

School of Health Professions Physician Assistant Program



Didactic Student Manual

2025 - 2027

As a student enrolled in the Baylor College of Medicine School of Health Professions' (SHP) academic programs, you should be knowledgeable of the College's policies, rules, regulations, and administrative procedures that affect you. This Student Handbook provides guidelines and policies for all Health Professions students as well as specific information for your particular academic program. Students are responsible for all the information presented in the Student Handbook of the School of Health Professions and the information contained in the manuals of the Physician Assistant Program.

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Table of Contents

Section 1

Requirements for Master of Science Physician Assistant Program

Program Values, Vision and Mission	6
Curriculum Pedagogy.....	6
Requirements	8
Expected Student Learning Outcomes	9
Entrustable Professional Activities	9

Program and Student Performance Evaluation

Evaluation Protocol	10
Evaluations Required by Students	10
Course and Rotation Assessment	10
Assessment of Knowledge and Skill Attainment.....	11
Degree Plan	13
Curriculum Sequencing.....	14
Interim and Final grades	15

Section 2

Physician Assistant Program

Professionalism	17
Attendance	17
Academic Honesty.....	19
Good Academic standing	20
Remediation.....	20
Technical Standards.....	20

Managing the Course of Study

Academic Advising	20
Faculty and Student Communication	21
Stress Management	21
Student Mental Health Services	22
Ombuds office.....	22
Student Grievances	22
Student Disability Accommodations	22
Electronic Communications	24

Miscellaneous Program Policies

General guidelines.....	24
Grading Reports	24
Examinations	25

Section 3

Instructional Resources

Academic and Exam Schedules.....	28
Textbooks and Instruments	28
Instructional Media.....	28
Blackboard.....	28

Online Evaluation Platform	29
Academic Success Center	29
TMC Library	29

Professional Information and Agency Resources

Robert J. Luchi Society (RLS)	30
Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA)	30
Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA)	30
Texas Gulf Coast Physician Assistant Association (TGCPAA)	30
Texas Physician Assistant Board (TPAB)	30
Texas Medical Board (TMB)	30
National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)	31

Section 4

Academic Calendar	32
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Section 1

Requirements for Master of Science Physician Assistant Program

Historical Perspective
Program Values, Vision and Mission
Curriculum Pedagogy
Didactic Instruction
Clinical Instruction
Master's Paper Research
Student Research Day
Requirements for Program
Expected Student Learning Outcomes
Entrustable Professional Activities

Program and Student Performance Evaluation

Evaluation Protocol
Evaluations Required by Students
Course and Rotation Assessment
Assessment of Knowledge and Skill Attainment
Post-Graduate Readiness for Practice Assessment
Degree Plan
Curriculum Sequencing

Requirements for Master of Science Physician Assistant Program

Historical Perspective

Impetus for establishment of a Physician Assistant (PA) Program at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) arose from the College's Ten-Point Expansion Plan for the '70s and establishment of a Center for Allied Health Manpower Development that would assist in the preparation of individuals to help physicians address the unmet need for medical care in Texas. The Certificate Program began in 1971 as a cooperative effort of the Houston VA Medical Center and BCM. In 1974, responsibility for the training of physician assistants shifted to the departments and faculty of BCM. These curricular enhancements were followed in 1975 by implementation of an upper-division undergraduate program, with graduates receiving the Bachelor of Science degree from the College. In 1988, faculty within the BCM Department of Community Medicine proposed a Master of Science degree curriculum for PA education. The departmental proposal received approval by the Board of Trustees in 1989. In July 1990, the College became the first institution in Texas and the fourth in the nation to grant the Master of Science degree upon completion of a PA program. The PA Program now resides within the BCM School of Health Professions (SHP).

Physician Assistant Program Mission Statement: The BCM Physician Assistant Program educates physician assistants on the principles and practices of medicine to provide quality healthcare to diverse populations and optimize health in a broad range of settings.

Physician Assistant Program Vision Statement: The BCM Physician Assistant Program will develop a diverse workforce committed to service and improvement of healthcare through educational innovation and sustained excellence.

Physician Assistant Program Values Statement: The core institutional values embraced by the BCM PA Program's faculty include respect, integrity, innovation, teamwork, and excellence.

The Goals of the Baylor College of Medicine Physician Assistant Program:

- **Enrollment and Retention:** Recruit, enroll and retain a diverse community of highly qualified applicants committed to the PA profession.
- **Curriculum:** Offer curriculum that provides foundational knowledge and analytical skills for the entry-level practice of clinical medicine and lifelong learning.
- **Graduate Preparation:** Prepare graduates that exhibit respect and compassion for others, responsiveness to diverse populations and a commitment to ethical, legal, and regulatory standards guiding clinical practice.
- **Practice Preparedness:** Prepare graduates who are confident to enter the profession with skills and knowledge requisite to entry-level practice as a Physician Assistant.

Curriculum Pedagogy

The innovative 30-month program was designed to address advances in genetics, immunology, diagnostic technologies, clinical therapeutics, emergence of the information sciences, recent changes in the economics of medical care, and decision making in relationship to the provision of care. The curriculum of the graduate program uses a creative combination of courses in the administrative, behavioral, and medical sciences organized and delivered in the following manner.

- First, the attitudes and skills of critical thinking and self-directed learning are developed within courses using case, team, problem and evidence-based learning techniques.
- Second, students are provided a framework from which to view humans as members of an interactive society through service-learning activities coupled with critical reflection.
- Third, the interpersonal, oral and written communication skills of students are assessed during courses and clinical experiences using standardized patients.
- Fourth, students begin the clinical phase of their training with an understanding of the health care

system, provider roles and responsibilities, and information systems before they are asked to interface with other professionals, interdisciplinary teams, and patient record systems.

- Fifth, students are provided an understanding of cultures, personality and physical development, abnormal behavior, and the biopsychosocial model before in-depth study of normative responses to stress, illness, injury and at-risk behaviors.
- Lastly, students are introduced to the principles of public health, clinical prevention, epidemiology, and research methods before undertaking learning experiences that challenge them to identify and use treatments that have proven effectiveness.

Approached in the above fashion, the curriculum presents each student with the opportunity to appreciate the narrative nature of the illness experience, the intuitive and subjective aspects of the clinical method, and the principles of evidence-based practice.

Didactic Instruction - The first 13 months of the curriculum are delivered over six academic terms and provides students with a strong foundation in the behavioral, biological, social, ethical, diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of living upon which to place their subsequent studies and practice experiences within the clinical phase of the curriculum. The courses to be completed during the didactic phase of the curriculum are shown below. Team and evidence-based learning strategies are used extensively throughout the didactic phase of instruction as a means of fostering attitudes and skills essential to critical thinking and life-long learning.

Clinical Instruction - The 17-month clinical phase of the curriculum is comprised of three core areas of activity: a clinical core, research core, and integration core. The clinical and integration cores offer students an in-depth exposure to individuals of all genders and all ages seeking preventive, acute and chronic disease management services. Over a period of 15 months, each student will complete eleven required rotations in the areas traditionally defined by emergency medicine, family and community medicine, geriatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, physical medicine and rehabilitation, psychiatry, and surgery. While assigned to various ambulatory clinics, emergency centers, in-hospital, and long-term care settings each student will interview and examine patients, identify health care risks and problems, transmit patient information in verbal and written form to physicians, obtain specimens for diagnostic testing, participate in surgeries, monitor programs of evaluation and therapy, and discuss health risk behaviors with patients and families. These skills are coupled with the application of scientific concepts to further understand the pathologic processes underlying a wide range of injury and illness. It is the successful completion of this phase of the curriculum that prepares the student to deliver quality illness prevention, injury intervention and disease management services in a wide variety of practice settings (see Figure 1).

Master's Paper Research - Evidence-based practice has emerged as the standard by which established and future providers will be expected to execute the delivery of medical care. Three required learning experiences are used to shape the students' ability to identify questions that may be answered through investigation and properly convey their findings to others. Knowledge of the research process is explored in-depth during the Research I course. Following completion of the course, students will identify, research and answer a question using the research method coupled with statistical strategies under the mentorship of two faculty members with expertise in the area under investigation. During the Research Core, students come out of the clinical setting and are assigned full-time to the Master's Paper Research Coordinator for two four-week periods of time. While so assigned, each student participates in orientations, conferences, work group sessions, and mock presentations. The product of these activities is the written Master's Paper and the Poster presented during the annual School of Health Professions J. David Holcomb Research Day. Preparation of the Master's Paper and the Poster are viewed as a means by which to further develop each student's ability to communicate essential information to others.

