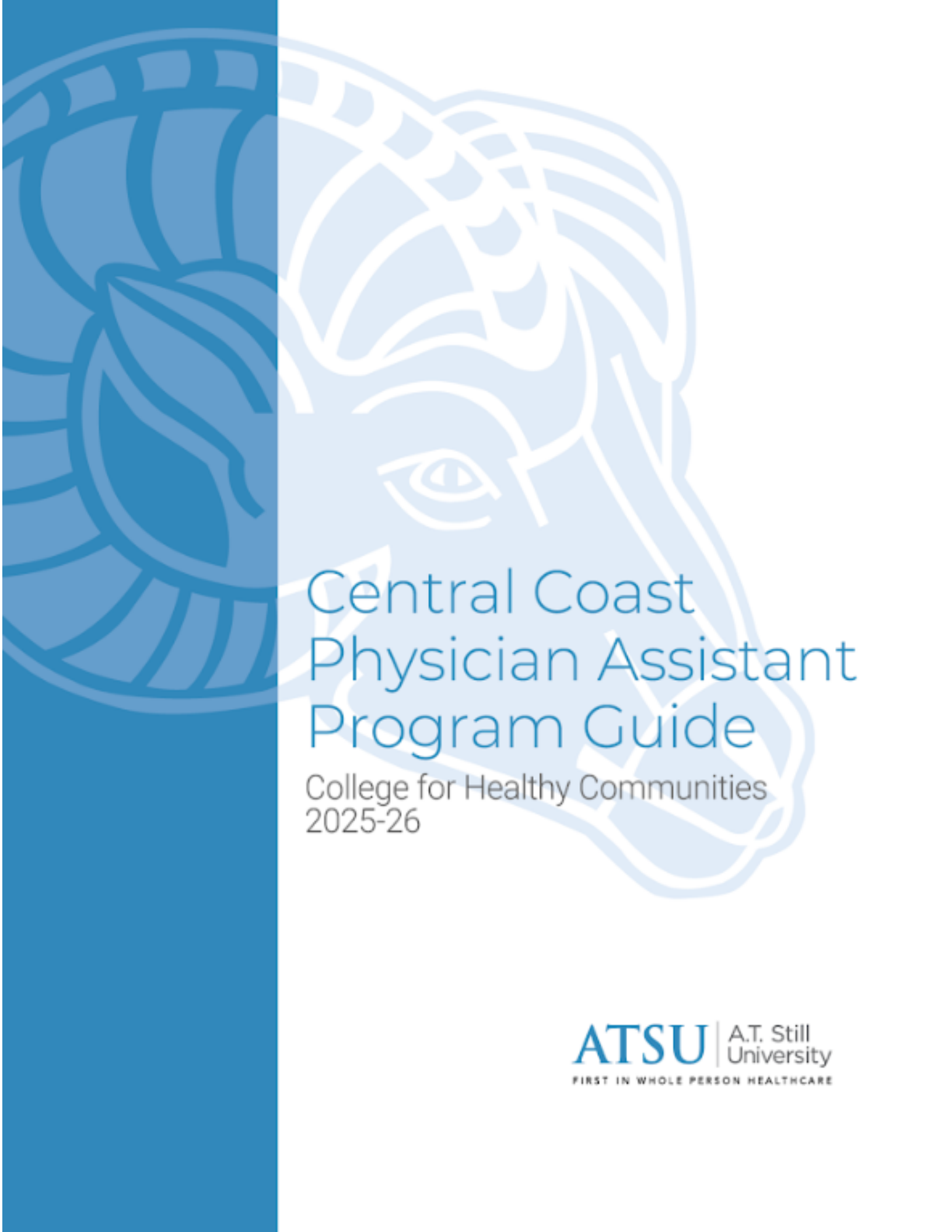




Central Coast Physician Assistant Program Guide

College for Healthy Communities
2025-26

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Link to Policies That are Not Located In this Guide (A3.14)

This guide provides an overview of key policies. However, policies with broader applicability across the University or the College of Healthy Communities (CHC) are detailed in other official publications. The College of Healthy Communities (CHC) specifically publishes the following policies within the [University catalog](#) & [CCPA Section of University Catalog](#)

- [Course Descriptions](#)
- [Tuition and fees \(A1.02\)](#)
- [Technical standards](#)
- [Standards of Academic Performance \(A3.15a\)](#)
- [Academic Standing, Warning, Progression, and Appeals \(A3.15b.g\)](#)
- [Remediation, Deceleration, Withdrawal, and Dismissal \(A3.15c.d\)](#)

Introduction and Welcome

Program Director's Welcome Letter

Welcome, CCPA Students!

I'm delighted to welcome you to the program. Here at CCPA, our goal is to empower you to deliver culturally relevant, evidence-based primary care medicine, with a special focus on serving medically underserved populations in Community Health Centers. By the time you complete your studies, I'm confident you'll be an excellent clinician, deeply committed to patient-centered healthcare for those who need it most. Our dedicated faculty and staff are eager to provide the support you'll need to launch your impactful career. Should you have any questions, please reach out to me directly at JenniferHarrington@ATSU.edu.

Dr. Jennifer Harrington, DMS, PA-C, DFAAPA

JenniferHarrington@atsu.edu - [Linkedin](#)

Department Chair- Program Director- Professor of the CCPA Program

Introduction

This guide outlines CCPA Program policies and procedures not detailed in the [University Catalog](#) or the [Student Handbook](#). Students are responsible for reading all three documents and must sign a declaration confirming their understanding and agreement to abide by their contents. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action. The CCPA Program reserves the right to make changes to this guide, with updates communicated via email.

Mission

The Central Coast Physician Assistant (CCPA) program educates culturally-humble, diverse physician assistants (PAs) to serve the primary care needs of medically underserved communities.

Vision

CCPA program intends to be recognized as the principal source of PAs from historically underrepresented groups providing culturally-humble care to medically underserved communities.

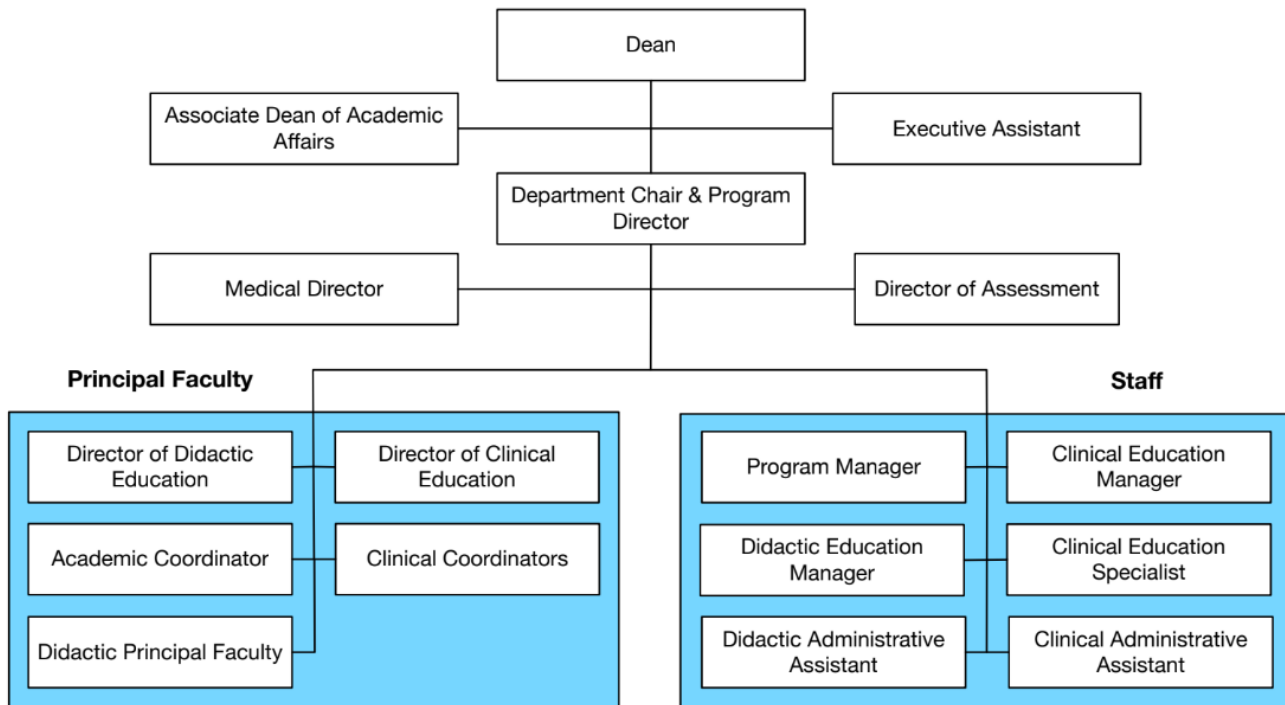
Values

Humility * Empathy * Accountability * Professionalism * Lifelong Learning

Goals

- Matriculate a cohort of students from diverse backgrounds.
- Develop graduates with the medical knowledge and skills to deliver evidence-based, primary care.
- Prepare culturally competent graduates equipped with the skills necessary to care for underserved communities.

