physician Assistant Program or have any questions about this process, please contact the Office of Access, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (AEDI) at aedi@arcadia.edu.

BEREAVEMENT POLICY

Rationale

Arcadia University is a caring community committed to student success. In the event a student experiences the death of a loved one during the course of an academic term, the student may request to utilize the Bereavement Policy for Students. The Physician Assistant Program recognizes the impact a loss may have on the emotional and academic well-being of a student and wishes to support the student during this stressful time. The Physician Assistant Program also understands grief impacts every student differently and, therefore, this policy is not an attempt to quantify the impact of the death of a loved one or in any way address the nature of the grief process. Rather, the purpose of this policy is to provide a formal process to allow grieving students the time to attend the bereavement services, as well as the opportunity to be available for their families during times of death and grief.

Bereavement Policy

Didactic Year: Under this policy, a student will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. A student is entitled up to five (5) consecutive *academic* days of bereavement to mourn a death. While this policy excuses a student from class attendance and examinations, the student remains responsible for all material covered in class as well as course assignments and must work with the Director of Didactic Education, Assistant Director of Didactic Education and the Course Director/s to complete any required work.

Clinical Year: Under this policy, a student will be excused from clinical rotations for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. A student is entitled up to five (5) excused absence days throughout their clinical year. Any student who needs more than five (5) excused missed days during the entire clinical year, without making up missed time, may request a leave of absence at the discretion of the PA program. Additional details may be found within the clinical phase handbook.

Disclaimer: The Physician Assistant Program reserves the right to review specific situations to determine if exceptions to the established bereavement policy are warranted.

Process and Notification

The student or a representative (family member, room/suitemate, on-campus faculty/staff) must notify paattendance@arcadia.edu (didactic year) or pa-faculty-clinical-team@arcadia.edu (clinical year) prior to the start of the bereavement leave. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their instructors about

any missed assignments and examinations and arrange to complete missed work or schedule makeup examinations. In keeping with this policy, course directors shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity for the student to complete missed quizzes, exams, papers, other required work and/or alternative assignments. Students who have followed this policy should not incur academic penalties.

Counseling Services

Arcadia University's Wellness Center is available to assist students and provide counseling services if so desired by the student.

NON-DISCRIMINATION ASSURANCE

All policies shall be administered in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and institutional non-discrimination laws and policies. No request for personal or additional time off shall be granted or denied on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

Students are encouraged to consult the Office of Student Affairs or the Office of Accessibility Services for guidance on available resources and accommodations.