Research leading to the Master's Paper can involve: [1] Retrospective chart reviews to answer questions regarding clinical outcomes or to further interpret and compare laboratory results with current practice protocols; [2] Prospective studies assessing outcomes of a clinical or educational intervention; [3] Surveys to gather data on issues such as physician assistant attitudes, roles, and/or education or patient satisfaction regarding a clinical or educational intervention; [4] Meta-analyses/case studies to draw upon the results of other research and literature reviews in addressing specific research question, or [5] Other research

deemed appropriate by the student's research mentors and the Program Director. Regarding case studies, the topic must be generated from an actual case in which the student was involved.

Research Day – School of Health Professions Research Day occurs the week prior to graduation each year. The posters and presentations provide opportunities for students to share publicly the results of their research, discuss the implications of their findings with faculty and other students, and gain experience in presenting research data in a scholarly environment. All third year PA students are required to participate in the competition.

Requirements for entering the program

Vaccination Requirements – Students with clinical rotations at affiliated institutions may be required to be vaccinated prior to arriving onsite at those affiliate locations regardless of whether Baylor College of Medicine approved an exemption. BCM cannot guarantee that alternate locations will be available for students prevented—by affiliate vaccination or other requirements—from performing their course of study, clinical rotations, or other program-required training. This potentially renders students unable to complete their course of study or receive degrees or certifications demonstrating training completion.”. If you have any concerns regarding your vaccination status, please be proactive in notifying the Program Director, Elizabeth Elliott, immediately at elliott@bcm.edu.

Malpractice Insurance - A professional liability insurance policy providing adequate malpractice coverage for each student must be in effect at the time each student begins their involvement with patients during the pre-clinical phase of the program. This is provided by Baylor College of Medicine.

HEPA Masks - Each student must be fitted for a HEPA mask before they can be permitted on clinical sites. A HEPA mask protects you from airborne pathogens, especially tuberculosis. They come in several sizes and models and must be individually fitted. A specific required time will be arranged during the didactic year for you to be fitted for the HEPA mask. A representative of the Environmental Safety Section at Baylor does the fitting and will provide each student with a card showing the size of mask to be worn. Once you have been fitted, you can obtain the appropriate mask from any clinical facility in which you are working. Carry your card with you when entering clinical sites.

Basic Life Support - It is the responsibility of each student to obtain and maintain BLS certification through an approved course throughout the entire PA Program curriculum, both didactic and clinical. Each student is expected to complete BLS training before seeing patients in the hospital or the outpatient setting. This typically begins during the month of July of the didactic year. A copy of each student's valid BLS certification card is maintained in the student's file in the PA Program office. Students are responsible for providing the PA Program with this documentation on a timely basis.

Requirements for Graduation - The following requirements for the Master of Science degree are expected to be completed during 30 consecutive months after admission to the program. In this context, students must:

- Satisfactorily complete 66 semester hour credits of basic science and professional courses in the didactic phase of the curriculum with a final grade of “B” or better.
- Satisfactorily complete the high-stakes comprehensive written and practical Clinical Readiness Assessment with a grade of “B” or better.
- Satisfactorily complete 68 semester hour credits of core and integration rotations, research seminars and cultural and professional courses in the clinical phase of the curriculum with a final grade of “B” or better.
- Satisfactorily complete the Clinical Skills Assessment with a cumulative final grade of “B” or better.
- Satisfactorily complete the high-stakes comprehensive Practice Readiness Assessment with a final grade of “B” or better.
- Produce a written Master's Paper and Master's Paper Poster meeting all guidelines set forth by the

PA Program faculty that result in the receipt of all required institutional signatures along with the receipt of 4 semester hour credits.

- Consistently meet the standards of conduct and professionalism set forth by the College.

Following satisfactory completion of the required 134 semester hour credits and measures of performance, each student in the PA Program is recommended for graduation to the Health Professions Student Promotions Committee. A decision by the Committee that each of these academic standards has been met leads to award of the Master of Science degree on December 31st of the year of graduation.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes - The learning experiences within the didactic, clinical and research phases of the curriculum of the PA Program are designed to develop each student's ability to demonstrate the following competencies by the time of graduation. Each of the Student Learning Outcomes below requires the integration of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

- **SLO 1 Foundations for Clinical Practice:** Demonstrate understanding of the scientific, clinical and public health foundations underlying illness prevention and disease management.
- **SLO 2 Risk Causality:** Demonstrate understanding of the historical, social, family and community context of illness prevention and disease management.
- **SLO 3 Assessment:** Explain, conduct and document a systematic assessment and plan for disease prevention, illness stabilization and injury management.
- **SLO 4 Critical Thinking:** Use critical analysis skills to select and apply illness prevention and disease management strategies for use in clinical practice.
- **SLO 5 Advocacy:** Exhibit cultural humility and professional behavior in all interactions with other care team members, individuals, and families.
- **SLO 6: Communication:** Utilize interpersonal communication skills that result in effective information exchange with individuals, their families, and the care team.
- **SLO 7: Collaborative Practice:** Understand and participate in the interdisciplinary prevention and management of illness and injury.
- **SLO 8: Practice-based Learning:** Use analytical and counseling skills to select, implement, and sustain effective solutions for illness prevention through disease stabilization.
- **SLO 9: Information Systems:** Use clinical data systems to support care decisions and the provision of effective, efficient care.
- **SLO 10: Systems-based Practice:** Analyze epidemiological, environmental, and other appropriate scientific data related to the health of individuals and target populations.

Entrustable Professional Activities - To perform in the manner described by the above competencies, each student must be able demonstrate the following executable, observable, and measurable EPAs.

- **EPA 1** Recognize personal prejudices and biases that affect one's ability to care for an individual.
- **EPA 2** Develop rapport and atmosphere of inclusivity with individuals from any background.
- **EPA 3** Elicit preventive screening and problem-based health history and physical examination.
- **EPA 4** Select and properly order appropriate diagnostic studies.
- **EPA 5** Screen and identify abnormal diagnostic study findings.
- **EPA 6** Synthesize collected data to identify health-related concerns.
- **EPA 7** Formulate an accurate differential diagnosis for any given patient presentation.
- **EPA 8** Communicate findings obtained through interview and exam in written and oral formats.
- **EPA 9** Generate care plans relevant to the management of a range of health concerns.
- **EPA 10** Implement problem management and treatment decisions for individuals.
- **EPA 11** Provide continuous care of individuals in a variety of settings.
- **EPA 12** Evaluate and treat life threatening illnesses and injuries.
- **EPA 13** Recognize and provide recommendations to modify at-risk behaviors.
- **EPA 14** Consult and refer based upon illness severity and personal level of confidence.
- **EPA 15** Use critical analysis skills to evaluate the medical literature.
- **EPA 16** Integrate community resources into care plan.
- **EPA 17** Implement public health principles in a clinical setting.
- **EPA 18** Recognize global health issues that impact healthcare.

- **EPA 19** Demonstrate principles of effective communication and professionalism as a member of an interdisciplinary care team.

The learning experiences within the didactic, clinical and research phases of the curriculum are designed to develop each student's ability to demonstrate these responsibilities.

Program and Student Performance Evaluation

Evaluation is an essential part of assuring ongoing quality of an educational program. One of our responsibilities as faculty members of the College is to systematically review the effectiveness of the education provided all students enrolled in the PA Program. The assessment process is used to judge the program's compliance with the standards and guidelines for accreditation. It is this same assessment process that leads to necessary changes in the admission, curriculum and other aspects of the program. Another aspect of the assessment process involves our determining your level of preparedness at pre-determined intervals throughout the didactic and clinical phase of the curriculum.

Evaluation Protocol - The on-line evaluation process uses several evaluations to gather information on the quality and consistency of the learning experiences offered and the effectiveness of the overall program. The collection and analysis of information is carried out each academic term. The information amassed in this manner allows us to better understand specialty practice interests, student-perceived abilities to perform role-related responsibilities, the level of knowledge and skills attainment by students, the consistency of clinical learning experiences over time, and the impact of graduates in the practice setting over time. Your role in this process is outlined below.

Evaluations Required by Students - All students in the PA Program are required each term to complete an evaluation for each instructor and preceptor involved and each course and rotation offered during that term. Didactic phase evaluations must be completed and turned in by the end of the first week of the following term (Friday by 5 pm). Failure to complete didactic instruction evaluations by the deadline can result in a professionalism citation. Clinical rotation and preceptor evaluations must be completed by the end of each Senior Day session.

Course and Rotation Assessment - Several evaluation tools along with small group sessions are used to assist PA faculty understand how well the didactic and clinical phases of the PA curriculum are functioning. Each of these tools is briefly described below.

The PA Program reserves the right to change, add, or remove evaluations and assessments and the right to change the method and timing of their release.