Faculty and Staff Organizational Chart



Program Leadership		
Jennifer Harrington DMS, PA-C, DFAAPA	Department Chair/Program Director/Professor	jenniferharrington@atsu.edu
Schedule Office Hours with Dr. Harrington Here		Remote
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Tina Kibodeaux	Program Manager	tinakibodeaux@atsu.edu	On-Campus

Evelyn Feliciano	Didactic Administrative Assistant	evelynfeliciano@atsu.edu	On-Campus
Andrea Perkins	Director of Assessment	AndreaPerkins@atsu.edu	Remote
Jessica McFadden	Didactic Education Manager	jessicamcfadden@atsu.edu	On-Campus

*Read more about Faculty and staff on the [CCPA Program Faculty & Staff Bios page](#).

Professionalism Expectations

Professional Conduct Policies And Procedures

The program expects students to embody exemplary moral, ethical, and professional conduct throughout enrollment. The program cultivates such professional behaviors and addresses unprofessional conduct. Therefore, students must abide by the conduct policies found in the [University Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#) and detailed in this Guide. While clinical site policies may occasionally override program policies (e.g., dress code), the program's professionalism policies always remain in effect for all students, whether on a clinical rotation or on campus.

Professionalism Code of Conduct

All CCPA students must abide by the following code of conduct:

Professional Values

- Exhibits honesty, integrity, ethical behavior, and trustworthiness.
- Actively and purposefully pursues professional development and self improvement.

Accountability and Responsibility

- Demonstrates timeliness with assignments and scheduled activities.
- Utilizes knowledge of one's strengths and limitations to self-reflect and improve.

Responsiveness to and Respect for Others

- Embraces cultural competency, humanism, and compassion.
- Demonstrates respect and empathy for others and responsiveness to concerns.

Professional Communication

- Demonstrates verbal, non-verbal, and written communication that is professional, responsive, and exhibits an understanding of proper chain of command.
- Allows others to share their viewpoints in hopes of understanding perspectives and developing conflict resolution.

<i>Examples of Actions that Demonstrate Following the Professionalism Code of Conduct</i>	
Professional Values and Conduct	• Follow the CCPA dress code policy • Use your cell phone for academic purposes only during class/clinic time • Exhibit professional classroom/clinic behavior • Address faculty or staff using their professional title (e.g. Dr. Smith) • Clean up your area and mess immediately after using any shared space or facility
Accountability and Responsibility	• Take responsibility for one's own actions • Submit assignments on time • Attend class/scheduled meetings/SCPEs on time and for the entire duration as scheduled • Communicate PAARs in a timely manner as outlined in the CCPA Program Guide • Respond to programmatic emails as outlined in the CCPA Program Guide
Responsiveness to and Respect for Others	• Interact with others in a manner that demonstrates consideration, empathy, and recognition of their dignity and worth. • Listen, speak thoughtfully, and engage in a way that fosters mutual understanding, regardless of differences in opinions, backgrounds, or experiences • Be mindful of and inclusive of differing opinions and social and cultural values
Professional Communication	• Communicate in a courteous and thoughtful manner in verbal, non-verbal, and in written form • Allow individuals to complete their thought, lecture or instruction without interruption • Communicate through the appropriate channels as outlined in the CCPA Program Guide • Express grievances in an appropriate manner, time and place, using proper chain of command

*Note, the above list is not comprehensive and merely serves as a general guideline

Academic Conduct- Professional Expectations

Academic misconduct is a serious offense that undermines education and violates trust. Students suspected of academic misconduct are referred to the CHC Dean for investigation and disciplinary action. University policies on academic conduct are located in the University Student Catalog's [Code of Academic Conduct](#). Examples of academic misconduct include:

- **Abetting:** Helping others cheat or share forbidden materials.
- **Cheating:** Dishonestly gaining an academic advantage for yourself or others (e.g., unauthorized exam questions, using notes, AI, or banned resources during a test, or copying answers).
- **Plagiarism:** Presenting someone else's ideas, words, or data (including AI-generated content) as your own, without proper citation. ([Please refer to the linked Plagiarism and AI Policy](#))
- **Deceitfulness:** Changing grade records, submitting forged doctor's notes as absentee evidence, tampering with exam software, or entering a faculty or staff office without permission.

Dress Code- Professional Expectations

Students must wear business casual attire to all educational activities with the exception of labs for which students may wear matching navy ATSU scrubs. (Labs for which scrubs will be allowed are noted on the schedule.) If a student does not follow the dress code, they may be asked to leave, change clothes, and return in appropriate attire. Dress code violations or absences caused by them will result in a professionalism warning. Additionally, if a student is asked to leave during an assessment because of dress code violations, the course director may assign a zero for that assessment. Clothing guidelines are as follows:

Coverage: Clothing must cover the shoulders, back, cleavage, back, midriff, buttocks, and upper thighs while sitting, standing, bending forward, or reaching.

Footwear: Shoes must be flat, closed-toed, and have adequate tread to avoid falls.

Jewelry: Large jewelry that interferes with patient care, such as dangling earrings, is prohibited.

Hair: Hair must be clean and pulled back to not interfere with patient care.

Fingernails: Fingernails should be clean and trimmed with no nail polish or artificial nails.

Head Coverings: Head coverings may only be worn for religious or cultural purposes.

Fragrance: Students must be fragrance-free, maintaining an odor-neutral presence (i.e. body odor).

Prohibited items include: Tube tops, tight or see-through clothing, spaghetti straps, hoodies, hats, tank tops, t-shirts, crop tops, flip-flops, excessive jewelry, lanyards, ear grommets/plugs, torn clothing, jeans, sweatpants, spandex or running pants, overalls, shorts, mini-skirts, sundresses, high heels, open-toed shoes, sandals, and shirts or facemasks with printed words, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans.

Note: Clinical sites may have additional dress code policies that must be followed by students.

Classroom Conduct- Professional Expectations

To maintain an environment conducive to learning, students should minimize activities that interfere with the educational process and abide by the following standards:

- **Limit class entry/exit:** Use break times for leaving and re-entering the classroom.
- **Limit device use:** Only use electronic devices for program-related educational needs.
- **No unauthorized recording:** Audio and video recording by students is prohibited.
- **No talking to others or making noise** while a professor is speaking.
- **Turn off cell phones** during all educational sessions. (*If you are an emergency contact, give them the ATSU Security Number (805) 245-6221 in case they need to reach you.*)

Students who demonstrate a lack of classroom etiquette or are disruptive or distracting during class may be issued a professionalism warning.

In-Person Attendance- Professional Expectations

The CCPA Program's didactic curriculum is designed as an immersive professional experience where in-person presence serves as a core component of both professionalism and clinical readiness. Direct, in-person engagement is vital to fostering a community of practice, ensuring that students develop the interpersonal communication skills and peer-to-peer collaborative habits essential for high-stakes medical environments. Attendance in the designated classroom is not merely for the delivery of information; rather, it is required for the supervised development of professional behaviors and clinical nuances that cannot be effectively replicated in isolation.

Virtual Classroom- Professional Expectations

Attending class in a professional environment with the camera activated is a fundamental student responsibility. To foster an engaged and respectful learning atmosphere, students are required to adhere to the following standards:

1. Professional Setting & Body Positioning

- **Approved Locations:** Students must participate from a quiet, stationary indoor space (e.g., a home office, desk, or table). Informal or unprofessional locations—such as beds, couches for lounging, moving vehicles, or public establishments—are strictly prohibited.
- **Body Positioning:** Students are expected to remain **upright and seated** in a chair throughout the lecture. Laying down or reclining is not permitted, as it detracts from professional engagement and personal focus.
- **Camera Framing:** The camera should be positioned at eye level, ensuring the student's face and shoulders are clearly visible and centered in the frame.

2. Camera & Presence Requirements

- **Constant Visibility:** Cameras must remain **on** for the duration of the lecture.
- **Active Presence:** Students must be physically present and visible. Turning off the camera or leaving the frame for extended periods without prior instructor approval will be marked as an absence or a lapse in participation.

3. Managing Shared Spaces

If other individuals are present in the student's home environment, the student must take the following steps to minimize disruption:

- **Audio Privacy:** Utilize headphones to prevent audio feedback and ensure lecture content remains private.
- **Visual Backgrounds:** Position the camera toward a **neutral background**, or utilize the **background blur** or a professional **virtual background** feature.
- **Traffic Control:** Avoid setting up in high-traffic areas (e.g., kitchens or hallways) during instructional time to prevent visual distractions for the rest of the class.

Social Media- Professional Expectations

Students must uphold high standards of professionalism on all social media and online platforms. Unprofessional posts are prohibited; this includes profanity, discriminatory comments, content showing alcohol abuse, sexually suggestive material, or any breach of patient confidentiality. Degrading faculty, staff, other students, preceptors, or the Program in any online form will not be tolerated. Any of these actions can result in disciplinary action or dismissal from the program. Further guidelines include:

- **Confidentiality:** Healthcare providers must protect patient information. Posting anything about patients, including photos of encounters, imaging, or procedures—violates HIPAA.
- **Digital Footprint:** Be aware that your online content is your "digital footprint" and must always be professional. Future employers, residency programs, and patients often review social media to evaluate your character and professional standards.
- **Privacy:** To protect participant privacy photography and videography is prohibited in Simulation Rooms and classrooms.

Student Communication- Professional Expectations

ATSU email is the official communication method for both the didactic and clinical years. Students must check their ATSU email at least every 24 business hours. Students who fail to respond to faculty emails within this timeframe will receive a professionalism warning. All CCPA-related correspondence must be sent from an ATSU email address, not from personal accounts. Additionally, students and faculty/staff should never communicate through personal phone numbers or social media *other than LinkedIn*.

