ALBANY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY
AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Physician Assistant Student Handbook

Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS)

Academic Year 2027-2028

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Foreword

The Physician Assistant Student Handbook ("Handbook") is a reference for Physician Assistant ("PA") students and others seeking information concerning the administrative rules and regulations of the Physician Assistant Studies Program at ACPHS. This Handbook supplements and does not replace existing ACPHS handbooks, policies, procedures, requirements, and rules with which PA students are also required to comply. In the case of an inconsistency, this Handbook generally shall apply, but ACPHS reserves the right to determine that another policy or procedure applies and to resolve any inconsistency as it deems appropriate in its sole discretion.

It is the responsibility of each student enrolled in the Physician Assistant Studies Program to read and abide by the regulations and policies outlined in this Handbook and within ACPHS publications.

Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted ACPHS Physician Assistant Program ("Program") permission to apply for Accreditation – Provisional. Provisional Accreditation is a status conferred when the proposed program's plans and resource allocation, if executed as intended, indicate the program's capacity to meet the ARC-PA Standards, even though it has not yet enrolled students. Similarly, a program holding accreditation-provisional status may demonstrate ongoing progress in adhering to the Standards as it readies for the graduation of its inaugural class (cohort) of students.

The provisional accreditation process begins with a thorough review of the planning, organization, and proposed content of a program that is in the advanced planning stages, but not yet operational. The provisional accreditation pathway is the only entry way for proposed new programs into the accreditation process.

Prospective students and others can access more information about the ARC-PA online at: http://www.arc-pa.org.

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Section 1 – Introduction

Welcome to the ACPHS Physician Assistant Studies Program (”Program”). This Program is designed to be an intense, engaging, and rewarding educational experience. Faculty of the Physician Assistant Studies program are dedicated educators who strive to provide students with the competencies necessary to become certified PAs.

This handbook has been assembled to guide students through the Program. Students should keep this handbook accessible and refer to it throughout their enrollment in the Program.

Program Vision Statement

The Program's vision is to become a leader in PA education, recognized for excellence in teaching and for graduating exceptional PAs who possess expansive medical knowledge, advanced critical thinking abilities, collaborative interpersonal skills and embrace lifelong learning.

Program Mission Statement

The Program's mission is to educate PA students in the fields of basic and clinical sciences, clinical reasoning and problem-solving to become compassionate PAs who provide evidence-based, culturally competent patient care.

Program Goals

1. Provide students with a strong foundation in the basic sciences
2. Provide students with a strong foundation in clinical sciences
3. Provide students with the ability to perform clinical skills
4. Provide students with a strong foundation in health maintenance, patient education and preventative healthcare
5. Provide students with the skills to create management plans for medical conditions using pharmaceuticals
6. Facilitate clinical decision-making skills
7. Provide students with the tools to practice evidence-based medicine
8. Develop skills to function as a competent member of an interprofessional team
9. Develop skills to provide compassionate and culturally competent care

Section 2 – Admissions

Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission to the MS in Physician Assistant Studies program at ACPHS, students must have completed the following pre-requisites. Preferential consideration is given to students with the highest science GPA, highest overall GPA and highest number of patient contact hours. Science GPA is weighed more heavily than overall GPA. Admission is offered on a rolling basis so preferential consideration is given to applicants who apply early in the cycle which opens in April yearly.

- Bachelor's degree earned prior to matriculation
- Overall GPA must each be 3.3 or greater on a 4.0 scale
- Overall Science GPA must be 3.2 or greater on a 4.0 scale
- A minimum of two letters of recommendation
    - one submitted by a clinician (PA, M.D., D.O., NP, CNS) who has observed the student in a clinical setting and can attest to a readiness for a career in medicine
    - one submitted by an individual who has instructed or supervised the student in an academic setting
- At least 20 hours of shadowing a practicing PA
- At least 1,000 hours of acceptable documented patient contact. Acceptable patient contact hours include:
    - Emergency Medicine Technician (EMT) or Paramedic
    - Nurse or Nursing Assistant/Patient care technician

- Medical Assistant
- Medical Scribe (at bedside, not remote)
- Inpatient Phlebotomist (Outpatient Phlebotomist will **not** be accepted)
- Athletic trainer
- Dental Assistant
- Physical Therapist/Physical Therapy Assistant
- Occupational Therapist/Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Dietician
- Sonographer
- Surgical Technician
- Emergency department technician
- Optometry assistant
- Military corpsman or medic

Other patient care hours will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Patient contact hours that will **NOT** be accepted include:

- Home health aide or personal home care attendant/companion
- Research assistant/technician
- Patient transporter
- Patient advocate or Child Life Specialist
- Pharmacy technician
- Lifeguard
- Medical Interpreter
- Medical secretary/administrator
- Patient observer/sitter
- Mental health/substance abuse worker
- COVID screener/tester/vaccinator

The following pre-requisite courses must be completed at an accredited educational institution within the United States. Students must have earned a grade of C or better in each of the pre-requisite courses.