- *Course Evaluations*
Multiple electronic instruments are used to help determine the effectiveness of a course presented during the didactic phase of the PA curriculum. The first is the Lecturer Evaluation (LE) that is delivered to each student at the start of each didactic term or before each Senior Day. The LE seeks information about a faculty member's teaching effectiveness along nine parameters. The second tool is the Course Evaluation (CE) that is provided to each student shortly following the finish of each academic term. The CE seeks information about the effectiveness of each course offered. You will also complete Small Group Preceptor Evaluations for various courses. Similarly to the Lecturer Evaluation, the Small Group Preceptor Evaluation will assess a faculty member's teaching effectiveness in directing a small group activity.
- *End-of-Didactic Year Evaluation*
The EDYE is administered to students at the end of the final didactic term. We use the information generated to understand your impression of how various aspects of the didactic curriculum affected your learning experience. The elements assessed encompass course objectives, textbooks and examinations, faculty and staff, specific courses, and those moments that stand out in your mind as highlights, strengths, and areas in need of improvement.
- *Clinical Rotation Evaluations*
Three instruments are used to help determine the effectiveness of the clinical phase of the curriculum.

The Student Evaluation of Rotation (SER) completed at the end of each core rotation, is used to determine the ability of the rotation to help you understand defined clinical principles, develop technical skills, and strengthen your capacity to perform essential role responsibilities. The Student Evaluation of Preceptor (SEP) is used to gather student opinions on effectiveness of faculty and resident preceptor as teachers. The last instrument is the Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance discussed further below.

- *Clinical Electronic Logging System*
The mobile-friendly Typhon (Physician Assistant Student Tracking, or PAST) system is used to keep a record of your involvement with patients and procedures and, thus, the ability of each clinical site to provide a consistent minimum level of student experience over time. These data are likewise used when responding to requests for clinical privileges from new graduates.
- *End of Clinical Year Evaluation*
The ECYE is administered to graduating students at the final Senior Day. We use the information generated to understand your impression of how various aspects of the program and the curriculum affected your learning experience. The elements assessed encompass rotation objectives, examinations, faculty and staff, specific rotations, and those moments that stick out in your mind as highlights, strengths, and areas in need of improvement.

Assessment of Knowledge and Skill Attainment - The formative stage of assessment begins at the time of enrollment, occurs and ends just prior to the time of graduation. Several methods are used to document your level of knowledge and skill attainment. The most frequently used tools include written multiple-choice examinations and the direct observations of skills performance using behavioral checklists and standardized patients. The approach to summative evaluation likewise involves the use of written and practical examinations. These various tools are used to determine your current level of performance based upon the completion of a series of defined learning experiences.

- *Peer Professionalism Evaluations* - This instrument is completed in select didactic courses to assess the professionalism exhibited by each member of a small group. You will evaluate your peers and be evaluated by them on four parameters that measure behavior in this group setting.
- *Didactic PACKRAT Examination*
The PACKRAT is a national examination administered to students at the end of the didactic phase of the curriculum. The multiple-choice questions provide an overall score in relation to other students nationally along with body/organ system sub-scores indicating areas of strength and weakness. A grade is not recorded as part of your program evaluation. Feedback is provided on areas in need of additional attention during clinical rotations.
- *Clinical Readiness Assessment*
The comprehensive CRA is used to assess to what extent you can use your knowledge and skills to identify, categorize, and further evaluate a range of symptoms, signs, diagnostic studies and abnormal physiologic states. The CRA is administered at the end of the didactic phase of the curriculum and contains written and Standardized Patient components. You are required to pass the CRA with a grade of 76 with a minimum 76 on the written component and a minimum of 70 on the Standardized Patient skills component.
- *Summative Evaluation* - In the last four months prior to graduation, a series of summative assessments will be administered. The case-based Practice Readiness Assessment (PRA) is comprised of the Practice Readiness Examination (PRE), a written exam, and the Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA), a skills exam. The Summative Faculty Professionalism Evaluation (PROF) assesses students on their exhibition of a set of professionalism parameters throughout the program. The Preceptor Practice Readiness (PPR) is a written evaluation released to each student's preceptor during the Family Community Medicine rotation in the clinical integration phase. Together these four assessments provide a summative measure of your ability to use your knowledge and skills to evaluate and manage an array of clinical problems. You are required to pass the PRE with a grade of 76 or higher and the CSA with a grade of 70 or higher.

- *Clinical PACKRAT Examination* – Students are retested with the PACKRAT national exam in the clinical year to indicate areas of strength and those areas in need of greater attention before sitting for national certification examination following graduation.
- *Preceptor Evaluations of Student Performance* - This structured evaluation looks at your ability to take a history, perform a physical exam, generate written documents, present and discuss cases, accomplish procedures, synthesize information, formulate management plans, interact with patients and other providers, and exhibit sound professional judgment. This instrument is completed at the end of each core clinical rotation.
- *Student Competencies Self-Assessment* – Grounded in self-efficacy theory, the SCSA is completed at six-month intervals in the didactic phase and then each Senior Day during the clinical phase. Students are asked to rate their perceived ability to perform the core competencies identified as requisite for graduation and entry-level PA practice.

Post-Graduate Readiness for Practice Assessment- The final area of information that you will be asked to provide to the program occurs following graduation. The feedback received from your employer and from you allows us to revisit the curriculum with an eye to your ability to effectively perform on entry to practice. The two sources of feedback are outlined below:

- *Graduate Survey* –This survey seeks information about the practice environment in which you work and the extent of your impact on the delivery of health care in the practice setting. This instrument is typically completed during the sixth month following your graduation from the program.
- *Employer Survey* – This instrument seeks information about your readiness to function in the practice setting and contribute to the delivery of health care. The instrument is to be completed by your supervising physician six months following your graduation.

You will learn more about each of the questionnaires and tools described as you begin to interact with the faculty, courses and rotations offered during the professional phase of the PA curriculum. The information obtained using these tools allows us to make informed decisions regarding the quality of the didactic and/or clinical experience offered any one student, group of students, or class over time.

2025- 2027 Degree Plan

Didactic Year (13 months)				Semester Hrs
Fall Semester (20 weeks)		Terms	Credit Hrs	35.5 credits
AHANA 65101	Anatomical Sciences I	1,2,3	6	
AHBIO 63121	Clinical Biochemistry	1,2	3	
AHPHY 64221	Human Physiology	2,3	4	
PAPRM 63801	Pharmacology I	2,3	3	
AHIMM 62131	Immunology for Health Professions	2	2	
AHGEN 61141	Clinical Genetics	3	1	
PACMD 61501	Clinical Medicine I	1	0.5	
PACMD 61502	Clinical Medicine II	2	1	
PACMD 63503	Clinical Medicine III	3	3	
PAPHD 66601	Physical Diagnosis I	1,2,3	6	
PAPSM 91901	Problem Solving in Medicine I	3	1	
PACLP 62301	Clinical Prevention	1,2	2	
AHHBC 62201	Health Behavioral Counseling I	2,3	1	
PAPRI 62411	Professional Role Issues I	1	1	
PACPH 62401	Communication and Perspectives in Healthcare I	1,2	1	
Spring Semester (24 weeks)				30.5 credits
AHANA 62102	Anatomical Sciences II	1	3	
AHPHY 62222	Human Physiology II	1	1	
PAPRM 62811	Pharmacology II	1	1	
PACMD 62511	Clinical Medicine IV	1	3	
PACMD 62512	Clinical Medicine V	2	3	
PACMD 62513	Clinical Medicine VI	3	3	
PAPHD 63611	Physical Diagnosis II	1,2,3	3	
PAPSM 62911	Problem Solving in Medicine	1,2,3	2	
PAWHI 62521	Women's Health	2	2	
PAPED 62531	Pediatrics	3	2	
PABDN 64431	Behavioral Dynamics	2	2	
PADIA 62701	Diagnostic Testing	1,2,3	1	
PAECG 62711	Electrocardiography	3	2	
PAETH 62421	Medical Ethics	2	1	
PATHR 61101	Therapeutics I	2,3	0.05	
PAMHM 81101	Medical Humanities	2	1	
Clinical Year (17 months)		Weeks	Credit Hrs	68 credits
PAIMI 78621	Internal Medicine-Inpatient	8	8	
PAIMO 75631	Internal Medicine-Outpatient	4	4	
PAGYN 74641	Obstetrics and Gynecology	4	4	
PAPDI 74751	Pediatric-Inpatient	4	4	
PAPDO 74761	Pediatric-Outpatient	4	4	
PAPSY 74671	Psychiatry	4	4	
PAERM 74681	Emergency Medicine	4	4	
PASUR 74691	Surgery	4	4	
PAGER 74721	Geriatric Medicine	4	4	
PAPMR 74781	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	4	4	
PACFM 78731	Community Family Medicine	4	4	
PARS1 74531	Research I	4	1	
PARS2 74541	Research II	4	4	
PARS2 74551	Research III	4	4	
PAMPP 74800	Master's Paper		4	
PAPRI 71511	Professional Role Issues II		1	
PAHBC 71201	Health Behavioral Counseling II		0.5	
PAPCP 74551	Preparation for Clinical Practice	4	4	
PACPH 71521	Communication and Perspectives in Healthcare II		1	
PATHR 61102	Therapeutics II		0.5	
Total Credits for 30 month Program				134 credits