Student Expectations on Addressing Faculty and Staff

Students are expected to address and refer to all program faculty, staff, and clinical preceptors by their professional title or Mr./Mrs. and their last name (e.g., Dr. Harrington, Professor Dancy, PA Nash, and Ms. Feliciano). Students who do not follow this policy will be issued a professionalism warning.

Professionalism Expectations and Consequences

Professional Behavior Expectations and Consequences

Students who fail to meet the Program's Professional Code of Conduct will first be addressed by a faculty member to discuss the issue and set clear expectations. Should the unprofessional behavior continue, a formal written warning will be issued. Accumulating three or more professionalism warnings during either the didactic or clinical phase of the program will trigger a referral to the Professionalism Progress Board. This board will review the student's conduct and may recommend disciplinary actions that can include professional probation, mandatory mentoring, or even dismissal from the program.

NOTE: Serious professionalism violations (like legal issues, or breaking University Policies such as cheating, arrest, or drug/alcohol misconduct) go directly to the CHC Dean, bypassing the Program's warning process.

Professionalism Warning

Professionalism warnings tell a student when faculty are concerned they might not meet the program's professional standards needed for graduation. These warnings also provide a chance for extra mentoring to help them develop the professional behaviors required of a physician assistant. If a student keeps violating specific behaviors after being told about them (in writing or verbally), they'll get a warning. This written warning will not become a part of the student's permanent academic record. Professionalism warnings may be given for violation of any of the code of conduct behaviors outlined in the [above table](#) or other similar unprofessional actions. More serious violations are handled separately, as described in the University Catalog's [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and the [University Student Handbook](#) Appendix B.

Professionalism Progress Board (PPB)

The **CCPA Professionalism Progress Board (PPB)** meets with students referred for **unprofessional behavior**. The PPB discusses concerns, then provides a **professionalism success plan** with recommendations that may include:

- Suspension from serving on Student Government or as an ambassador for CCPA;
- Suspension from participating in any CCPA-sponsored extracurricular activities;
- Attend additional advising or mentoring sessions;
- Referral to Student Affairs;
- Referral to Behavioral Health and Wellness counseling (TimelyCare or ATSU counselor);
- Complete remediation assignments or activities to increase student success.

Professional Probation

The Professionalism Progress Board (PPB) may place a student on professional probation if unprofessional behavior continues after warnings. Students on probation are not considered in "good standing". This status is reported to the University and becomes a permanent part of the student's record. Probation will be lifted if the student commits no further violations within the timeframe specified in the Program Director's letter. However, if a student repeatedly violates behaviors for which they were already placed on probation, they will be referred back to the PPB. This could lead to further recommendations, including professionalism dismissal from the program.

Professionalism Dismissal (A3.14)

The inability to meet professionalism standards is grounds for dismissal. The Program reserves the right to recommend the dismissal for serious legal, moral, or ethical circumstances, even if a student hasn't been on probation. Such "due cause" for dismissal includes professional conduct that violates ATSU's [Code of Conduct and Behavioral Standards](#) or breaks state or federal law. Examples include:

- Arrest, criminal activity, or felony charges
- Civil misconduct or aggressive behavior
- Social media misconduct (ex. taking photos during class)
- Cheating or academic dishonesty
- Alcohol or Drug use misconduct
- Blatant or continued disregard of program professionalism policies

Attendance and Days Off

Attendance and Punctuality - Professional Expectations

Attendance at the CCPA program is mandatory. Students are expected to arrive at least **10 minutes prior** to the scheduled start of all classes, labs, rotations, and examinations. Students who violate the attendance policy will receive a formal professionalism warning for each infraction. Multiple violations may result in a referral to the Professionalism Progress Board for further disciplinary action, including potential probation. Attendance policy details are as follows

- **Tardiness to Class:** Arriving after the scheduled start time for any educational activity is an unexcused tardiness. If a student does not sign in within the designated timeframe, they will receive a written professionalism warning.

- **Late Arrival to Assessments:** If a student is late to any scheduled examination or formal assessment they will receive a **10% deduction from the overall grade of that specific assessment** and a written professionalism warning.
 - **Late Assignments:** Late assignments will incur a **20% grade deduction** for each day until submitted and students will be issued a written professionalism warning.
 - **Unexcused Absences** Students with unexcused absences will receive a professionalism warning letter and may be called into the professional progress board for additional disciplinary action.
- *Exceptions to the above are granted only for pre-approved emergency absences.

PA Absence Requests (PAARs)

The Program monitors all absence requests and verifies supporting documentation. Students who exceed absence limits or fail to adhere to these procedures will be referred to the Professional Progress Board (PPB) for disciplinary review, which may result in formal sanctions such as professional probation.

1. Categories of Absence:

There are two distinct categories for requesting time away from the program:

Planned Absence Day (PAD)

PADs are intended for personal days, medical appointments, family events, or religious observances.

- **Annual Allowance:** Maximum of seven (7) days per academic year.
- **Incremental Limits:** During the clinical year, PADs must be used in full-day increments. During the didactic year, half-day (0.5) increments are permitted; any didactic year request for less than a half-day will automatically be recorded as a half-day absence.
- **Term Limits:** Maximum of one (1) PAD per clinical rotation or (2) per academic term.
- **Submission Timeline:** Must be requested a minimum of fourteen (14) days in advance.
- **Documentation:** Verifiable documentation may be requested by the program.
- **Blackout Dates/Times:** PADs are **strictly prohibited** on days with examinations, scheduled assessments, or laboratory activities. Lab sessions are mandatory, hands-on experiences. Students may not switch lab groups or attend different times to accommodate personal schedules.

Emergency Absence Day (EAD)

Emergency Absences are reserved for qualifying, unforeseen emergencies.

- **Submission Timeline:** Must be requested before the absence occurs or within 24 hours of the emergency occurrence.
- **Documentation:** Verifiable documentation validating the emergency must be submitted within 48 hours of the emergency. **Note:** Students should **never** share specific personal medical information/diagnoses; only a provider's note verifying the need for absence is required.
- **Blackout Dates:** While specific blackout dates are not pre-defined for emergency absences, the Program reserves the right to deny requests and record them as unexcused if a pattern of suspicious or frequent emergency leave emerges.

2. Professionalism Implications of PAAR Compliance

The submission of a PA Absence Request (PAAR) is a mandatory administrative requirement for any absence. Failure to submit a PAAR within the required timeframe of the incident is considered a serious breach of professional standards. Such omissions will result in an automatic unapproved absence and may lead to a Professional Progress Board (PPB) meeting, potentially resulting in professional probation.

3. Academic Implications of Absence

Students maintain sole responsibility for mastering all missed content and course requirements resulting from an absence.

- **Coursework Responsibility:** For any absence, students must email the Course Director at least two (2) business days prior (or as soon as possible in emergencies) to obtain assignments. Failure to notify the director may result in a professionalism warning and a grade of 0% for missed work.
- **Clinical Rotations:** Missing more than two (2) days during a single rotation may require remediation or repeating the entire rotation, which can delay graduation.

- **Lab Sessions:** These cannot be made up or substituted. PAARs for lab days will be denied unless a true emergency is proven.

4. How to Request an Absence/Absence Limit Summary

How to Request an Absence

Request Type	Submission Timeline	Required Action
Planned (PAD)	Minimum of 14 days in advance	Submit via Exxat; provide any requested documentation.
Emergency (EA)	Within 24 hours of the incident	Submit via Exxat; provide documentation within 48 hours.

Absence Limit Summary

Metric	Planned Absence (PAD)	Emergency Absence (EA)
Per Academic Year	7 Days	N/A (Case-by-case)
Per Term/Rotation	2 days/1 Day	N/A (Case-by-case)
Minimum Notice	14 Days	24 Hours
Documentation	Submit as requested.	Required within 48 hours

5. Absence Approval & Denials

The program maintains final authority over all absence requests. Each submission is reviewed on a case-by case basis, and the program reserves the right to approve, deny, or request additional documentation at its discretion..

Note: Any unapproved absence is classified as **unexcused** and will result in a formal professionalism warning.

PAD Denials:

A PAD request may be denied for any of the following reasons:

- **Scheduled Lab Activity:** The request conflicts with mandatory lab sessions or hands-on skill development.
- **Scheduled Assessment:** The request falls on a day with an examination or practical assessment.
- **Exceeding Limits:** Use of more than two PADs per term or seven per year.
- **Insufficient Notice:** Request submitted less than two weeks (14days) in advance.
- **Pattern of Absences:** A recurring pattern that suggests a lack of professional engagement.

Emergency Request Denials

Emergency requests are strictly for unforeseen, urgent circumstances. They may be denied if:

- **Not a True Emergency:** The situation is a minor inconvenience or a routine appointment. (e.g., a routine dental cleaning is considered a PAD, not an emergency).
- **Improper Notification:** Failure to notify the appropriate staff/faculty prior to the scheduled start time.
- **Unverifiable Information:** The explanation or documentation provided cannot be validated.
- **Policy Misuse:** A recurring pattern of "emergencies" that suggests poor time management rather than unpredictable events.

Appeals Process

If a request is denied, students have the right to appeal the decision. To initiate an appeal, email the **Director of Clinical or Didactic Education** within **three business days** of the denial. The email must include a clear explanation of the situation and any relevant supporting documentation for review.