- General Biology with lab (two semesters)
- General Chemistry with lab (two semesters)
- Organic Chemistry with lab (one semester)
- Biochemistry (one semester)
- Microbiology (one semester)
- Genetics (one semester)
- Statistics (one semester)
- General Psychology (one semester)
- Anatomy and Physiology (two semesters)

Other courses that are recommended, but not required for admission, include:

- Abnormal Psychology/Psychopathology
- Introduction to Pharmacology
- Public Health
- Immunology

Technical Standards for Admission, Progression, and Graduation of the PA Program

I. Observation

Students must have sufficient capacity to observe in the classroom, the laboratory, and in all varieties of clinical settings. Sensory skills to perform a physical examination are required. Functional vision, hearing, and tactile sensation are required to properly observe a patient's condition and to perform techniques regularly required during a physical examination such as inspection, auscultation, and palpation.

II. Communication

Students must be able to communicate effectively in both academic and healthcare settings. Candidates must show evidence of effective written, verbal, and non-verbal communication skills. Candidates must be able to communicate effectively with patients to elicit information and provide sufficient patient education. Students must be able to communicate effectively with other healthcare team members to describe a patient's affect, symptoms, objective findings, differential diagnoses, and management plans. Candidates must be capable of completing accurate and thorough medical records and other documentation in a timely manner.

III. Motor Skills

Students must be able to participate in basic diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers and procedures. Candidates must have sufficient motor function, with or without assistive devices, to execute movements reasonably required to properly care for all patients. Candidates must be able to move freely about patient care environments and must be able to move between settings such as clinics, classroom buildings, and hospitals. In addition, physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of clinical study is required. Long periods of sitting, standing, or moving are required in classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences such as the operating room.

IV. Intellectual Abilities

Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data and information. Problem-solving, one of the critical skills demanded of PAs, requires all these intellectual abilities. Candidates must be able to read and understand medical literature. To complete the PA Studies program, candidates must be able to demonstrate mastery of these skills and the ability to synthesize them in a timely fashion for patient care.

V. Behavioral and Social Characteristics

Students must possess the emotional health and stability required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities. They must exercise good judgment and be able to promptly complete all academic and patient care responsibilities. The ability to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other members of the healthcare team is essential. Students must be able to function effectively in

times of uncertainty or stress. Flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, and interpersonal skills are required. Students must be receptive to constructive criticism and manage interpersonal conflict.

Section 3 - Program Policies and Rules

Classroom Hours

Classes will generally be held during regular class hours, which are Monday through Friday, 8:00AM to 5:00PM, though some evening and/or weekend learning opportunities may be required. Lectures/labs/activities/exams may need to be rescheduled outside of daily class hours or outside of regularly scheduled course hours to accommodate the schedules of adjuncts, faculty or guest lecturers. Students are expected to be available for any changes. Every attempt will be made to keep changes to a minimum and notify students ahead of time.

Professionalism & Attendance

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom, laboratory, clinical settings, and elsewhere on campus. PA student behavior reflects themselves and the Program, other PA students, the faculty, the college, and the PA profession.

PA students are expected to act in a manner that is professional, mature, and socially conscious. Qualities that reflect the highest ideals of healthcare practice and ethical behavior in students pursuing the PA profession include:

- Academic integrity: Each PA student is expected to personally complete all assignments, laboratory exercises, exams, and other assessments required for any academic course or clinical experience without receiving unauthorized assistance from others. Students who are caught cheating will receive a zero on the assignment/assessment and will not be allowed to retake/remediate it.
- Advocacy: PA students in the clinical year of education are expected to advocate for the needs of patients and assist them in navigating the healthcare system.
- Confidentiality: PA students are expected to maintain confidentiality of medical records unless disclosure is permitted/required under law. Refer to the HIPAA Compliance headline later in this section for more information on HIPAA.
- Interpersonal Communication: PA students are expected to communicate with faculty, staff, students, patients, their loved ones and other members of the healthcare community using active listening, openness, empathy, respect and clear and effective language.
- Personal Integrity: Students are expected to demonstrate honesty, good judgement, and moral courage.
- Personal Demeanor and Appearance: Students are expected to behave politely and abide by the Dress Code requirements set forth herein, both in the classroom and in the clinical setting.
- Attendance: Students are expected to attend all scheduled lectures and labs. Students are responsible for the information provided within them. Students are expected to attend all shifts at their clinical rotations per the schedule assigned to them by the preceptor. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain until they are dismissed. Students must take all

assessments during the time they are scheduled. Missing assessments will result in a zero on the assessment unless the absence is excused by the course coordinator. (See Exam Attendance section below.)

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to assume personal responsibility and maintain personal integrity in all aspects of their education. Academic integrity is violated when any dishonest act is committed in an academic context. Academic dishonesty may occur in courses, in experiential settings (professional rotations, research laboratories, clinics) or other associated academic activities. Dishonest actions, including but not limited to cheating on examinations or other academic assignments and reporting or documenting false information, constitute violations of the ACPHS Academic Integrity Policy. Students caught cheating will receive a zero on the assignment/assessment and will not be allowed to retake/remediate it.