Curriculum Sequencing

Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
	Clinical Genetics				
Clinical Biochemistry	Clinical Biochemistry				
Anatomical Sciences I	Anatomical Sciences I	Anatomical Sciences I	Anatomical Sciences II	Medical Ethics	Electrocardiography
	Human Physiology I	Human Physiology I	Human Physiology II	Behavioral Dynamics	Behavioral Dynamics
	Pharmacology I	Pharmacology I	Pharmacology II	Women's Health	Pediatrics
Clinical Medicine I	Clinical Medicine II	Clinical Medicine III	Clinical Medicine IV	Clinical Medicine V	Clinical Medicine VI
Physical Diagnosis I	Physical Diagnosis I	Physical Diagnosis I	Physical Diagnosis II	Physical Diagnosis II	Physical Diagnosis II
	Immunology for Health Professions	Problem Solving in Medicine I	Problem Solving in Medicine II	Problem Solving in Medicine II	Problem Solving in Medicine II
Communication and Perspectives in Healthcare I	Communication and Perspectives in Healthcare I		Diagnostic Testing	Diagnostic Testing	Diagnostic Testing
Professional Roles Issues I	Health Behavioral Counseling I	Health Behavioral Counseling I		Medical Humanities	
Clinical Prevention	Clinical Prevention			Therapeutics I	Therapeutics I

	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	Weeks
Clinical Core	Internal Medicine-Inpatient		Internal Medicine-Outpatient	Obstetrics Gynecology	Psychiatry	
	Pediatrics-Inpatient	Pediatrics-Outpatient	Emergency Medicine	Surgery		36
Integration Core	Geriatric Medicine	Physical Medicine Rehabilitation	Community and Family Medicine	Preparation for Clinical Practice		16
Research Core	Research 1	Research 2	Research 3			9
					Subtotal	60
Courses	Professional Role Issues II					1
	Health Behavioral Counseling II					
	Communication and Perspectives in Healthcare II					1
	Therapeutics II					
	Master’s Paper					4
					Total Weeks	66
					Total Credits	68

Distribution of Course Interim and Final Grades

Courses	Fall			Spring		
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Clinical Medicine	Final	Final	Final	Final	Final	Final
Anatomical Sciences	Interim	Interim	Final	Final		
Clinical Biochemistry	Interim	Final				
Clinical Prevention	Interim	Final				
Communication and Perspectives in Healthcare	Interim	Final				
Physical Diagnosis	Interim	Interim	Final	Interim	Interim	Final
Health Behavioral Counseling		Interim	Final			
Human Physiology		Interim	Final	Final		
Immunology for Health Professions		Final				
Pharmacology		Interim	Final	Final		
Clinical Genetics			Final			
Problem Solving in Medicine			Final	Interim	Interim	Final
Diagnostic Testing				Interim	Interim	Final
Behavioral Dynamics					Interim	Final
Medical Ethics					Final	
Professional Roles Issues					Final	
Medical Humanities					Final	
Women's Health					Final	
Electrocardiography						Final
Pediatrics						Final
Therapeutics I					Interim	Final

Section 2

Physician Assistant Program

Professionalism
Attendance
Professional Responsibilities
Academic Honesty
Academic Standing
Technical Standards

Managing the Course of Study

Academic Advising
Stress Management
Emotional Health Wellness
Computer Resources
Electronic Communications

Miscellaneous Program Policies

Grading Reports
Examinations
Exam Review and Feedback

Physician Assistant Program

Professionalism – Students enrolled in and graduates of the PA Program are expected to be professionally capable, intellectually mature and socially conscious individuals. Those qualities that reflect the highest ideals of health care practice and ethical behavior within PA students include:

- *Academic integrity* - students will personally complete all assignments, laboratory exercises, reports, and patient assessments identified as a requirement for any academic course or clinical experience.
- *Altruism* - students will consistently put the needs of the patient before their own.
- *Confidentiality* - information related to any scheduled examination or patient evaluation shall remain confidential unless otherwise authorized for discussion by an individual faculty member or clinical preceptor.
- *Commitment to Learning* - students will demonstrate intellectual curiosity, seek ways to learn about issues and patient problems, and improve their fund of knowledge to help others.
- *Interpersonal Communication* - students will demonstrate the ability to socialize with peers, develop rapport with faculty and professional staff, interact effectively with clinical preceptors and patients, and show courtesy and respect in all interpersonal interactions.
- *Personal Integrity* - students will perform in a way that is truthful and honest, accepting responsibility for their actions and working diligently to correct identified deficiencies.
- *Professional Responsibility* – students are expected to participate in all aspects of the learning process during all phases of the curriculum.
- *Personal Demeanor and Appearance* - students will be neat and clean with attire in the classroom being a matter of individual judgment. When in the clinical setting students are expected to be well groomed and appropriately dressed for working with patients and other health professionals.
- *Environmental Respect* - students are expected to demonstrate respect for the educational activities offered by the College, the physical facilities of the College and affiliated clinical training sites, the faculty and staff, and their peers.

Didactic Year Attendance Policy

The BCM PA Program values building community among students, and between students and faculty. Student presence in the classroom is an important driver of community formation and fosters supportive networks, communication skills, collaborative learning, and can also serve to decrease stress and isolation in the didactic phase of the program. Therefore, attendance is mandatory at all scheduled learning activities in the didactic year of the Program. The Program will follow the institutional academic calendar during the didactic year of the Program, including holidays and scheduled vacations.

Academic Schedule

Because of the complex nature of scheduling multiple courses with many instructors, we do not finalize a Term schedule until the first day of an academic term. However, the Program does occasionally need to reschedule events on the calendar after the first day of the term due to factors beyond our control. It is expected that students enrolled in the program will adjust to these schedule changes. As stated in your onboarding, you should expect to be available for learning activities between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday during each academic term.

Absence Bank

Each student has an absence bank of 56 hours for the didactic year. These hours can be used for both anticipated and unanticipated absences. These hours CANNOT be used during times when skills instruction, small group, workshops, critical thinking sessions, assessments, director/faculty hour, or exams

are scheduled. These absences will be tracked, and students will be notified when they have less than 16 hours of absences remaining.

Anticipated Absences

We realize that students will occasionally need time away from the program for wellness, events, personal obligations, and personal care. A student requesting an allowable anticipated absence should email the Program Director at elliott@bcm.edu and copy Yvonne Baier (cbaier@bcm.edu) **BEFORE** 11:59 PM the day before the requested absence. The absences will be deducted from the allowed absence bank. The email should copy all course directors for the missed learning sessions.

Unanticipated Absences

Unanticipated absence may occur from time to time due to personal or family illness, family death, or emergencies. In the case of an unanticipated absence, the student should contact the Program Director at elliott@bcm.edu and copy Yvonne Baier (cbaier@bcm.edu). The email should copy all course directors for the missed learning sessions. The absences will be deducted from the allowed absence bank. If a student is absent due to personal illness for more than two (2) days, a provider note is required to return to training.

Students are required to complete an absence form for both planned and unplanned absences, which will be submitted to the Program Director.



or <https://bit.ly/DidacticAbsence>

Extended Absences

Any anticipated or unanticipated absences requiring extended time away from the Program, including bereavement and other events (such as ceremonies and celebrations), will be discussed individually with the Program Director to determine the best course of action. Students should discuss these absences directly with the Program Director as soon as they are known.

Recurring Absences

Students with personal circumstances that require regular absences from the PA Program for healthcare or self-care appointments should discuss these with the Program Director.

Attendance Checks

The Program will conduct random attendance checks throughout the didactic year. It is expected that all students are present during these checks unless there has been an approved anticipated or unanticipated absence.

Lapse in Attendance Requirements

The Program considers attendance and participation pillars of professionalism while enrolled in the Program. If a student is found to be absent without notification OR exceeds 56 hours of absences without prior approval, a warning will be issued. Further unauthorized absences will result in a Professionalism Citation and any further disciplinary action as indicated by the policies governing student professional behavior.

Leave of Absence - The faculty of the PA Program recognizes that there are situations when a student may require time away from the Program. The mechanism by which a PA student may be away from the program for more than two or three days is the Leave-of-Absence. For more information, see the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the BCM Student Handbook.