Clinical Rotation Attendance

Students' clinical rotation schedules must match their preceptor's work schedule, which includes days, nights, weekends, holidays, and on-call hours.

- **Expected Clinical Hours:** Since clinical work hours and logged patient experiences are strongly linked to academic and PANCE success, students aiming for a successful clinical year should work full-time during each clinical rotation week. If a student isn't actively involved in clinical activities and is concerned about meeting logging requirements or learning objectives, they must first discuss a plan with their preceptor or the Regional Director of Physician Assistant Education (RDPAE) to gain additional clinical hours with another provider. If that request isn't honored, the student must contact their academic advisor during the first week of the rotation to find a solution.
- **Consequences of not Meeting Learning Outcomes:** If a student fails to meet course learning outcomes due to insufficient attendance, they will be required to repeat additional clinical remediation days or the entire clinical rotation, which may delay graduation and impact financial aid.

- **Mandatory End of Rotation (EOR) Activity Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory for all end-of-rotation (EOR) activities and assessments. If a student doesn't attend these, they may receive a 10% deduction from their overall course grade and face professionalism disciplinary actions.
1. **Preceptor Vacation Make-Up Hours:** If a student's preceptor is on vacation or leave during regular hours, this doesn't excuse the student's absence. The student must try to work with another provider at the site. They should also notify the Regional Director of Physician Assistant Education (RDPAE), if applicable, and their Clinical Coordinator, who will then arrange alternative learning activities.
 2. **Site Closure:** If a clinical site closes for any reason (e.g. inclement weather), students must immediately notify their Clinical Coordinator so that they may arrange alternative learning activities.

Unexcused Absences

Absences or late arrivals that are not due to an emergency or are not pre-approved are considered unexcused. Students with unexcused absences will receive a failing grade on any assessments or missed assignments that occurred during the absence. Any assignment, exam, or material missed due to an unexcused absence will be given a zero and will not be allowed to be made up late.

Extended Absences

The University's Leave of Absence policy requires students with a projected absence of 15 days or more to take a leave of absence. The University's Extended Absence Policy requires students to submit extended absence paperwork for any consecutive absences between 5-15 days. For absences above 15 consecutive days please refer to the Leave of Absence Policy.

Student Contagious Illness

Students diagnosed with a contagious illness must refrain from attending campus or clinical sites and are required to follow established absence notification protocols. In accordance with CDC guidelines, return-to-site dates are determined on an individual basis by the Director of Didactic Education (didactic phase) or the Clinical Preceptor/RDPAE (clinical phase) in coordination with the Clinical Coordinator. Although the program will facilitate the completion of missed coursework or rotation-specific assignments, students who fail to achieve mandated learning outcomes due to illness may be required to repeat the full Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE). Such remediations will result in a delayed graduation date and may adversely affect financial aid eligibility.

Program Information

Student Organizations

Student Government

The Student Government champions academic and clinical excellence, advocates for PA students and the profession, and serves the community. Each class elects a student board, which includes a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Diversity Chair, and Service Chair. The class also elects an AAPA Student Academy Representative and a California Academy of PAs Student Representative. For a copy of the student society's constitution and bylaws, contact the Program's Administrative Coordinator.

Active participation in the SGA and its associated extracurricular activities is strictly contingent upon maintaining **good academic standing**. Should an officer be placed on academic probation, they become immediately ineligible to participate in any SGA-related activities until they have officially returned to good standing with the institution. The SGA prioritizes personal accountability; therefore, it is each student's responsibility to monitor their GPA, self-report any changes to eligibility to the appropriate advisor, and make the necessary decisions to prioritize academic success above all else.

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)

[ATSU's Student Life office](#) supports students' academic, professional, and social growth and leadership opportunities through Registered Student Organizations (RSOs). The CCPA RSOs promote campus community and encourage a vibrant life outside the classroom.

Community Outreach

Students may participate in optional community service and outreach events as a core part of the program's mission to serve the underserved. However, if students participate in non-approved events, they are not covered by University insurance and cannot present themselves as CCPA students or program representatives.

Student Memberships in Professional PA Organizations

Joining professional PA organizations is crucial for developing leadership skills, networking, and advancing the profession. Students should become members of the two leading organizations: [CAPA \(California Academy of Physician Assistants\)](#), which represents and serves PAs statewide, and [AAPA \(American Academy of Physician Associates\)](#), the national professional society that advocates for PAs and works to improve healthcare. Students can also join other [AAPA constituent organizations](#) aligned with their goals.

Pi Alpha

[Pi Alpha](#) is the national PA honor society. It recognizes PA graduates who demonstrate academic excellence and significant achievements in areas like research, community service, professional service, or leadership. Students earning this honor are inducted into the society at the CCPA graduation banquet.

Student Services

Student Counseling and Health Services (A3.07)

[TimelyCare](#) is a free, 24/7 virtual Behavioral Health & Wellness resource, aiming to boost student well-being and engagement. Students can be referred by faculty or access it themselves. Through TimelyCare, students can connect with physicians and counselors in all 50 states. Services include:

- On-demand or scheduled medical care
- On-demand or scheduled mental health support
- Health Coaching and digital self-care content

Refer to ATSU's [Health & Wellness](#) page for more information on University health services.

Title IX Services for Discrimination and Harassment(A1.02g)

If a student experiences or witnesses sexual harassment, discrimination, or harassment based on protected characteristics (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), they should follow the University Title IX reporting procedures detailed on the A.T. Still University [Title IX Webpage](#).

Academic Support Services

Academic Support helps students achieve academic success and can help with study skills, time management, schedules, examination-taking skills, Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS), and guidance to scholarly resources. Students wishing to access these services should contact adolfoortiz@atsu.edu, and those wishing to access PALS should contact PALProgram@atsu.edu.

Accommodation Services

[Learning Resources & Accommodation Services \(LRAS\)](#) helps students with disabilities by determining eligibility and coordinating necessary accommodations. Students requiring academic adjustments due to a documented disability must obtain official approval before any accommodations are provided. Clinical site accommodations must be submitted and approved during the didactic year; late approvals can result in delayed placements or graduation. To apply, contact LRAS at accommodations@atsu.edu or 480.245.6248.

Title IX Services Pregnant Students

Under Title IX law, pregnant students have rights regarding access to education. Any student enrolled in the Program who becomes pregnant should contact the [ATSU Title IX office for more information](#).

Environmental and Infectious Hazards

OSHA Safety Training (A3.05)

To prevent exposure to environmental and infectious hazards, students must follow [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) and universal precaution guidelines during all CCPA courses and volunteer activities, and at clinical sites. Students will receive OSHA training during the didactic year. [ATSU's OSHA student course materials are linked here](#).

Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards(A3.05)

In the event of a needle stick or exposure to potentially infectious fluids, students must do the following:

1. Carefully read the needlestick policy letter: [needlestick policy letter](#)
2. Follow the policy that corresponds with the location in which the exposure occurred:
 - a. On Campus: [On Campus Exposure/ On Campus Procedure](#)
 - b. Off Campus: [Off-Campus Exposure/Off Campus Procedure](#)
3. Immediately seek medical care

4. Immediately report the incident to the program director and clinical site/clinical director, if at a clinical site.
5. Complete the [On Campus Incident Report](#) or [Off Campus Incident Report](#), which starts on page 3 of these documents.

Financial Responsibility: While ATSU strives to facilitate medical insurance coverage, students are ultimately responsible for their own insurance and all related healthcare costs.

Student Health

Student Medical Insurance Policy

Students are required to maintain personal health insurance from the time of enrollment through graduation. The health insurance policy must cover healthcare in all states due to the possibility of moving throughout the clinical year. Please see the [University Catalog](#) for additional information.

Student Health Records and Medical Treatment (A3.06)

Student health records are confidential and are not accessible to or reviewed by the Program Faculty or staff except for immunization and tuberculosis screening results. Except in an emergency situation, faculty may not participate as health care providers or behavioral counselors for students in the Program.

Campus Security

CCPA prioritizes campus security. Because of this, security officers are on campus during all open hours to assist with student needs. All crimes or emergencies, including fire, hazardous materials spills, police emergencies, or anything threatening imminent harm, must be reported to [Campus Security](#). The CHC campus also ensures security through controlled building access and the requirement of badge access.

Security and Safety Emergency Notification System

The RAVE system alerts students to severe weather, violent conditions, or hazardous incidents. To ensure you receive these alerts, log into RAVE via the [ATSU portal](#). Once logged in, search for "Rave," add your phone number, click "Opt-In Lists", and select "California Santa Maria" to confirm.

Campus Hours

Security officers are on campus during all open hours to assist with student needs. The campus is open weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Student Grievance Reporting Procedures (A1.02; A3.14)

Students must follow the chain of command and grievance reporting procedures outlined below when reporting any concern. [Student Affairs](#) also offers staff who can advise students in solving grievances.

Academic Grievances

Students have **three working days** from an incident or grade release to dispute an exam, assessment, or course concern in writing with the course director, who then has three working days to respond. If unresolved, the student has three working days to escalate the issue to the Director of Didactic Education (didactic year) or Director of Clinical Education (clinical year), who likewise has three working days to provide a resolution. Should the grievance still remain unresolved, the student has a final three working days to submit the matter to the Program Director for a decision within three working days; however, formal **final course grade** appeals must defer to the [ATSU Catalog](#).