Student Disciplinary Code

All PA students are required to adhere to the Student Disciplinary Code as set forth in the ACPHS Student Handbook. ACPHS Student Handbook 26-27

Classroom and Laboratory Rules

Appropriate classroom and laboratory behavior is necessary to ensure a favorable learning environment.

- Program faculty and staff are to be addressed by their appropriate professional titles.
- Disruption of class activities, derogatory or disrespectful comments, confrontations with instructors or classmates, or outbursts of temper are not allowed.
- All phones must be silenced and left in backpacks or purses, during class or laboratory sessions. Students should not engage in personal telephone calls, emails, texts, or any social media exchange while in a classroom or laboratory activity.
- Students are expected to secure their own transportation to classes, labs, on or off-campus patient encounters, and simulation activities. Adjustments to clinical placements **will not** be made to accommodate transportation challenges.

Dress Code

PA students must dress appropriately in didactic and clinical settings. Clothes must be clean, non-revealing, properly fitted, and in good repair. Dress guidelines are as follows:

Guidelines for on-campus attire:

- No ripped jeans or other clothes
- No clothing with language, text, images, or graphics that could be considered offensive or controversial. Shirts must not display any obscenities, rude or controversial expressions or references to drugs or alcohol
- The midriff should be covered, and overall attire should be conservative
- Students are not permitted to wear hats or other head coverings (eg. hoods) except in the case of religious head coverings
- Students are required to carry a valid college ID card while on campus.
- Laboratory courses may have specific dress codes (see specific course syllabi).

Guidelines for attire on clinical rotations:

- Hospitals and clinical settings may have their own dress codes. Students should defer to those when applicable.
- Otherwise, students are expected to wear business casual attire with a short white coat.
- If allowed by the preceptor, students may wear medical scrubs. Students should ask the preceptor if medical scrubs are appropriate.
- Students must always wear their ACPHS name tag while at clinical settings, and it must be visible.

Exam Policies

The rules and procedures for exam administration are as follows:

1. Students will be allowed the following amount of time to take multiple-choice exams based on the semester they are in the program
    a. Semester 1: 1.5 minutes per question
    b. Semester 2: 1.25 minutes per question
    c. Semester 3 and beyond: 1.0 minute per question (this is the amount of time allotted for PACKRAT, EOREs, and PANCE)
2. Students must take exams during the time they are scheduled in the classroom unless individual accommodations have otherwise been approved.
3. Students who arrive late for an exam may use *only* the remaining time available to complete the exam.
4. Students are not permitted to ask questions or have conversations about exam content during the exam period.
5. Students will be permitted to bring only their laptop, tissues, and common wristwatches (no "smart watches") into the examination room. Mobile phones and smart watches must be silenced and placed in a book bag during exams. All personal items, including book bags, must be placed at the front or side of the examination room. ***If a student is found to have personal electronics (aside from the device used for testing purposes), recording devices of any type, electronic storage/memory devices, cell phones, or other communication devices on the student's person during an exam, the student will be removed from the exam room for academic dishonesty, will not be permitted to continue to take the exam, and will receive a score of zero for that exam.***
6. Each student is responsible for properly recording their answers on the computer and/or on the answer sheet. Except where an approved accommodations plan provides otherwise, students will not be permitted extra time to complete these tasks, and any grade resulting from failure to record answers on the computer and/or answer sheet or for incorrectly recording their answers will not be adjusted.
7. Scratch paper is allowed during exams at the course coordinators' discretion. All written notes and calculations made during examinations must be handed in at the end of the exam. Under no circumstances may exams, answer sheets, or notes taken or used during an examination leave the examination room.
8. If students finish before the end of the examination period, they may turn in all testing materials and notes and leave the room quietly. Because some students may take an exam at a different

time from the rest of the class, discussion of any exam is prohibited until such discussion is explicitly permitted by the course coordinator. Unauthorized discussion of exams may be considered a violation of academic honesty.

9. Each exam room will have one designated door through which students will be expected to use to exit the room at the completion of the exam.
10. If a student is discovered to have breached the academic integrity policy, the student will receive a grade of zero on the exam and will not be permitted to retake it.
11. For on-line exams that are administered remotely, faculty may use video monitoring or recording to detect any anomalous behaviors. Discovery of anomalous behavior will be investigated as appropriate and may constitute violation of the Academic Integrity policy.

Technology

Students are required to possess a laptop computer. Supported operating systems include Windows 10 Home, Professional or Enterprise (or greater) or Mac OSX laptop. Exams are primarily created on the ExamSoft application and delivered using the application Examplify. Minimum system requirements for Examplify can be found on the ExamSoft webpage minimum system requirements of ExamSoft. Please note that ACPHS does not support the use of ExamSoft on iPads.