Hospital Visitation and Conduct - Baylor students work in many Texas Medical Center facilities including the Ben Taub General Hospital, Houston VA Medical Center, The Methodist Hospital, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Baylor St. Luke's Hospital, and Texas Children's Hospital. While these are all teaching facilities, keep in mind that the latter four are also private hospitals with patients less accustomed to being visited by students. You *MUST* wear your white lab coat displaying your name badge, Baylor ID, and other appropriate institutional ID, when you visit patients in the hospital as part of Program activities.

When visiting a hospital ward or clinic either at the beginning of a clinical rotation or to find a patient for a history and physical assignment, go first to the area identified as a point of contact. Introduce yourself to the staff and explain the reason for your visit. While you are welcome in all Baylor affiliated facilities, some hospital staff may be less accustomed to encountering PA students on the ward. If you plan to go to a private facility as part of an educational assignment, please discuss your plans, in advance, with the appropriate PA Program course director. If you encounter problems when visiting a hospital, immediately contact a PA Program faculty member.

Clinical Setting Identification – All PA students when in the clinical setting are required to wear short white coats bearing the BCM logo, the BCM-specific ID badge and name tag. Further badging is required for all PA students in conjunction with clinical rotations occurring in specific affiliated teaching institutions. Further identification in the clinical setting involves participation in orientation programs, gaining access to individual Electronic Health Records, and to secure clinical areas.

Confidentiality - In accordance with HIPAA regulations, learners must maintain the confidentiality of patient information at all times. Never list patient identifying data on assignments. Avoid discussing details of cases that include information that could identify the patient. When discussing cases, do so in a private area where your conversation cannot be overheard.

The absence policy and its related procedures for the clinical phase of the curriculum are published in the Clinical Manual and presented and distributed during the Clinical Year Orientation on the final day of the didactic year.

Students are expected to maintain accurate and up-to-date location/address information and emergency contact information. Location/address updates and emergency contact updates can be made in the CAMS student portal.

Academic Honesty

The College recognizes honesty and integrity as necessary to the academic functions of the College. The following rules are promulgated in the interest of protecting the validity of the College's grades and degrees, and to assist students in developing standards and professional attitudes appropriate to academic life and the practice of medicine. Violation of the following rules can result in dismissal from the College.

- No student shall receive assistance not authorized by an instructor in the preparation of any assignment, laboratory exercise, report, or examination submitted as a requirement for an academic course or rotation.
- No student shall knowingly give unauthorized assistance to another student in such preparation.
- No student shall sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to another student material which can be shown to contain the questions or answers to any examination scheduled to be given at any subsequent date, in any course of study offered by the College.
- No student shall knowingly cheat, plagiarize the work of others, or submit another person's work as one's own.
- No student shall convey confidential patient information without authorization by an individual faculty member or clinical preceptor.

- No student shall falsify or present fictional patient information as real to fulfill requirements for work assigned by individual faculty members or clinical preceptors.
- No student shall alter, transfer, forge or in any way misuse an identification card, internet address, or other identification of an affiliated clinical facilities participating in the PA Program.

Good Academic Standing - In order to begin Clinical Rotations, a student must earn a passing grade in all courses in the pre-clinical (didactic) phase of the PA curriculum and pass the comprehensive Clinical Readiness Assessment. All grades included on the transcript are counted, including remedial and repeat grades. The repeat of any course or core rotation comes with the requirement that the student is responsible for the same academic work and examinations required of other students taking the same course or rotation. Re-examination in any course for a student that has been dismissed, suspended, or is on leave of absence is contrary to existing policy.

Course Remediation policy- Outlined in the School of Health Professions Handbook, Article 5.13
<https://www.bcm.edu/education/school-of-health-professions/students-resources/student-handbook>

Technical Standards - Enrolled students must have abilities and skills in the areas of observation, communication, sensory and motor coordination and function, intellectual-conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities, and behavioral and social attributes to navigate the complexities of the didactic and clinical phases of the PA Program curriculum effectively. Technical standards can be found at <https://www.bcm.edu/education/school-of-health-professions/students-resources/student-handbook>.

Students unable to resolve deficiencies in these areas with appropriate accommodation will be counseled to pursue alternate career paths.

Student Dismissal Guidelines- Physician Assistant students may be dismissed from the program for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Academic dishonesty
- Failure to possess ability and skill requisites necessary for completion of the program
- Failure to maintain academic standards
- Failure to maintain attendance standards
- Unprofessional conduct

Managing the Course of Study

Completing the documents required to get your course of study underway occurs prior to the New Student Orientation. There is no formal registration process for courses, clinical rotations or the Master's Paper, and no add/drop period similar to what you experienced in undergraduate school or other graduate programs. All newly enrolled students are automatically registered to begin the same two and one-half years of study and continue on that track unless encountering some academic difficulty. An in-depth orientation to the specifics of the PA Program takes place prior to the New Student Orientation and at the beginning of the program.

Academic Advising - At the time of matriculation, each student is assigned an Academic Advisor who is a faculty member with the PA Program in the SHP. Your Academic Advisor will assist you with the following:

- Interpreting your didactic and clinical course of study overall and on an academic term-by-term basis.
- Checking requirements for progression based on current level of preparation on an academic term-by-term basis.
- Listening to concerns and questions about course expectations, performance criteria, academic standing, or access to support resources when needed.
- Discussing academic performance and early warnings of academic difficulty in an effort to maximize your learning experiences.
- Assisting with your development of a plan to address issues of course complexity or academic difficulty on an as needed basis.

- Demonstrating genuine and sustained concern for your personal growth and connecting you with appropriate professional counselors should the need arise.
- Providing letters of recommendation in support of your required experiences while enrolled in the PA Program.

Students are required to meet with their assigned advisors once per academic term during the didactic year of the curriculum, and at the time of predetermined Senior Days during the clinical year. The focus of these meetings will be:

- Providing feedback on the progress in the curriculum in relationship to course, rotation and faculty expectations.
- Assisting students to understand and abide by the published policies and practices of the College, School and Program.
- Providing College resources to deal with issues of an academic and personal nature.

Prior to each scheduled advising session, students will be expected to complete the Student-Faculty Advisor meeting form that serves as the basis for their discussion with their faculty advisor. Students are expected to follow the recommendations of their advisor and to participate in a study plan or remediation plan to help ensure their success in the PA Program. A form will be created by the student and advisor which will be kept in your Student File and may be reviewed by you at any time during regular office hours. Please note that at NO time may your Academic Advisor act as your medical provider or act as a personal counselor. Your advisor may, however, refer you to available College resources and facilities and provide you with additional information to assist you in meeting your personal and educational goals.

Faculty-Student Communications-

Salutations – The term “professor” will be used by all Program Faculty when speaking of another faculty member during interactions with students. Students will refer to an individual PA faculty member as “Professor XXXXX” during interactions with lecturers, course directors, faculty advisors, and physical diagnosis preceptors. Physician lecturers are to be referred to as “Doctor XXXX.”

Phone Cards – Faculty phone numbers will be provided to didactic and clinical year students along with emergency resource contacts numbers to facilitate communication, especially in emergency situations. Faculty members are encouraged to carry these numbers on their cell phones as well.

Information Requests – Email requests by students of course directors and program leadership for information will be processed during the week with discretion used on the weekend with respect to responding in an effort to protect faculty personal time.

Emergencies – Both didactic and clinical year students encounter difficult personal life events that constitute emergencies. The first point of contact for an emergency will be the student’s Advisor. They should be contacted directly on their office phone or cell phone. The Advisor will, in turn, notify the Associate Director if the matter involves the didactic phase of the curriculum. If the student is in the clinical phase of the curriculum, the Advisor is to contact the Associate Director of Experiential Learning. If neither of these people is available, the next contact is the Program Director. If the student’s Advisor cannot be reached, the student should contact either the Associate Director or Associate Director of Experiential Learning depending on what phase of the curriculum they are engaged in. All emergencies are to be documented in the student’s record.

Stress Management - You must master a large amount of information and skills in a brief period of time. It is important that you establish ways to maintain balance in your life. We advise you to study hard but also make time for recreation. Maintain your support systems -- family and friends can be a tremendous source of strength and encouragement. Finally, the educational experience offered by the PA curriculum is a challenging and often stressful experience. As a faculty, we attempt to monitor the level of stress during individual advising sessions and during Director’s Hour time. Should you begin to feel overwhelmed, faculty members are here to assist you and refer you to the **Baylor College of Medicine Resources** when necessary. Do not hesitate to call on us for help.