NON-Academic Grievances

Any non-academic grievance against employees or the Program should be reported to the Dean of the College of Health Communities following University Policies [A.T.Still University Catalog](#). If any grievance involves Title IX complaints, please follow ATSU [Title IX reporting procedures](#).

Grievances Involving Another Student

If a student has a grievance or witnesses misconduct by a fellow student, they should first try to resolve the issue directly with the classmate. However, if that conversation might worsen the situation, the incident should be reported to the student's faculty advisor. For Title IX complaints, please follow ATSU [Title IX reporting procedures](#).

Clinical Rotation Grievances

If any academic, professional, or personal problems arise during clinical rotations, students should first try to resolve them with their preceptor or the Regional Director of Physician Assistant Education (RDPAE). If the issue remains unresolved, students should then email the clinical team. For any safety concerns, students must contact the clinical team immediately.

Student Guest Policy

- **Who May Visit:** Students may host up to **two guests per visit**, limited to immediate family members (parents, siblings, spouses, children) or significant others.
- **Permitted Areas:** Guest access is strictly limited to the **Student Lounge and patio**. Guests are not allowed in classrooms, faculty offices, or other campus areas.
- **Check-in Process:**
 - All guests must **check in at the front security desk**. Students must **accompany their guests** during check-in and remain with them throughout the visit.
 - Guests must present **valid photo ID** and will receive a **temporary visitor badge** marked: *"Guest Access Only – Student Lounge/Patio."*
 - Badges must be returned, and guests signed out upon departure.
- **Visiting Hours:** Guest visits are allowed **Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**
- **Student Responsibility:** Students are fully responsible for the conduct of their guests during the visit.

Important Procedures and Policies

ATSU Student Email Signatures Should be Set up as Follows:

Student First Name Student Last Name
Physician Assistant Student Class of 202X
Central Coast Physician Assistant Program
Student email-address@atsu.edu

Student Emergency Contact Information

Students must provide the program with their current address and phone number. If it changes, they should immediately update it in the Anthology Student Portal and inform the program administrative staff at ccpap@atsu.edu. Clinical year students must also update the Clinical Management Portal.

Background Check and Substance Screening

Before enrolling, students must complete a criminal background check and drug/alcohol screening. Some clinical rotations require additional screenings or background checks during the clinical year. Clinical sites reserve the right to refuse students based on these results. Students are responsible for all screening related costs. The ATSU Background Check Policy is detailed in the [ATSU catalog](#).

Tobacco and E-cigarette/Vape Policy

The CHC Campus is a tobacco-free environment. Tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and or other vaping devices are not permitted on campus, at clinical sites, or at university-sponsored events.

Alcohol and Drug Use

All students must adhere to the University's, as well as local, state, and federal laws and policies regarding alcohol and drugs. This strictly prohibits being under the influence while driving, providing patient care, or at any program activity. Additionally, disruptive or disrespectful behavior, providing alcohol to minors, or reckless consumption are forbidden. [Violations will result in disciplinary actions by the University.](#)

Arrest/Criminal Activity/DUI

Any student arrested or charged with a legal violation must report it to the Program within two business days. Failure to report may lead to dismissal. Additionally, criminal violations can result in University disciplinary actions, such as probation, mandatory treatment or counseling, or program dismissal.

Employment While Enrolled in the Program

Due to the significant time commitment required, outside employment is strongly discouraged while enrolled in the CCPA Program. Attendance is mandatory and absence requests for work will not be approved unless they are related to a military assignment. No assignments, examinations, or schedules will be adjusted due to a student's outside work schedule.

Employment for the Program (A3.02; A3.03)

Students are not required to work for the CCPA Program. Students are also prohibited from substituting for or functioning as instructional faculty and/or clinical or administrative Program staff.

Military Assignments while Enrolled

To ensure proper planning and adherence to regulations, it is crucial for all individuals with military assignments impacting their availability to attend class or clinical rotations to submit official documentation to the Program Director (PD) well in advance of any scheduled event. This proactive measure allows for timely verification of duties and necessary accommodations, thereby minimizing disruptions and ensuring compliance with both academic and military obligations. Such documentation, like official orders or a Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) document, enables the PD to accurately account for student availability, safeguarding the success and academic progress of those serving.

Shadowing Medical Providers

Shadowing is optional for students and is permitted only if it doesn't interfere with course or clinical schedules. For shadowing activities, students must follow these guidelines:

- Don't represent yourself as a CCPA student while shadowing.
- Don't wear your school-assigned white coat, ATSU scrubs, or ATSU badge.
- You must still attend your assigned clinical experience when shadowing.
- Students assume full responsibility and liability for any actions and consequences during shadowing.

Identification as a PA Student (A3.04)

Students must identify themselves as PA Students at all times and never present themselves as a physician, resident, medical student, or PA-C. Use of titles earned prior to matriculation is not permitted (e.g., EMT, RN). Students and faculty must wear their ATSU ID badge at all times while on campus and in the clinic.

Course and Program Surveys

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, students must complete end-of-course surveys. These surveys gather feedback on the quality of instruction and help us identify areas for improvement. Completing these surveys is a mandatory Pass/Fail assignment for every CCPA Program course. Failure to complete the survey will result in an "incomplete" being recorded on a student's transcript and a professionalism warning letter. An incomplete course grade can delay progression, change clinical site placement, affect financial aid, or even delay graduation. *Note: Survey results are anonymous and confidential.*

Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Patient health information is private and is protected by law under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). All students are trained in HIPAA and must uphold confidentiality in accordance with HIPAA by refraining from discussing or posting patient health information or photographs on social media, redacting patient identification from all presentations and assignments, and only discussing health information with those who have a "need to know." Students who do not comply with HIPAA policies are subject to disciplinary action.

Student Health Screening (A3.09)

Students must submit proof of CDC-required immunizations or an exemption form, and a TB skin test to the program, ensuring all health requirements are met; refer to the ATSU Catalog for specifics. Only students who are compliant can participate in any educational activities, whether on or off campus, including clinical rotations. Absences due to non-compliance with this policy are considered unexcused, will result in a professionalism warning, and can negatively affect a student's academic standing.

Section IV Academic Information

Academic Advisors

Although the student bears the ultimate responsibility for the successful completion of all curricular requirements, academic advisors provide academic support throughout the program. This includes:

- Helping students understand program policies and procedures.
- Answering questions about course requirements and expectations.
- Giving feedback on progress toward graduate competencies.
- Providing timely referrals to appropriate student services.
- Assisting with study plans to overcome academic challenges.

- Mentoring students in professional skills and behaviors.
- Reviewing performance feedback after assessments.

Academic Advising Requirements

All students must meet with their advisor at least once per term. Faculty will post their office hours on the program's shared calendar for sign-ups. If all slots are filled, it is the student's responsibility to email their advisor directly to ask about additional availability.

Advisors may meet this requirement by holding pre-scheduled group advising meetings once per term, particularly during the clinical year. These group sessions are mandatory for all students and cannot be rescheduled.

If a student is placed on academic probation, they are also required to schedule an individual meeting with their assigned advisor. Failing to schedule this individual meeting by the end of the term will result in a professionalism warning.

Summative Evaluation Requirements for Graduation

Students must complete a summative evaluation within the final four months of the program during the Transition to Practice course to verify meeting the program's competencies required to enter clinical practice, including:

- clinical and technical skills,
- clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities,
- interpersonal skills,
- medical knowledge, and
- professional behaviors.

The summative evaluation includes the PAEA End of Curriculum (EOC) exam, clinical skills assessments, technical skills assessments, case write ups, and Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)*. If a student does not pass one or more summative assessments, a remediation plan will be developed and a reassessment given. To successfully pass the summative evaluation, students must pass all components of summative assessments.

EOC Examination Requirements for Graduation

If a student does not meet the program's benchmark score on the EOC examination, the student must:

1. Meet with an appointed faculty member to develop a remediation plan.
2. Complete all remediation assignments.
3. Retake the EOC exam after sixty (60) days. (This must be taken on-campus and proctored in-person)

Failure of the EOC examination results in delayed graduation and may impact financial aid eligibility. Students are responsible for any resulting costs. If the examination is not passed on the second attempt, the student must repeat the TTP course according to a timeline set by the Academic Progress Board.

Examination Procedures

To ensure a fair and undisturbed testing environment for all students, specific guidelines are in place for quizzes and exams. Adhering to these expectations is crucial for academic integrity and professionalism.

- **Punctuality:** Students who are late for assessments will automatically have 10% docked from their final grade and a professionalism warning will be issued. Late arrivals must check in with the proctor. A Planned Absence Request (PAAR) is required for any tardiness or absence.
- **Arrival Time:** Students **must arrive at least 15 minutes before** the examination begins.
- **Required Materials:** Before entering the exam room, students **must have** their:
 - o Laptop
 - o Laptop power cord
 - o Laptop screen privacy filter
 - o 1-2 pencils or pens
 - o ATSU ID Badge
- **Testing Aids:** Earplugs will be available at the proctor's table if needed. For exams longer than 30 minutes, proctors will provide scratch paper, which students must label with their name and submit at the end.
- **Water:** For hydration, one clear, label-free water bottle is allowed.
- **Accommodations:** Approved ATSU testing accommodations will be provided during the examination. If a student feels their accommodations were not met, they must contact accommodation services within 24 hours of the exam to seek a resolution.
- **Bathroom Breaks:** If a student has a bathroom emergency outside of an allotted break, they should raise their hand and wait for the proctor's dismissal. Timed exams will not be paused for additional breaks.