The Information Technology Department is available to students, faculty, and staff for technical assistance. Technology support includes Desktop/Laptop Support, Antivirus Software, Login/Password Assistance, Software Support (installation and upgrades), Network Access (wired and wireless), Communication Support (email, voicemail, etc.)

An incident ticket may be created here Get Help | ACPHS ServiceNow | ACPHS ServiceNow or by emailing acphs@service-now.com. For additional technical support, members of the ACPHS community are encouraged to visit the Computing and Technology Support Center, which is in Room 212 of the Student Center or call 518-694-7358.

Email

Each student will be provided with a College Microsoft Outlook email address. Students are welcome to use email to communicate with faculty and staff and are encouraged to add a profile picture to their email account. Students are expected to be mindful of proper email etiquette and professional communications, including addressing faculty and staff by their professional titles.

Scheduling

Course and/or semester schedules are issued prior to the start of each semester for student planning purposes. However, all course schedules are subject to change, so students should check their email prior to coming to class to be sure there have been no last-minute changes.

Employment

PA students are never required to work for the Program, and they must not substitute for or function as instructional or clinical faculty or administrative staff. Because the PA Program curriculum is rigorous and requires many hours of study outside of the classroom, PA students are strongly discouraged from holding employment during their time in the PA Program. In addition, due to the demands of clinical rotations, which may require students to be present nights, weekends, and holidays, students should not plan to hold employment during their clinical year.

Faculty Advisors

Each student will be assigned to a faculty advisor at the beginning of the Program, who will be available to meet with the student throughout the duration of the Program. The faculty advisor will provide academic counseling to students. Each advisee is encouraged to meet with their advisor at least once per year during the didactic phase of the Program. More frequent advisee meetings may be required or requested at the discretion of the student or faculty advisor based on student needs.

Confidentiality of Student Records

For information with respect to the confidentiality of student information, see the Notification of Rights under FERPA policy (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) in the ACPHS Student Handbook. ACPHS Student Handbook 26-27

Student Records

The following student academic records will be maintained or easily accessible by members of the Program:

- Individual student admission application
- Academic performance while enrolled in the Program
- Remediation efforts and outcomes
- Formal disciplinary actions
- Status of requirements for program completion
- Faculty advisors and instructors' documentation of student meetings
- Immunization documentation
- Proof of BLS and ACLS certification

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student records by limiting who can access them without consent. Unauthorized people, including PA students, will not be allowed to have access to academic records or other confidential information about other students or faculty. Students have the right to privacy in education. For more information see the government webpage FERPA | Protecting Student Privacy.

Academic transcripts, student contact information, and emergency contact information will be maintained by the Registrar. It is the responsibility of the students to keep their records up to date. If there are changes in any of the following areas, students are expected to update the Registrar's Office as soon as possible:

- Legal name
- Home address
- Home telephone number
- Mobile phone number
- Emergency contact information

HIPAA Compliance

All students will receive training on the privacy and confidentiality requirements in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which protects the privacy and security of patient

information. Students must comply with HIPAA regulations at all times throughout the course of the Program, and failure to do so will result in the initiation of the Disciplinary Code Process as well as possible civil and/or criminal penalties. Additional information about HIPAA can be found on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.

Books and Equipment

Students are required to purchase and maintain required books, a laptop computer, medical scrubs, physical exam equipment, and other incidental items as described in the course syllabi, PA Student Handbook, and the Clinical Rotation Handbook.

Student Participation in Program Self-Assessment

As part of the process of Program Self-Assessment, the Program collects and analyzes data. Students will be asked to complete the following periodic surveys and evaluations:

- Didactic Course & Instructor Evaluations
- Clinical Site and Preceptor Evaluations
- Didactic Curriculum Survey
- Survey of the Program Director
- Survey of the Medical Director
- Survey of the Institutional Resources
- Graduate Exit Survey

It is very important that students complete these surveys for the Program to conduct accurate data analysis for the purpose of Program self-assessment

Identification

Students are required to always have their college-issued ID on their person while on campus. Students must always wear a name tag while on clinical rotations. Students must always introduce themselves as PA students to patients and members of the healthcare teams.

Criminal Offender Background Checks

Students are required to undergo state and federal criminal background checks prior to starting clinical rotations. Certain types of convictions, whether the conviction took place prior to enrollment at ACPHS or while attending the program, may preclude a student from being able to start or complete required clinical rotations.

For information on required background checks and clearances, please refer to the Clinical Year Student Handbook.