Emotional Health & Wellness- The **Academic Live Care** provides confidential counseling, medication management, and virtual psychotherapy free of charge with unlimited services available 24/7. To learn more go to: <https://www.bcm.edu/education/academic-faculty-affairs/student-and-trainee-resources/student-wellness/emotional-mental-health-wellness>

To access the service, visit bcm.myahpcare.com/telehealth . Use ALC as the Service Key when signing up for an account. **Before your visit, you will be prompted for payment, at that time please use Coupon Code ALCBCM to waive payment.**

In addition, Baylor continues to offer services through the **Student and House Staff Mental Health Service** at Baylor College of Medicine including individual psychotherapy and psychopharmacology. Services are provided at no cost for up to 12 sessions. All provided services abide by the strictest rules of confidentiality and the service does not issue any report to administrative personnel within your department or any others of Baylor College of Medicine. Call 713-798-4881 to schedule an appointment.

When situations arise that could impede success in learning, students should access support and report concerns. Students may address concerns directly with faculty, staff, program directors, and deans, and should also review the following policies regarding grievances, mistreatment, and qualifying disabilities.

The **Ombuds Office** provides confidential guidance for handling problems, conflicts and concerns (https://intranet.bcm.edu/index.cfm?fuseaction=Policies.Display_Policy&policy_number=32.1.01). Reports through avenues described below are addressed confidentially to the extent possible to resolve the issue. BCM enforces an anti-retaliation policy to encourage everyone at BCM to take proper steps to point out problems and to recommend solutions.

Student Grievances – BCM is committed to treating all students respectfully and fairly and providing a quality educational environment and experience. Student Services Policy 23.8.01

https://intranet.bcm.edu/policies/index.cfm?fuseaction=Policies.Display_Policy&policy_number=23.1.08 describes how to appeal a grade, adverse academic action, other academic issue, or conduct, and to report nonacademic, professionalism, and mistreatment issues. Use the **Integrity Hotline** at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com> or via the Intranet at www.bcm.ethicspoint.com to report grievances. Appeals of grades or adverse academic actions must occur within 10 days of the grade being posted to the Student Portal or within 10 business days following personal notice of an adverse action.

Mistreatment – BCM is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of the BCM community. All individuals have the right to be free from all forms of sex and gender-based discrimination which includes sexual harassment, acts of sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. BCM enforces policies related to Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation https://intranet.bcm.edu/policies/index.cfm?fuseaction=Policies.Display_Policy&Policy_Number=02.2.25 and sexual misconduct and other prohibited conduct

https://intranet.bcm.edu/policies/index.cfm?fuseaction=Policies.Display_Policy&Policy_Number=02.2.26 These policies define prohibited conduct, describe mechanisms for reporting alleged violations, explain BCM's centralized investigation and adjudication procedures, and identify potential disciplinary actions and remedies. Report prohibited conduct you experience or witness via the Integrity Hotline (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/>) or the Intranet (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/>). Anonymous reports are investigated to the extent allowed by the information provided, and a system exists to provide confidential follow-up about steps taken.

Disability Services – BCM is committed to providing equal educational access for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The goal is to provide students with disabilities access to needed resources so that they are afforded every opportunity to do their best work. Further information about these services is available at: <https://www.bcm.edu/education/academic-faculty-affairs/student-services/student-disability-services>. Students with documented disabilities can seek accommodations by contacting Student Disability Services (713-798-8137) or by the Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Toni Gray (toni.gray@bcm.edu or title-ix@bcm.edu). If an accommodation is granted, the student is responsible for informing the course director of the approved accommodation prior to the first examination.

Classroom Etiquette and Dress Code - Students are expected to be courteous, respectful, attentive, and on time for all educational activities. This is particularly important during the didactic phase when you have many lecturers from the College and the community who will form an impression of you as an individual and as a class by the manner in which you present yourself in the classroom. For example, sleeping, texting, or conversing with another student during a lecture constitutes rude and offensive behavior. If you must arrive late or leave early, take precautions to not disturb the lecturer or your classmates. Ideally, inform the instructor before the lecture starts if you must leave early. You must wear your name badge, Baylor ID, and other appropriate institutional ID when you are in any Baylor educational space.

For synchronous remote activities, e.g., virtual classes (Teams), students are encouraged to be on camera. Microphones must be kept muted until the student desires/needs to speak. Ambient noises, e.g., pets, children, other adults must be controlled such that they do not interfere with the virtual learning environment.

Baylor College of Medicine is located in the Central Time zone. All scheduled course times, including office hours, chats, and assignment deadlines, are central standard time (CST).

All communication in discussion boards, chat forums, and via other online tools should be composed with tact, fairness, and common courtesy. Students should keep in mind that communication cues, such as body language, tone, and expression, are absent in an online forum and, as a result, misunderstandings can occur. Students are encouraged to be cautious about the wording and tenor of all communication and to observe basic netiquette guidelines. All communications should represent graduate level grammar, spelling, and syntax.

All students have the right to appropriately express opinions in discussions and other online forums. Attempts to dominate a discussion by posting threads excessively, intentionally changing the discussion topic, exhibiting an inappropriate or argumentative attitude or other disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

All students are encouraged to have a back-up plan for internet/computer access should they experience technical difficulties with their primary computer or internet service provider. If a student experiences technical difficulties (e.g., internet outage, power outage, weather-related issues, etc.) that prevent him or her from submitting an assignment, the student should contact the instructor immediately via phone or other communication method. The instructor will advise the student how to proceed with submitting the coursework.

Study Groups- Up to now in your academic career, you have been encouraged to focus on individual achievement and rank. Now that you are in professional training, it will be more helpful if you can put aside individual competitiveness. You can accomplish more by working together to master material and skills. Working through the process of developing a cohesive group out of diverse personalities also helps you develop team skills important to professional practice. Working together for mutual benefit begins to form a network of life-long friends who will soon be your professional colleagues.

Group study can provide a forum for discussion and debate, as well as helping students recognize gaps in their knowledge. It can provide structure to studying and assist progress for deadlines. Most students will read and consider subjects alone first and then get together with others to clarify areas of confusion and test their understanding. Often, just simple verbalization makes a dramatic difference in retention. Courses that require hands-on skill acquisition usually demand the use of study groups.

As students in the program, you are not allowed to be an instructor in an official capacity for the program. should you choose to participate in a student led review you are doing so unofficially. Student led reviews are not organized by faculty, and information may be different from what is presented during the course; therefore, attendance and use of information is at student discretion.

Employment While in the Program - Outside employment by students while in the didactic or clinical phase of the curriculum of the program is strongly discouraged. We recognize that employment may be a necessity for some students. If you choose to have outside employment, please realize that Program obligations will *NOT* be altered due to your work situation. It is expected that work obligations *WILL NOT INTERFERE* with attendance of scheduled classes, laboratories or assignments and that they *WILL NOT*

IMPEDE your learning process. Separate from the policies guiding Student Helper VI employment, NO student in the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum of the PA Program may substitute for clinical or administrative staff.

Computer Resources - The primary site for completing work that requires access to electronic resources should be the Academic Success Center on the second floor of the DeBakey Building. The guidelines for appropriate personal conduct apply to your conduct using the Baylor computer systems. Keep your personal passwords confidential. You are not to log in using another's password. To locate the official Baylor policy regarding access and security go to:

http://intranet.bcm.edu/index.cfm?fuseaction=Policies.Display_Policy&Policy_Number=12.2.01.

Duplication of Learning Materials - Learning materials are placed on the Blackboard website for student access rather than photocopying materials. This includes, but is not limited to, course descriptions, announcements, objectives, and assignments. You are expected to check the Blackboard website on a regular basis to obtain course assignments and other information vital to the completion of your courses. We encourage you to bring materials to be shared with the class on the website to the PA Program office in the appropriate electronic format. Any materials students feel must be copied for distribution must be approved in advance. The student designated to assist didactic faculty in the classroom is the one person with advance permission to make copies of lecture handouts when the presenter fails to bring an adequate number for distribution. Photocopying machines are available to students at several sites on campus. The TMC Library has multiple copiers and students may purchase copy cards for easy access.

Electronic Communications - A variety of electronic methods are used to maintain regular communication with you and your fellow classmates. The principle means of disseminating information to all students enrolled in the PA Program about courses, rotations, priorities and deadlines is email. Notices about schedule revisions, meetings or special events are posted to the shared electronic calendar. It is your responsibility to check your email, Calendar and Blackboard daily for course, rotation and administrative communications along with reporting any technical problems with the email account to the Information Technology Help Desk.

The final clinical year of the PA Program will be spent off-site. As such, communication during the clinical phase of the curriculum will involve the use of cell phones, site visits, and direct email to students. The primary mode of contact between students and faculty while students are assigned to off-site clinical settings will be a smartphone. Use of this approach makes it possible for each of us to reach one another without having to track down clinic and hospital unit telephones as we each go about our day.