Exam Cell Phone Policy & Consequences:

After using their phone for authentication, students must immediately silence it, place it face down, and store it completely out of sight under their chair. Failure to comply, or any attempt to access or glance at a phone during an exam, will result in

the immediate termination of the examination. The student will then be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action, as any perceived act of cheating will be met with consequences.

Prohibited Materials in the Examination Room:

To maintain a secure testing environment, students cannot bring the following items into the exam room:

- **Personal items:** This includes cell phones, headphones, all types of watches, and any wireless devices.
- **Headwear & Outerwear:** Hats, hoodies, and baggy coats or clothing are not permitted. Proctors will visually check for watches and baggy clothing; students will be asked to roll up sleeves for watch inspection and remove any non-compliant items until the test concludes.
- **Food and Beverages:** No food or snacks of any kind are allowed. No beverage other than water in a clear bottle with no labels.
- **Personal Papers:** Do not bring any personal scratch paper, notes, books, or any other type of paper.

All these prohibited items must be left outside the testing area. Please note, the Program and University are not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Examsoft Exam Preparation Instructions:

To ensure a smooth testing experience, students must download the examination onto their laptop at least 24 hours before the scheduled exam time. If you encounter any difficulty downloading the exam, contact IT immediately. For ExamSoft-specific issues, you can reach their support line at 888-792-3926. (If you have trouble uploading the exam later, try toggling your Wi-Fi off and on; this often resolves the issue.)

Beyond downloading, it's crucial to ensure your test-taking device is fully functional and ready. On exam day, confirm your device is set to the PST time zone, then power it on and be in your assigned seat 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.

Examsoft Examination Instructions:

Follow these steps to begin and complete your assessment:

1. **Start ExamSoft:**
 - a. Ensure your wireless is on and you're logged onto the ATSU network.
 - b. Close all background programs on your computer.
 - c. Open Exemplify, enter the password provided by the proctor, and click "Start Exam."
 - d. When the "Secure Exam Starting" warning appears, click "Continue."
 - e. Read the "Examination Code of Honor Notice," then click "Next."
 - f. If the "Please Wait" screen appears, **STOP and wait for the proctor to provide the code.**
 - g. Once instructed, type in the exam code and click "Start Exam."
2. **After Finishing Your Exam:**
 - a. Click "Exam Controls" in the drop-down menu, then select "Submit Exam" and "Exit."
 - b. **Wait for the green confirmation screen.** Bring your laptop to the proctor and display this screen to verify your submission.
 - c. Turn in your scratch paper, with your name clearly written on it, to the proctor.
 - d. Quietly gather your belongings and exit the learning theater through the designated door.
3. **Post-Exam Conduct:**
 - a. After leaving the testing area, **remain silent** until you are past the Student Affairs office.
 - b. Stay either in the student lounge or off campus until **one hour after the exam ends.**
 - c. **Do not loiter** in or near the learning theater doors, hallways, simulation rooms, library, or use the bathrooms near the learning theater.
 - d. **Creating noise or disturbance, or failing to follow proctor instructions, will result in a professionalism warning.**

Exam Policies: Troubleshooting, Breaks, and Conduct

- **Troubleshooting:** If a student's computer freezes or experiences issues during an exam, they should immediately raise their hand and await proctor assistance.
- **Taking Breaks:** Examination breaks are for urgent needs only. To request a break, students must click "Exam Controls" in the menu bar, select "Hide exam," and obtain permission from the exam proctor. Talking outside the room or leaving the designated area is forbidden during breaks. No extra time will be granted for the examination due to a break. A student's laptop will remain with the proctor until they return. If a student does not return from a break, their examination will be submitted and graded as is.
- **Questions or Talking During the Exam:** Students may not ask the in-room proctor questions about definitions, interpretations, or clarifications during the examination. They must also refrain from talking to other students. Violators will be asked to leave the room, and their examination will be submitted and graded as is.

Failure to adhere to exam procedures may result in an automatic zero for the exam or disciplinary action.

Examination Reports

Following Examsoft examinations, students receive a Strengths and Weakness report detailing specific topic areas where errors occurred. To further aid in self-assessment, course directors have aligned assessments with Program Competencies and Course Learning Outcomes. Upon receiving their examination report and grade, students are encouraged to review these outcomes to identify any deficiencies or knowledge gaps. Subsequently, students should develop a personal self-improvement plan to address these areas and ensure the attainment of all program competencies prior to program completion.

Exam Day Illness Policy

If a student is feeling unwell or experiences an unforeseen emergency on the day of a scheduled exam or assessment, they **must** notify the Course Director (identified in the syllabus) of their illness **before** beginning the exam and place a Prior Absence Arrangement Request (PAAR) as soon as possible. This critical notification is necessary to discuss potential alternative arrangements, such as rescheduling the exam for a later date. **Once a student starts the exam**, their decision to proceed is considered an affirmation of their fitness to test, and the grade for that attempt will be final. This policy ensures academic integrity and fairness across all student assessments, and students are strongly encouraged to prioritize their health and make an informed decision before starting. Finally, for any absence due to a medical emergency or illness, students are required to provide a doctor's note or official medical documentation verifying the need for the absence.

Proactive Management of Personal Circumstances

To maintain academic integrity and support student success, students are expected to disclose any personal issues that may adversely affect their performance to their advisor **prior to sitting for an assessment**. It is critical to understand that once a grade has been officially recorded, it cannot be altered based on retroactive disclosure of personal hardships; failure to address these issues in a timely manner may lead to academic dismissal. Please be advised that the academic grievance process is not the appropriate venue for addressing personal life events; course directors cannot be expected to retroactively interpret how individual health or family crises influenced a student's performance. In cases of significant life events—such as major surgery, military deployment, family emergencies, or financial or health challenges—students are strongly encouraged to consult with Enrollment Services to discuss a **Leave of Absence** or **Extended Time Off**. Taking proactive steps to pause your studies is a professional decision that protects your GPA and preserves your academic standing.

Remote Examination Policy

Remote exams are subject to professional proctoring. Students who do not adhere to the established rules will face investigation, which may lead to a zero grade for the exam and disciplinary action.

- **You must select a private location** for your exam where video recording of you and your workspace is permissible. This area **must be free of all distractions and interruptions**.
- **All other electronic devices** (e.g., tablets, phones, and second computers) **must be turned off and placed out of reach** immediately after identity verification.
- **Your desk must be completely cleared** of all external materials, including but not limited to books, papers, and calculators.
- **Only one blank sheet of paper is permitted**. Both sides of this paper **must be displayed to the webcam** during the room survey.
- **Your cleared desk must be clearly shown** during the room survey.
- **Your device's camera and microphone must remain enabled and fully functional** throughout the entire exam duration.
- **The camera must be positioned to prevent glare and ensure your face is fully visible at all times**.
- **You are strictly prohibited from leaving the monitor's view** at any point during the examination.
- **The use of earbuds or any unauthorized materials is forbidden**.
- **You must be alone in the examination room**. No other individuals are permitted under any circumstances.

Observed Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) Policy

OSCE days are designated "blackout days." Students are strictly prohibited from submitting a request for a Planned Absence Day on OSCE days.

Pre-OSCE Procedures: Students are required to review the published schedule in advance to ascertain their assigned check-in time, specific room assignments, and any required materials.

Permitted Materials: Only a pen or pencil, student ID badge, and a stethoscope (or as otherwise specifically instructed) are permitted in the testing area.

Prohibited Materials: Cell phones and all other personal items must be stored in the designated Student Lounge and may not be accessed until all OSCE sessions are concluded.

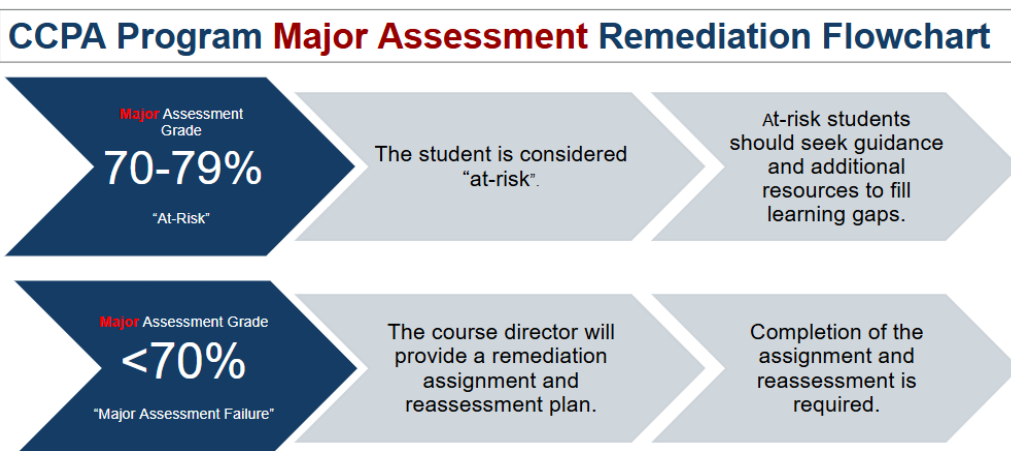
Post-OSCE Procedures: Students are expressly forbidden from discussing their OSCE experience or knowledge of its components until all grades have been posted. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, discussing the OSCE with any student who has not yet completed their examination. Revealing any information about the OSCE to other students constitutes academic dishonesty, impairs the program's ability to accurately assess knowledge, and will be treated as a severe violation of professionalism.