Section 3 – Graduation Competencies and Requirements

Expected Competencies of Program Graduates

Program graduates are expected to possess the following program competencies:

1. Possess a foundation of medical knowledge
    a. Demonstrate a foundation of knowledge of diseases within all organ systems

b. Demonstrate a foundation of knowledge of managing patients
c. Demonstrate a foundation of knowledge of applying foundational scientific concepts
d. Demonstrate a foundation of knowledge of professional practice

2. Demonstrate Effective Clinical Skills
    a. Demonstrate sufficient and appropriate history taking
    b. Perform appropriate physical examination
3. Demonstrate Clinical Reasoning & Problem-Solving
    a. Choose and interpret diagnostic studies in the evaluation of a patient
    b. Develop an appropriate differential diagnosis given a patient case
    c. Choose a most likely diagnosis given a patient case
    d. Develop an appropriate treatment plan given a patient case
4. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills
    a. Listens attentively
    b. Speaks clearly
    c. Confirms patient understanding
    d. Provides accurate, tailored patient education
5. Demonstrate Professional Behaviors
    a. Demonstrates respect
    b. Demonstrates compassion
    c. Demonstrates integrity
    d. Demonstrates cultural competency
    e. Demonstrates patient-centered care
6. Demonstrate accurate and appropriate technical skills
    a. Performs technical skills correctly

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the Program, students must successfully and sufficiently fulfill the following requirements:

1. Pass a Medical Terminology Competency
2. Maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA
3. Pass all required didactic courses
4. Pass all required supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs)
5. Pass the End-of Curriculum Comprehensive Written Examination (EOCE)
6. Pass the Summative Clinical Skills Examination (SSE)
7. Log the minimum number of patient encounters to ensure sufficient exposure to each core specialty (see Clinical Year Handbook for details)
8. Complete any outstanding requirements of the Registrar or Student Financial Services
9. All requirements must be completed within five academic years

Section 4 – Student Health Services & Immunization Requirements

Student Health and Wellness

The physical and mental health of PA students is essential for ongoing success within the program. Students are encouraged to stay appraised of their health needs and obtain services when needed to maintain or improve their health.

Examples of time to seek resources include during times of diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, sadness or hopelessness, excessive worry, eating and/or sleep problems, relationship issues, family worries, loss, personal struggle or crisis. The program director, the medical director, and the PA principal faculty cannot provide formal mental health counseling to students.

Counseling Services

Students are encouraged to access the Office of Counseling and Wellness to support their emotional health. Counseling services are provided by full-time licensed clinicians. These services are free and are kept strictly confidential.

Call 518-210-5298 to schedule an appointment or see the Office of Counseling and Wellness webpage for additional information. Counseling Services | Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Health Insurance

All full-time ACPHS students are required to possess health insurance. Please see the Health Insurance section in the ACPHS Student Handbook. ACPHS Student Handbook 26-27

Student Health Services

ACPHS Students may access medical services through Russell Sage College's Wellness Center on the Albany and Troy campuses. The health centers offer holistic medical care to students, including sick visits. For more information, refer to the health services webpage Health Services | Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The program director, medical director, and principal faculty cannot provide medical services or medical advice to students.

Student health records are confidential and will not be accessible by the Program faculty or staff except by certain individuals for immunization and specific health screening necessary for clinical rotations.

Immunization and Health Screening Requirements

Immunization requirements are based on CDC recommendations. The required immunizations for attendance at ACPHS include measles, mumps, & rubella (MMR), meningococcal meningitis, varicella, and Hepatitis B.
Required immunizations for the clinical year of the Program also include tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap), COVID, and Influenza.
Students are required to be tested for tuberculosis

Medical exemptions to immunizations will be considered if a licensed physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse certifies in writing that the student has a health condition which is a valid contraindication to receiving a specific vaccine.

Religious exemption from immunizations will be considered if in the opinion of the institution, the student holds genuine and sincere religious beliefs which are contrary to the practice of immunization.

Clinical sites may deny student participation if the student is unable to produce proof of immunization, which could result in delayed graduation or the inability to graduate from the program. Clinical rotation sites may require additional immunizations or disease screening.

Students with Disabilities

Some students require accommodation because of temporary or permanent physical, learning, and/or mental health disabilities. ACPHS is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and will make all reasonable accommodations necessary. While a student can request a particular type of accommodation, it is the college that determines how to meet a particular need. Students who seek reasonable accommodations are responsible for notifying the Director of Counseling and Wellness of their disability. There is an established procedure to follow when seeking accommodations. This information can be found by contacting Peter Cornish Ph.D. at the Office of Counseling and Wellness at peter.cornish@acphs.edu or 518-694-7262.

Student Grievances and Mistreatment

For student complaints related to course grading, please refer to the Course Concern Procedure section of the ACPHS catalog 2026-27-College-Catalog-updated-to-final-doc-091006.pdf.

PA students are encouraged to communicate directly with faculty members or preceptors to resolve conflicts, express grievances, or address perceptions of harassment or mistreatment. If PA students are not comfortable communicating with these individuals directly, they are encouraged to report grievances to the program director. If students are not satisfied with the outcome of those discussions, they may complete the Student Complaint Form. See the ACPHS Student Handbook for detailed information pertaining to filing grievances Student-Handbook-Fall-2026-2027.pdf.

The Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences does not tolerate discrimination regardless of race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, veteran status, or disability status. At ACPHS, students have the right to freedom from discrimination. Complaints of discrimination by other students will be handled through the Student Code of Conduct process. See the ACPHS Student Handbook for detailed information regarding the Code of Conduct process Student-Handbook-Fall-2026-2027.pdf.

ACPHS is committed to creating and maintaining an academic and workplace environment free of illegal sexual misconduct and sexual harassment for all its students and employees. Violation of the Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures for Students and Employees will result in responsive action, as prescribed under applicable law and college policies, which may include suspension, dismissal, or termination from the College. Incidents falling within the Title IX Grievance Policy's jurisdiction elements will be investigated by the Title IX coordinator.

Students who feel they may have experienced sexual harassment or discrimination based upon their sex should contact the Title IX coordinator Amanda Bastiani TitleIX@acphs.edu 518-244-4809 or fill out a report here Report a Violation of Policy or Concern. More Information pertaining to Title IX can be found on this webpage Title IX - Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

For more detailed information pertaining to student grievances and mistreatment, refer to the ACPHS Student Handbook Student-Handbook-Fall-2026-2027.pdf

Security and Campus Safety

The University Heights Association (UHA) Public Safety provides safety and security for the three-member institutions; Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Albany Law School and Russell Sage College. The department provides 24-hour response to life safety incidents every day. To reach Public Safety call 518-244-3177 or email contact.uha@universityheights.org.

For emergencies requiring immediate assistance, call 911 or contact UHA.

The department also offers officer escort to students' dormitories or cars.

Off Campus Confidential Resources for Students are listed here

1. Albany County Crime Victims and Sexual Violence Center: 518-447-7716
2. Equinox Domestic Violence Services: 518-432-7865
3. The Legal Project Campus Violence Connection: 518-435-1770

Anonymous reporting to Confidential Hotlines for students and employees provided by New York agencies and not-for-profit entities:

- NYS Office of Victim Services: 1-800-247-8035 Note: Information regarding STIs, forensic exams, and resources available through the NYS Office of Victim Services
- New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-942-6906
- Equinox Hotline: 518-432-7865
- Unity House Hotline: 518-272-2370
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- The National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673
- Safe Horizon Hotlines: 800-621-4673 (domestic violence), 866-689-4357 (victims of other crimes, 1-212-227-3000 (rape & sexual assault victims)

Section 5 – Physician Assistant Program Curriculum

Graduates of the Physician Assistant Studies Program receive a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MS) degree. The Program offers students a variety of educational experiences designed to prepare them for clinical practice as physician assistants.

Program Course Schedule

Year I—Spring

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 505	Evidence Based Medicine	2
PAS 518	Medical Genetics	2
PAS 530	Clinical Anatomy	3

PAS 541	Clinical Pharmacology I	3
PAS 551	Human Physiology and Pathophysiology I	3
PAS 610	Physical Examination	2
PAS 610L	Physical Examination Lab	1
TOTAL		**16**

Year I—Summer

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 500	Principles of Professional Practice	2
PAS 510	Medical Interviewing & Documentation	2
PAS 515	Electrocardiography Interpretation	2
PAS 520	Introduction to Psychiatry	2
PAS 525	Diagnostic Methods	2
PAS 542	Clinical Pharmacology II	3
PAS 552	Human Physiology and Pathophysiology II	3
TOTAL		**16**

Year I—Fall

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 601	Clinical Therapeutics I	3
PAS 620	Surgery & Procedures	2
PAS 620L	Surgery & Procedures Lab	1
PAS 651	Clinical Medicine I	5
PAS 652	Clinical Medicine II	5
PAS 661	Patient Assessment I	2
TOTAL		**18**

Year II—Spring

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 508	Introduction to Public Health	2
PAS 602	Clinical Therapeutics II	3
PAS 653	Clinical Medicine III	5
PAS 602	Clinical Medicine IV	5
PAS 662	Patient Assessment II	2
TOTAL		**17**

Year II — Summer (This course meets in between rotation blocks 1 & 2, and 2&3)

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 671	Clinical Seminar I	0
2 Clinical Rotations will occur worth 5 credits each		**10**
TOTAL		**10**

Year III — Fall (This course meets in between Rotation blocks 3 & 4, 4 & 5, and 5 & 6)

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 672	Clinical Seminar II	0
3 Clinical Rotations will occur worth 5 credits each		**15**
TOTAL		**15**

Year III —Spring (This course meets in between Rotation blocks 6 & 7, 7 & 8 and after block 8)

COURSE	TITLE	SEMESTER HOURS
PAS 673	Clinical Seminar III	0
3 Clinical Rotations will occur worth 5 credits each		**15**
TOTAL		**15**

Note: the ACPHS PA program does not offer advanced placement in the program or give transfer credit for courses taken outside of ACPHS

Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs/Rotations)

Year II —Summer, Year III –- Fall and Spring

Refer to the Clinical Year PA Student Handbook for additional information about the clinical year.