By contrast, cell phones are NOT allowed in classroom settings because of the distraction caused by a ring tone. Students disrupting the classroom environment because of a cell phone alert will be asked to leave the classroom and return when the devices are not in their immediate possession.

Miscellaneous Program Policies

General Program Guidelines

1. Each Physician Assistant student must hold a valid driver's license.
2. Physician Assistant students may be assigned to clerkships and practicums that require living outside of Houston.
3. Physician Assistant students are responsible for personal expenses associated with out-of-town clinical clerkship and practicum assignments. In many cases no-cost housing can be arranged through Area Health Education Centers and other resources. These arrangements are not guaranteed.
4. Improvements and modifications to the curriculum occur on an ongoing basis to assure the best possible educational experiences for Baylor students. The PA Program maintains the freedom to change the curriculum without prior notice.
5. Physician Assistant students must comply with all institutional Baylor College of Medicine policies as outlined by the institution. <https://intranet.bcm.edu/policies/>

Grading Reports - At the end of each academic term, students may access their final grades by calling the Registrar or going on-line through the password-protected system (CAMS) to view their grades for the

academic period just completed. No grades are posted until reviewed by the Program Director. At the completion of a term, final exam grades will be released at the discretion of the course director via ExamSoft. Interim course and exam grades will be released at the discretion of the course director and Associate Program director.

Examinations - All examinations of cognitive knowledge administered during the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum are delivered electronically on your personal exam taking device and are given throughout each term and during the designated exam week. Students are required to be present for all formal assessments of knowledge and skills through 5 pm on the last day of the term. In cases of acute illness, documentation by an appropriate health care provider must be provided to the Program Director. In cases of death in the family, the Program Director may excuse the student from exams following consultation with a SHP Dean. **Prior approval of all other cases of absence is required. These cases must be presented in writing to the Course and Rotation Directors and the Program Director. Students who miss an examination for reasons that do not constitute an approved absence will receive a grade of "0" for the exam missed. Examinations missed because of inclement weather or excused absences will be made up at a later time.**

- Exams begin on the hour and must be started at the designated start time. If you are late to an exam, you must complete the exam during the time remaining. Failure to start an exam at the designated time will result in a professionalism citation.
- A privacy screen on your computer is required during each exam.
- A whiteboard is allowed during the exam. It must be no larger than 11 x 14. Your whiteboard must be empty when you enter the testing room and you will show your empty whiteboard to the proctor prior to starting the exam.
- The following is strictly prohibited during an exam: talking, leaving the exam room unless an emergency (must obtain permission from the proctor), scratch paper (erasable whiteboard no larger than 11 x 14 is permitted), books, backpacks, or reference material of any kind in the general area, smart watches, personal communication devices/smart phones, headphones. Cell phones must be turned off and cannot be on your person or anywhere near the exam table.
- Your computer's green screen and erased whiteboard must be shown to the proctor before you leave the exam room.
- Refer to exam taking guidelines on Blackboard for additional information.
- Exams taken remotely will utilize an electronic exam monitoring system. Recorded video will be analyzed by faculty to determine if there has been a breach of integrity during the exam.

Exam Review and Feedback - The purpose of feedback within the PA Program is to assist students in maximizing their academic performance so that they are in a position to fulfill their potential as a future healthcare provider. While the approach to feedback on performance varies throughout the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum based on instructional strategies incorporated within specific courses and rotations, there are several constant features. These constant features serve as the underpinning of the Examination Review and Feedback policy articulated below.

- Immediate individual and group performance feedback will occur in conjunction with Team-based Learning (TBL), critical thinking sessions (CTS), concept application (APP) and clinical skills evaluation (CSE) sessions with scheduled one-on-one feedback provided by the respective course director for low achieving students.
- Delayed individual and group performance feedback will be provided following the appropriate analysis of modular and interim examinations. Individual email messages will be sent by the appropriate faculty member to students whose performance was not passing directing them to meet with the Associate

Director to review and discuss their performance. Individual exam scores, which are not official grades, will be distributed after modular exams at the discretion of the course director.

- Delayed individual and group performance feedback will be provided following the appropriate analysis of each final course and rotation examination with attention paid to overall areas of weakness. Individual email messages will be sent by the appropriate faculty member to students whose performance was not passing directing them to meet with the Associate Director to review their overall performance, to identify areas of strength and weakness, to understand what factors if any may have contributed to their failing performance, and to discuss the options available for the remediation of unacceptable performance.
- Delayed individual and group performance feedback will be provided following the appropriate analysis of each high stakes clinical readiness assessment (CRA) components with attention paid to overall areas of weakness and demonstrated areas of strength. Individual email messages will be sent by the CRA Associate Director to students who failed the CRA exams, scheduling a one-on-one meeting to review their performance, to identify areas of strength and weakness, and set a date for the second attempt at the exam. Failure of the second attempt will result in an email from the Associate Program Director, informing the student of the need for a second one-on-one meeting, which will include the Program Director, to discuss the options available to the Promotions Committee for addressing repeated unacceptable performance.
- Delayed individual and group performance feedback will be provided following the appropriate analysis of each high stakes comprehensive readiness examination with attention paid to overall areas of weakness and demonstrated areas of strength. Individual email messages will be sent by the appropriate faculty member to students who failed the CRE and PRE exams directing them to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Program Director to review their performance, to identify areas of strength and weakness, and set a date for the second attempt at the exam. Failure of the second attempt will result in an email from the Program Director informing the student of the need for a second one-on-one meeting to discuss the options available to the Promotions Committee for addressing repeated unacceptable performance.
- High performing students may likewise request one-to-one meetings with the appropriate course director or rotation coordinator to obtain feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. For clinical year students, the one-to-one meetings will occur in conjunction with Senior Day during which OCSE performance will be reviewed.

Individual percentage scores rounded to whole numbers are to be provided to individual students. Assigned final grades for all didactic courses and clinical rotations are NOT to be provided to students until after they have been reviewed and approved by the Program Director. Grades are not available until after Promotions Committee meets. The grades will be available to students via CAMS.

Section 3

Instructional Resources

Academic and Exam Schedules
Textbooks and Instruments
Instructional Media
Blackboard
Online Evaluation Platform
Academic Success Center
TMC Library

Professional Information and Agency Resources

Robert J. Luchi Society (RLS)
Student Academy of American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA)
Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA)
Texas Gulf Coast Physician Assistant Association (TGCPAA)
Texas Physician Assistant Board (TPAB)
Texas Medical Board (TMB)
National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

Instructional Resources

As you begin and progress through the didactic and clinical phases of the MS PA Program, you will repeatedly find the need to locate textbooks, course packs and other resources to assist you in achieving the competencies expected by the time of graduation. The information presented below should be helpful.

Academic Schedules - The PA Program publishes an electronic Academic Calendar and Examination Schedule for the didactic and clinical phases of the PA Program. You can access the Academic Calendar on the BCM. The schedule is not subject to change throughout the year. This makes it possible for you to plan vacations and make travel arrangements. **It is important to note that you should plan to be here until 5:00 p.m. on the last day of testing during each exam week.** Exams are **NOT** switched to accommodate personal travel schedules.

Academic Calendar and Exam Schedule - Each academic term during the didactic phase of the curriculum follows a similar pattern: orientation to the term on the first day; lectures and skills activities that can extend from 8:10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on any one day; workshops in the evenings or the weekend (kept to an absolute minimum); and a week of exams. A limited number of interim and final exams will occur during the term.

Clinical Calendar and Exam Schedule - With the exception of the final clinical rotation, Wednesday will be the last day on all clinical services during the final week of the clerkship. Clinical year students are off as of 6:00 p.m. that evening and are to return on Thursday to participate in **required** Senior Day activities. Senior Day activities include lectures, written exams, competency testing, roundtable discussions, enrichment learning activities, next rotation orientations and other administrative tasks.

Detailed schedule will be provided to students prior to each Senior Day session. Senior Days are an integral component of the clinical phase of your training. **Attendance is mandatory.** Do not make plans to come late or depart early on designated Senior Days.

Textbooks and Instruments - Most courses presented during the pre-clinical phase of the curriculum draw upon several resources for the information requisite for your exposure to the knowledge and skills essential for subsequent areas of study. The faculty coordinator for each course is responsible for generating and providing each student with a course description containing introductory information about the course, grading and exam requirements, instructional and outcome performance objectives, lecture outlines, and assigned readings when a textbook is not required.