Understanding Remediation(A3.14c)

Remediation helps students address deficiencies in their knowledge and skills, ensuring these gaps are corrected through reevaluation. A remediation plan might involve additional assignments, written or practical exams, quizzes, case studies, projects, oral presentations, or written tasks. These reevaluation assessments focus on the specific content areas where a student demonstrated weaknesses.

Remediation of Major Assessments

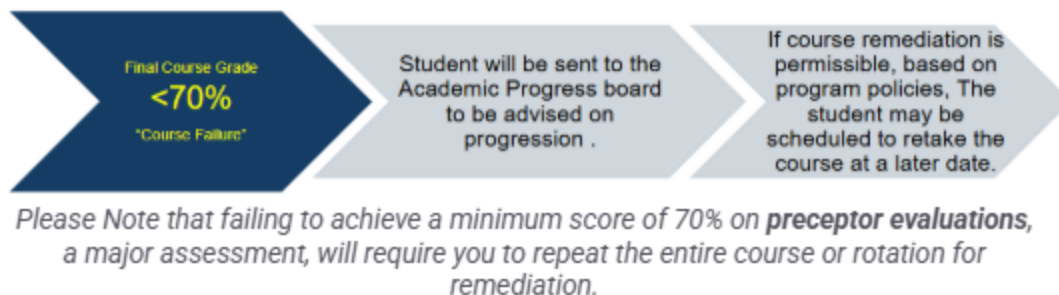
To successfully pass any CCPA course, students must achieve a score of 70% or higher on all major course assessments, as noted in the course grading scheme within each course syllabus. These assessments serve as key indicators of a student's mastery of essential course material. Should a student receive a score below 70% on any of these major assessments, they will be required to remediate the material covered by that specific assessment. Remediation is a structured process designed to help students strengthen their understanding and address any identified knowledge gaps. Following remediation, students will then be reassessed. This ensures that every student has the opportunity to remediate areas of the curriculum and fill knowledge gaps. While this policy applies to major assessments, faculty or program leadership may also ask a student to remediate a minor assessment if needed to support academic progress. In such cases, expectations will be communicated directly to the student.



*Please Note that failing to achieve a minimum score of 70% on **preceptor evaluations**, a major assessment, will require you to repeat the entire course or rotation for remediation.*

Remediation for Course Failure

If a student receives a failing grade in a course, they must remediate and successfully pass a reevaluation assessment for that course. Failure to pass this reevaluation assessment will require repeating the entire course, leading to deceleration or delayed graduation. Remediation plans for course failures are tailored to the specific content areas where the student struggled. Students are required to fulfill all remediation plan requirements within the identified timeframe. Upon successful completion of the remediation process and passing the reevaluation for a course failure, students will receive an RC (Remediated C) on their transcript. However, if the remediation requirements aren't met, or if the reevaluation assessment isn't passed with a grade of 70% or higher, the final course grade will remain an "F" on the student's transcript.



Ensuring Student Success (B4.01b)

Supporting Course Success

The CCPA Program is committed to student success, identifying and supporting those who may be at risk throughout each term. When deficiencies, such as the failure of an assessment, are identified, students receive warning letters and an individualized success plan. This plan may include additional academic advising, specific assignments, or referrals to other University resources. These support efforts begin at the course level and can be escalated to the academic progress board for more widespread deficiencies.

Supporting PANCE Success

To proactively support student success on the PANCE, the program has identified key data points at the end of each academic year that indicate potential risk. These indicators include PACKRAT Scores, number of remediated major exams, GPA, End-of-Rotation (EOR) scores (specifically Internal Medicine and Family Medicine), End-of-Curriculum (EOC) scores, and hours of attendance at clinical sites. The program's Director of Assessment will evaluate this data at critical junctures throughout the program. If these metrics suggest a student is at risk of not passing the PANCE, the student will receive a tailored remediation plan. Ultimately, the goal of these remediation plans is to provide students with the necessary tools, support, and targeted instruction to bridge knowledge gaps, improve test-taking abilities, and build confidence, significantly increasing their likelihood of successfully passing the PANCE on their first attempt.

Section V Clinical Year Expectations

Clinical Year Policies and Procedures Introduction (A3.01)

The clinical year is dedicated to maximizing the application of didactic knowledge and further developing skills to meet the program's graduate competencies. Students in the clinical year are expected to adhere to all program policies and procedures during the clinical year. Clinical site policies may supersede the program policies (e.g., dress code, immunization requirements) when they differ from program policies.

If students have questions about the clinical year policies, they should direct them to the Clinical Director for clarification. Students must sign a declaration before beginning the clinical year stating they have read, understood, and agreed to abide by all clinical year policies while at clinical sites.

Clinical Rotation Course Director Assignments

Before clinical rotations, students receive the name and contact information of the CCPA Program faculty member assigned to assess and supervise their progress toward the learning outcomes for that rotation.

Clinical Site Recruitment Policy and Procedures (A3.03)

Students are not required to solicit or provide clinical sites or preceptors for their training. Students may recommend a new clinical site or preceptor by submitting a [Clinical Site Recommendation Form](#) by the assigned date to the clinical team with the knowledge that this may or may not be possible and available for their cohort.

Notifying Students and Preceptors of Clinical Site Assignments

Students receive their clinical site assignments, including contact information, locations, and schedules, around two months before each rotation begins. Schedule changes are rare, occurring only in cases of urgent, unforeseen circumstances. Both parties will be promptly notified if such changes are necessary.

Navigating Clinical Rotations: Relocation and Expenses

Students should anticipate significant travel and multiple relocation during their Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs). While SCPEs are located across the United States, most students will need to relocate from Santa Maria, CA, and move multiple times to various clinical sites to complete all seven required experiences as well as any remediation SCPEs as well.

Students are responsible for all costs associated with transportation, housing, and relocation for these clinical rotations. Reliable transportation is essential, as students will either commute considerable distances or move to new locations depending on the site's proximity. Students are strongly encouraged to contact ATSU Financial Aid to discuss available resources and ensure adequate funding for these expenses during their clinical year.

Hometown Scholar Site Assignments

Hometown Scholar students will be assigned to their sponsoring site if the site is an established partner site. The Hometown Scholar letter of recommendation must be on file with the Vice President of University Partnerships before matriculation.

Clinical Site Placement Policy

Placement Process

Clinical site assignments are made by the program and **cannot be assigned or altered based on student requests**. Students may, however, submit a preference sheet by the specified due date to list their preferred sites and any relevant extenuating circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to ensure this sheet is submitted accurately and on time. Note that listing a preference does not guarantee placement at that site.

Factors Considered in Placement

The program takes several factors into consideration when assigning clinical sites, including but not limited to:

- The **quality of the learning experience**
- The **availability** of preceptors and sites
- Specific **requirements of the preceptor or clinical site**
- Meeting **ARC-PA accreditation standards**
- Alignment with the **program's mission and vision**

Trading Placements

After the clinical sites are revealed electronically via Exxat, students have a one-week window to **trade their entire seven-rotation schedule** with another student in their cohort. Partial trades of specific rotations or locations are not permitted. To complete a trade, both students must email Lisett and the Director of Clinical Education, with both parties cc'd on the email.

Clinical Preceptor Assignments (A2.17)

When students are assigned to a clinical site, they receive the contact information for the Regional Director of PA Education (RDPAE) (if applicable), as well as the primary site location and its contact details through EXXAT.

Preceptor names and email addresses will be accessible in EXXAT **three weeks before each rotation begins**.

Students are required to **contact their assigned preceptor two weeks before the rotation starts** to confirm their schedule and location. Students cannot begin a clinical rotation without being assigned a specific preceptor and having their contact information.

Clinical Site Support for PA Students

Many clinical sites have a Regional Director of PA Education (RDPAE) or dedicated administrative staff who help with scheduling, supporting the PA Program's clinical team. The RDPAE acts as a direct link to the Central Coast PA Program (CCPA), receiving guidance from our clinical team. If a site doesn't have an RDPAE, our Clinical Coordinators will step in to fill that role for both the site and the students.

Whether it's an RDPAE or a Clinical Coordinator, their key responsibilities include:

- **Scheduling:** Collaborating with the CCPA Clinical Manager to plan each student's Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) schedule.
- **Student Support:** Providing prompt assistance to students facing academic or personal challenges.

- **Evaluation Oversight:** Confirming that preceptor evaluations of student performance are completed and submitted by the last Friday of each SCPE.

Evaluation of Clinical Sites by the Program

The program evaluates clinical sites and preceptors both initially and on an ongoing basis to ensure a high-quality clinical education and assess the site's physical facilities, patient populations, safety, and student supervision. This ongoing evaluation includes analyzing student performance at the site from preceptor evaluations and End-of-Rotation (EOR) exams, as well as conducting in-person or virtual site visits. The data collected from these evaluations helps the program identify strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring students consistently receive effective training.

Preceptor Evaluations of Student

Preceptors must submit student performance evaluations by the last Friday of each Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE). Submitting evaluations late will result in an incomplete grade for the student which can affect progression, graduation date as well as financial aid. The preceptor or their designee must submit the evaluation form, not the student, to the program, and the evaluation must be completed by the preceptor of record. Preceptors are encouraged to complete these evaluations with the student to provide direct feedback. Students, in turn, should actively seek this feedback if it's not immediately offered.