Students will be enrolled in 12 months of Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs). Each SCPE will be 5 weeks in duration and worth 5 credit hours each. Students will be enrolled in 8 SCPEs throughout the year for a total of 40 credit hours of Clinical Rotations. SCPEs will include seven core specialties and one elective.

Below is a list of core Clinical Rotations:

1. Internal Medicine
2. Pediatrics
3. Psychiatry
4. Surgery
5. Emergency Medicine
6. Women's Health
7. Family Medicine

Students will preference their desired elective SCPE from the following list. The program will attempt to provide students with their preferred elective rotation, but they are not guaranteed.

- Repeat of one of the core rotations if available
- General surgery or a surgical subspecialty

- Cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery
- Critical care
- Dermatology
- Rehabilitation Medicine
- Hematology/Oncology

Total credits to complete degree requirements = 107 semester hours

SCPEs may be scheduled throughout the United States to provide a range of diverse learning experiences and to ensure the availability of quality clinical rotation sites. Student requests for specific rotation sites will be considered during the Rotation Site Selection Process. Students should expect to be assigned to clinical sites located more than an hour's drive from the ACPHS campus for at least a portion of their required clinical rotations. Students should also expect to travel out of state for clinical rotations. In all instances, regardless of the location of student placement, students are responsible for transportation (including airfare), food, parking, housing, and other related incidentals for all clinical rotations. The Program encourages students to plan in anticipation of additional expenses in the clinical year. See PA program website for expected costs of the Program.

Students may recommend new rotation sites to the program but are never required to find their own rotation sites. These recommended rotation sites must be approved by the Program Director before any placement can occur.

Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)

All students in the Program must become BLS- and ACLS-certified prior to clinical rotations. BLS Health Care Provider certifications must follow the guidelines of the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross to be acceptable to the Program. BLS Health Care Provider certification is required for ACLS Health Care Provider training, and both active BLS Health Care Provider and ACLS Health Care Provider certifications must remain current and/or active throughout all clinical rotations. If a student's ACLS or BLS certification lapses while on clinical rotations, they may be required to forfeit the rotation to become re-certified. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and maintain these certifications.

Instructional Resources

Courses in the program curriculum use several resources to assist students in acquiring the knowledge and skills essential for subsequent areas of study. The course coordinator for each course will provide a course syllabus on or before the first day of class. The syllabus includes introductory information, instructor office hours, course grading and assessment requirements, instructional and outcome performance objectives, an overview of course content, and required texts or materials.

Students have access to the ACPHS library and its vast selection of databases and textbooks.

For additional academic support, refer to the Academic Support and Resources page on the ACPHS website Student Support - Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. For additional assistance with access to any of the academic resources, email the Center for Student Success at student.success@acphs.edu. PA students have access to all academic resources that are provided to ACPHS students.

Students are required to purchase the following items for practicing physical examination & procedures:

- Stethoscope
- 128Hz Tuning Fork
- 512Hz Tuning Fork
- Penlight
- Babinski Reflex Hammer
- Metric Tape Measure
- Otoscope
- Ophthalmoscope

Students are also required to purchase a short white coat for use during physical exam testing and clinical rotations. An ACPHS name tag will be provided and must be worn at all times when the coat is worn.

Student Progression and Remediation

Progression Requirements

To maintain good academic standing and progress normally within the Program, students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 each semester of the PA program and pass each course. The passing grade for each course in the program is a C (73%).

Academic Standing

Students who do not meet the minimum academic progression requirements of the Program as outlined above will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee (ASC) at the end of the semester. The ASC will consider the PA Program and College policies on progress and remediation to decide as to the appropriate course of action. The ASC may recommend academic probation, remediation, deceleration, or dismissal from the Program.

Academic Probation

Students who do not meet program progression requirements will be placed on Academic Probation. A student on Academic Probation is required to make improvements in performance that are specified in the terms and conditions developed by the Program Director. Students placed on Academic Probation will be given a status of either “Progression”, or “Non-Progression”. A status of “Progression” allows the student to continue in the program with specific conditions that must be met (such as increasing the student’s GPA). A status of “Non-Progression” is applied to a student who is required to delay progression to remediate specific content, or to decelerate within the program to retake courses in which the student was not successful.

Remediation

Remediation of Failed Assessments within Courses:

Students must remediate any failed assessment worth at least 10% of the total course grade. Remediation entails receiving the topics and instructional objectives missed, meeting with instructors as needed to clarify concepts and taking another assessment on the missed objectives. Students will have two opportunities to take the remediation assessment throughout the semester and must pass with a

73% or better. The original assessment grade will not be changed after remediation. Students who do not pass the remediation assessment during the semester will earn an "I" (Incomplete) in the course and remediation will continue for another 30 days into the following semester until successful, at which point the course grade will be changed to the grade earned. If the student remains unsuccessful after 30 days into the next semester, the student will earn a failing grade ("F") in the course.

Course coordinators reserve the right to require remediation of assessments worth less than 10% of the total course grade, and the same policy will be applied.