Each course and clinical learning experience offered as part of the curriculum has a required textbook and list of recommended texts. Where courses require projects, there is often a listing of databases to evaluate and web sites to seek out for information. In addition to texts, students will have to purchase equipment for use in the Physical Diagnosis course. The list of textbooks and equipment used during the didactic phase of the PA Program is presented to all students at the time of orientation.

Instructional Media – Supplemental resources are on file in the Academic Success Center for your use. Reserve items may be used in but not removed from the library. In addition to print materials, the library staff maintains an extensive array of electronic database and Internet resources for most courses and clinical experiences offered to BCM students. Faculty members also place course materials on the learning management system that can be accessed through the internet. The PA Program contributes to the instructional media resources in a most important way. Most lectures offered during each academic term of the didactic phase of the curriculum are recorded and made available for review.

Blackboard – Blackboard is a learning management system that allows instructors to develop and distribute course materials, assignments, links to quality Internet resources, examinations, and surveys. Blackboard can be accessed at <http://bcm.blackboard.com/>. Your password for Blackboard is issued by a Blackboard system administrator. Students will register themselves for each course as the academic schedule moves forward. You will be expected to use the PA Program course sites in Blackboard during both the didactic and clinical phases of your education. Similar to checking email, you are encouraged to

go to the Blackboard website for all courses on a daily basis to check on specific course materials.

Online Evaluation Platform – Most of the evaluations used to assess the effectiveness of instructors, courses, preceptors and clinical rotations along with student-perceived levels of confidence are distributed on a single online evaluation platform. The assessment of student performance carried out by clinical faculty likewise involves the use of this platform. You may use other platforms to complete specific self-evaluations. You will receive access to all platforms necessary after matriculation.

Academic Success Center – Excellent resources are available to you as a student in the Texas Medical Center. The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides curriculum support for Baylor students, faculty and residents. Located on the second, third and fourth floors of the DeBakey Center, the ASC includes large reading areas, open study carrels, group and individual study rooms, and computer labs. *Information regarding their programs can be found at <https://www.bcm.edu/education/academic-faculty-affairs/student-services/academic-success-center>.* The ASC houses a variety of self-instructional materials for basic and clinical sciences including textbooks, audiocassettes, computer programs, slide sets, videocassettes, old exams, syllabi, and interactive video. Materials are available for use in the ASC and may be signed out overnight for clinical presentations. For more information on the ASC, visit <https://intouch.bcm.edu/sites/trainees/SitePageModern/2429/academic-success-center>.

TMC Library - A regional member of the National Library of Medicine, the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center (HAM-TMC) Library is located just across the street from the Baylor campus. Your first introduction to the TMC Library will come during School of Health Professions orientation. The information derived from this will eventually be of assistance to you when it comes time to begin your Master's Paper. You access the library services from the Baylor Intranet at <https://intouch.bcm.edu/sites/faculty-affairs/SitePageModern/71167/tmc-library-portal>. You may access the library directly at <https://library.tmc.edu>. Your next click should be on PubMed to begin that all-important search for needed information. Of course, you may walk across the street and peruse the journal stacks for the most current issue.

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Robert J. Luchi Society (RLS)

The RLS is the PA student organization of Baylor College of Medicine. Its mission is to foster the personal and professional development of Physician Assistant students, encourage educational excellence, and to advocate at the local, state, and national level for students and professional issues. The RLS serves as the official BCM student body connection to the Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA) and the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA). The PA Program supports the mission and goals of the Robert J. Luchi Society. Website: <https://www.bcm.edu/education/school-of-health-professions/physician-assistant-program/student-life>

Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA)

SAAAPA is the national professional society for student physician assistants. Its membership includes both graduate and student physician assistants as well as categories for affiliate memberships. The Program strongly encourages students to be active in SAAAPA. The Student Academy meets yearly in conjunction with the AAPA at the annual spring conference to elect officers and representatives. Release time to attend this conference, held in May of each year, can be requested in writing to the Academic Coordinator or the Clinical Coordinator as appropriate. A SAAAPA student representative from your class will be elected and required to attend the national conference as well as keep the class informed of national PA issues throughout the year. Website: www.aapa.org and <https://www.aapa.org/about/aapa-governance-leadership/student-academy/>.

Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA)

There are over 50 constituent chapters of the AAPA nationwide. The Texas Academy of Physician Assistants is the state constituent chapter for PAs in Texas. TAPA works in concert with the AAPA to move the profession forward and provide public education for PAs practicing in the state of Texas. The faculty encourages you to become a member of the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants. A TAPA student representative from your class will be elected and encouraged to attend TAPA meetings and keep the class informed on state issues. Website: www.tapa.org

Texas Gulf Coast Physician Assistant Association (TGCPAA)

The Texas Gulf Coast Physician Assistant Association is a professional organization of local PAs. The group meets semi-monthly for networking and continuing medical education (CME). Students are welcome at the meetings at any time. Attending the meetings is an excellent opportunity to meet local practicing PAs, hear about practice and political issues important to the profession, and attend CME. Website: www.tgcpaa.org

Texas Physician Assistant Board (TPAB)

The Texas Medical Board issues the PA license to qualified individuals to practice in Texas. The Licensure Department of the TPAB upholds the standards set in statute and Board Rule, and by efficiently processing licensure applications. Individuals applying for a PA license should review the information provided on the website for specific information about eligibility, the application process, and the required documentation and fees before submitting an application. In addition to submitting the online application, some forms must be sent to and completed by third parties. In addition, all applicants must take and pass the Jurisprudence Exam and submit fingerprints for criminal history background checks.

Website: <https://www.tmb.state.tx.us/page/licensing-physician-assistants>

Texas Medical Board (TMB)

Virtually every state has laws governing PA practice. Each student is encouraged to become familiar with the PA laws in the state in which they intend to practice. As part of the curriculum at Baylor College of Medicine, each student will be exposed to many of the specifics of the laws for physician assistants to practice in Texas. Students should be aware that laws vary from state to state. Most states require registration through the state board of medical licensure prior to the start of employment. Students are encouraged to check with the specific state board of medicine for current requirements and for an application to become eligible to practice in that particular state. State laws for practicing in Texas are covered in the Professional Role Issues II course with specific rules and regulations found at the TMB. Website: <http://www.tmb.state.tx.us> and <https://www.tmb.state.tx.us/page/laws-main-page>

National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

Physician assistants who graduate from PA programs accredited by CAAHEP (Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs) are eligible to sit for the national certifying exam offered by the NCCPA several times a year. Applications to sit for the examination are completed during the second year of the Physician Assistant Program. Please check the NCCPA website for dates and fees. Many states require graduates to take and successfully pass the NCCPA examination to either begin employment or to continue employment. Once certified through the NCCPA, each graduate must obtain and report the number of hours of continuing medical education (CME) every two years to maintain certification. Re-certification exams are also required regularly in addition to the CME requirement to maintain valid certification. Once again, students are encouraged to check with the states in which they intend to practice concerning regulations for NCCPA certification and maintenance of a valid certificate. Certification, CME, and recertification requirements are covered in Professional Roles Issues II. Website: <https://www.nccpa.net>

Section 4 Academic Calendar- 2025- 2026 Didactic Phase	
Fall 1 Semester	
Term 1 (5 weeks)	June 16-July 18, 2025
First Day of Classes	June 18
Holiday (Independence Day)	July 4
Last Day of Classes	July 11
Study Time and Exams*	July 12-18
Vacation	July 19-27
Term 2 (9 weeks)	July 28-September 26, 2025
First Day of Classes	July 28
Holiday (Labor Day)	September 1
Last Day of Classes	September 19
Study Time and Exams*	September 20-26
NO VACATION	
Term 3 (10 weeks)	September 29-December 5, 2025
First Day of Classes	September 29
Holiday (Thanksgiving Day)	November 27
No School	November 28
Last Day of Classes	November 28
Study Time and Exams*	November 29-December 5
Vacation	December 6, 2025-January 1, 2026
Spring 1 Semester	
Term 1 (9 weeks)	January 5-March 6, 2026
First Day of Classes	January 5
Holiday (Martin Luther King Day)	January 19
Last Day of Classes	February 27
Study Time and Exams*	February 28-March 6
NO VACATION	
Term 2 (10 weeks)	March 9-May 15, 2026
First Day of Classes	March 9
Last Day of Classes	May 8
Study Time and Exams*	May 9-15
Vacation	May 16-24
Term 3 (9 weeks)	May 26-July 24, 2026
Holiday (Memorial Day)	May 25
First Day of Classes	May 26
Holiday (Independence Day-observed)	July 3
Last Day of Classes	July 17
Study Time and Exams*	July 18-23
Clinical Year Orientation	July 24
Vacation	July 25

*Length of each term includes exam week. Exams are given intermittently throughout the term as well as during the designated exam week.