Evaluation of Clinical Sites by Students

Upon completing a rotation, each student is required to submit an evaluation for the clinical site. Students should provide professional feedback that is constructive and intended to improve the educational experience for future students. The clinical team carefully reviews these evaluations and promptly addresses any concerns or issues that students raise.

Student Responsibilities During Clinical Rotations

As a PA student, your clinical rotations are a critical part of your education. Here's what's expected of you:

Before and During Rotations

- **Contact Your Preceptor:** At least two weeks before a new rotation, contact your preceptor or their designated person to confirm your start time, location, and whom to report to. If you can't reach someone within 48 hours, immediately contact your Clinical Coordinator for help.
- **Adhere to Policies:** Always be familiar with and follow all Program policies and procedures.
- **Maintain Professionalism:** Consistently demonstrate professional behavior.
- **Prepare Thoroughly:** Review relevant concepts for each Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) to prepare.

Clinical Practice and Supervision

- **Work Under Supervision:** You must always work under the direct supervision of an assigned preceptor or a program alternate. You are never allowed to manage a patient's care alone. All patients must be reassessed with your preceptor before discharge. Do not relay information or assessments to patients or families without your preceptor's approval.
- **Commit to Full-Time Work:** Follow your site/preceptor's schedule, including any on-call or weekend shifts. While exact hours vary, you should work **approximately 150 hours** and log approximately **120 patient encounters** over each 5-week SCPE.
- **Make Up Missed Time:** Ensure you make up any missed time to gain a comprehensive clinical experience.
- **Seek Learning Opportunities:** Actively look for chances to learn on every rotation, even if it means longer days, nights, or weekends.
- **Augment Learning:** Review all course learning outcomes and objectives for each SCPE. Supplement your clinical experiences with independent research and discussions with your preceptor as needed.

Professional Identification and Documentation

- **Identify as a PA Student:** Regardless of previous titles (e.g., RN, RT), you must only identify as a PA Student. Verbally and visually (via a badge), always identify yourself as a "PA Student" to every patient, preceptor, and staff member.
- Wear a Clean **white lab coat** at all times while in the clinical setting.
- **Proper Documentation:** Any documentation you write must include your name followed by "PA-S." Do not use other professional designations.
- **Appropriate Activities:** Participate only in activities appropriate for your stage of development. You may perform procedures within the scope authorized by the PA program, preceptor, and clinical site, but always with preceptor approval and supervision.

Evaluations and Logs

- **Complete Self-Assessments:** Complete the **Mid-rotation Evaluation**
- **Evaluate Preceptors/Sites:** Complete the **Student Evaluation of the Preceptor/Site** for each rotation, providing constructive feedback on both positive aspects and areas for improvement by the last day of the rotation
- **Complete Safety Evaluation:** Fill out the **72-hour site safety evaluation within 72 hours of starting the new rotation, even if at the same location.**
- **Prepare for Exams:** End-of-rotation exams are based on specific rotation and learning objectives. Clinical experiences will vary, so adapt your preparation.
- **Maintain Logs:** Keep a detailed time, patient and procedure log of all encounters in **Exxat**. If all required logging is not completed, then graduation, financial aid as well as progression may be affected.
- **Adhere to Compliance:** Always abide by **HIPAA standards** and follow **OSHA guidelines** for universal precautions as well as any site specific policies.

Clinical Preceptor Responsibilities During Clinical Rotations

Clinical preceptors play a vital role in shaping the next generation of Physician Assistants. Their key responsibilities include:

1. **Lawfulness and Supervision:** Preceptors must comply with current laws, regulations, and medical practice standards. They are required to **countersign all orders and charts** and **supervise all patient care** carried out by the student.
2. **Non-Discrimination:** Preceptors must not discriminate against any student or patient based on age, creed, handicap, national origin, race, gender, or sexual orientation.
3. **Licensure and Certifications:** Preceptors **must maintain current licensure and certification (if applicable)**. Any lapses will prevent the student from participating in the clinical rotation.
4. **Collaboration on Learning Outcomes:** Preceptors work collaboratively with the student to ensure **Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) learning outcomes** are met. These outcomes are assessed via student evaluations and are detailed in the rotation's syllabus.
5. **Supervision of Student Activities:** Preceptors ensure the highest standards of patient care and safety while providing a sound educational experience. Under their supervision, students should be:
 1. Obtaining patient histories and performing physical examinations.
 2. Performing procedures on patients.
 3. Presenting patient cases.
 4. Selecting diagnostic tests.
 5. Creating assessments, plans, and patient education for cases.
6. **Evaluation and Mentorship:** Preceptors provide **ongoing and timely verbal and written feedback** to the program on student evaluation forms. This feedback covers clinical performance, knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and critical thinking. They also delegate increasing levels of responsibility as the student's experience and expertise grow.
7. **Scholarship:** Preceptors assign relevant outside readings, demonstrate clinical skills, and assess the student's oral case presentations and critical thinking abilities.
8. **Orientation:** Preceptors introduce the student to appropriate personnel and inform them of the student's role. They **orient the student to the clinical setting**, discuss site policies, physical location, safety and review the rotation's learning outcomes and expectations.
9. **Schedule:** Preceptors establish the student's **full-time work schedule**, mirroring their own, including any on-call, evening, or weekend shifts. Preceptors will not change schedules to students' requests. Preceptors will not be responsible for PAARs as this has to be approved at the Program level. Students should never ask for days off to study, for travel or for program meetings without cc'ing their clinical coordinator.
10. **Safety:** Preceptors provide a **safe learning environment**. They must immediately notify Program personnel and students of any emergencies (weather-related or otherwise) requiring evacuation. They must also promptly report any identified issues to the CCPA Program clinical team.
11. **Communication:** Preceptors immediately inform the program if a student develops personal problems requiring attention or if academic circumstances arise that may prevent them from meeting learning outcomes before rotation completion.
12. **Referral:** If behavioral health or wellness concerns arise, preceptors **refer students to TimelyCare**, the 24/7 virtual extension of ATSU Behavioral Health & Wellness resources, to support their well-being

Program Responsibilities During Clinical Rotations

The Central Coast Physician Assistant (CCPA) Program is committed to providing high-quality clinical education. Our responsibilities for clinical rotations include:

- **Orienting Preceptors:** Orient preceptors to the specific student learning outcomes for each rotation.
- **Providing Insurance:** Provide general liability insurance for all students.
- **Evaluating Clinical Sites:** Evaluate sites to ensure they offer appropriate educational experiences.
- **Reviewing Student Feedback:** Review evaluations of clinical sites/preceptors and address any concerns promptly.
- **Supporting Students:** Maintain contact with students to answer questions and assist with problems.
- **Communicating Learning Outcomes:** Provide clear learning outcomes for each rotation located in each syllabus.
- **Assigning Grades:** Assign rotation grades, based on the criteria outlined in the respective syllabi.
- **Monitoring Competency Progression:** Monitor student progression to ensure they are on track to meet the program's overall graduate competencies.

Mandatory End of Rotation (EOR) Activity Attendance

Students are required to participate in all End of Rotation (EOR) assessments and callback day activities. These include, but aren't limited to, End-of-Rotation Exams, Virtual Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (VOSCEs), Case Presentations, PANCE review lectures, and clinical skill assessments. Planned Absence Approval Requests (PAARs) for EOR activities will not be approved on EOR exam or call back days. Also, if a student fails an EOR exam they are required to meet with their clinical coordinator the next day. If they do not show up, then they will be given a professionalism warning.

Clinical Rotation Attendance Policy

Attendance and punctuality for ALL clinical rotation days are mandatory. Students must work the same schedule as their clinical preceptor(s), including any on-call work nights or weekends. Clinical time on the rotation is based on the preceptor's schedule to work an average of 40 hours a week. Students should seek out opportunities to learn while on every rotation, which may entail longer days, nights, and weekends. It is up to each preceptor to determine the schedule with the student, which may or may not include University holidays. A student who becomes aware that they will be unable to achieve adequate exposure in a rotation due to the preceptor's schedule or absence should immediately contact the clinical team to pursue a schedule adjustment or site re-assignment.

If a student is going to be absent for an emergency, the student MUST notify both the RDPAE/preceptor and the Clinical team by email by 8:00 am on the day of the absence, noting the reason for the absence. If an absence is considered unexcused, the student needs to follow these steps, and the clinical days missed due to ANY absence MUST be made up as assigned by the course director. If the assigned make-up work/clinical hours are not completed by the end of the clinical rotation, an "I" (incomplete) will be recorded for the course.

Mandatory End of Rotation (EOR) Activity Attendance Policy

Students are required to participate in all End of Rotation (EOR) assessments and activities (Ex. End of Rotation Exams, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), Case Presentations, PANCE review lectures, and clinical skill assessments.)

Clinical Site Safety (A1.02e)

To ensure safety at clinical rotation sites, the Program conducts site visits and 72 hour safety forms to evaluate the safety of each clinical site. The Program immediately discontinues any clinical site deemed unsafe. If a student feels unsafe at a clinical site, the student should immediately report this to the preceptor and RDPAE. If on-site personnel do not handle the situation immediately, the student must report it to the Director of Clinical Education on the "clinical team" email (ccpa-clinical@atsu.edu). The Program takes student safety seriously and will promptly investigate any concerns.