Remediation of Failed Courses

To pass each didactic course in the curriculum, students must earn a minimum final course grade of 73% (grade of C). Students who do not earn a grade of C or better in any one course within the first two didactic semesters will be required to decelerate to retake the course. The new course grade will replace the first course grade. Students who do not earn a grade of C or better in any one course within the last two didactic semesters will be allowed to progress and remediate the failed course in the summer semester after the last didactic semester as long as their cumulative GPA is at least 3.0. This will result in a delay of the start of clinical rotations by one block, and therefore a delay in the graduation rate. Students who do not earn the minimum passing grade of C in two courses during any given semester are subject to dismissal.

Deceleration

Students who do not meet the minimum standards for progression may be recommended for deceleration in the Program. Deceleration may occur during any phase of the curriculum and may be required to repeat PA courses. Individualized curricula may be created based on academic deficiencies. Classes in the PA Studies Program are offered once yearly. Students who are required to decelerate must take a Leave-of-Absence and return when the course(s) are next offered to retake them. Repeated courses must take place at ACPHS. Each course within the PA program may be repeated only once. Students who do not pass a course after the second attempt will be dismissed.

All students must complete all didactic and clinical year phases of the Program within 5 years from the matriculation date. Students who fail to complete the course of study in 5 years are subject to dismissal from the Program.

All PA students are responsible for reading and understanding the Policies for Grading, Remediation and Progression.
Any student with questions on these policies is responsible for seeking answers through their faculty advisor, or the Program Director.

Dismissal

Students who remain on Academic Probation for more than one semester are subject to dismissal. The Academic Standing Committee will make dismissal decisions based on the student's overall performance in the program. Students may retake PA courses only once. Failure to successfully pass any PA course after the second attempt will result in dismissal. Students who fail two or more separate courses at any point within the program are subject to dismissal.

Appeal

Students have the right to appeal dismissal decisions by submitting a form and supporting documentation to the Academic Standards and Progression Committee at academicappeals@acphs.edu. The appeal letter should clearly describe the basis for the appeal and should include:

- Explanation/justification surrounding the student's inability to meet the college-wide or program academic standards
- Appropriate documentation by a competent, qualified professional in the event extenuating life circumstances are identified
- Student Success Plan: plan for coping with unresolved issues and for remediating academic deficiencies

The college reserves the right to require further evaluation and/or documentation.
For more information see 2026-27-College-Catalog-updated-to-final-doc-091006.pdf, pg 33.

Leave of Absence

Students may request a leave of absence for up to one calendar year. To request a leave of absence, students must submit a written request via email to the Program Director. The request must include:

- The reason(s) for the leave
- The desired duration of the leave (up to one year) and the expected return date
- Supporting documentation

For more information, refer to the ACPHS Institutional Leave of Absence Procedure here Institutional-Leave-of-Absence-Procedure.pdf, 2026-27-College-Catalog-updated-to-final-doc-091006.pdf, pg 15.

Withdrawal

Students who wish to withdraw from the college must contact the Registrar's Office to complete the Withdrawal Form and submit it to the Registrar's Office. If the withdrawal is planned to occur after the first 9 weeks of a semester, students must also meet with the Program Director. For more information, see ACPHS Catalog 2026-27-College-Catalog-updated-to-final-doc-091006.pdf, pg 10. or contact the Registrar's Office at 518-694-7222 or registrar@acphs.edu.

Tuition Refund Policy

The following chart indicates the institutional refund policy for withdrawal and leaves of absence from the College:
Withdrawal Date and Refund Percentage:

- Before start of classes to first day of class: 100%
- After first day to before end of 10% of term: 90%
- End of 10% of term to before end of 25% of term: 50%
- End of 25% of term to end of 50% of term: 25%
- After 50% of term to end of term: 0%

For more information, see ACPHS Student Consumer Information or contact the Registrar's office at 518-694-7222 or registrar@acphs.edu.

Program Grading

The numerical grade distribution and the corresponding letter grades are listed below for the Didactic Courses. See Clinical Rotation Handbook for Clinical Rotation grade distributions. ***A grade of C or better is required to pass all didactic courses.***

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade
>97	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
<60	F

*One decimal place will be used for rounding numerical grades. Example 79.5 rounds up to 80 (B-) and 79.4 represents 79 (C+).

Section 6 - Student Membership in PA Associations

New York State Society of Physician Associates (NYSSPA)

Students are strongly encouraged to be members of NYSSPA. NYSSPA is a constituent chapter of AAPA, and students are eligible for discounted membership. PA students are eligible to participate in the NY PA Challenge Bowl if 50% of enrolled students are members. Students are encouraged to participate in the New York Challenge Bowl.

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)

Students are encouraged to be members of the AAPA. All PA students are eligible for membership of the Student Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAPA). Members receive malpractice insurance, official publications of the AAPA, have access to job services, and are eligible to compete for scholarships. The program will also be eligible to compete in the AAPA's annual Challenge Bowl.