

# Ottawa University



*Master of Science in PA Studies*

**Learner Handbook**



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## Welcome

Dear PA Learners,

Welcome to Ottawa University's Master of Science in PA Studies (PA Program)!

You were a student in undergraduate school; in PA school, you are a **learner**, learning the practical skills to practice medicine with an underpinning of academic knowledge achieved through active engagement with the assigned textbook readings, articles, and other tools, along with classroom instruction and discussion.

The faculty and staff of the PA Program and the School of Arts and Sciences are here to support and guide you through the journey to becoming a PA Certified (PA-C). This Learner Handbook is the first step in understanding the program.

Success,

*Susan Salahshor*

Susan M. Salahshor, PhD, PA-C,  
DFAAPA Division Chair,  
Founding Director  
Master of Science PA Studies

*“Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.”*  
*Arthur Ashe*



## Ottawa University Inclusion and Belonging Statement

Inclusion embraces the broad spectrum of unique personal identities, experiences, and perspectives arising from differences in origin, culture, and life situations. Ottawa University aims to be welcoming and supportive of open and respectful dialogue among all community members regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, race, religion, biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, language, and education. Inclusion promotes freedom from bias and favoritism, fostering unity, empathy, access, opportunity, a sense of belonging, and an environment where everyone's contributions are valued and respected.

Ottawa University is proud to have an inclusive, accessible, and diverse community that encompasses its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and Board of Trustees. As an institution guided by our mission statement, we believe that by fostering an environment that values inclusion, we can create a richer, more impactful educational experience for all. A sense of belonging is essential throughout our institution. This statement reflects our foundational calling as a Christ-inspired community of grace and open inquiry focused on seeking out different perspectives, listening intentionally, and advocating for justice within our community.

## PA Program Commitment to Community Statement

The Ottawa University PA Program is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and compassionate classroom and community environment. Guided by the principles outlined in the Ottawa University Inclusion and Belonging Statement, we commit to:

- **Encouraging and Empowering:** Cultivating an atmosphere where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and inspired to contribute to a shared vision of inclusive healthcare.
- **Valuing and Respecting Diversity:** Embracing the unique identities, experiences, and perspectives of our students, faculty, patients, and partners, recognizing that these differences enhance the quality of care we provide.
- **Strengthening Intercultural Awareness:** Actively engaging in opportunities to learn about and celebrate cultural diversity within our classrooms and through community outreach.
- **Creating a Culture of Belonging:** Ensuring that every voice is heard and valued and that all program activities reflect mutual respect and appreciation.
- **Listening with Compassion:** Practicing empathy and understanding in all interactions, recognizing that diverse viewpoints enrich our educational and professional experiences.
- **Acting Inclusively:** Demonstrating a commitment to inclusion and belonging through actions that reflect equity and justice in all aspects of our program.

By embracing these principles, we believe we can prepare future PAs who are skilled clinicians and compassionate advocates for health equity and social justice. We strive to create a healthcare community where all individuals feel empowered to achieve their full potential.

## About this Learner Handbook (A3.01)

This Learner Handbook was developed to provide information regarding the policies and procedures applicable to learners currently enrolled in the Ottawa University Master of Science in PA Studies program (PA Program) and acquaint learners with resources available to them.

*The Ottawa University PA Program policies align with the Ottawa University institutional policies; and apply to all enrolled learners, principal faculty, and the program director throughout all phases of the program, regardless of location.* If discrepancies arise between the Learner Handbook and institutional policies, the PA Program Learner Handbook will take precedence unless otherwise stated.

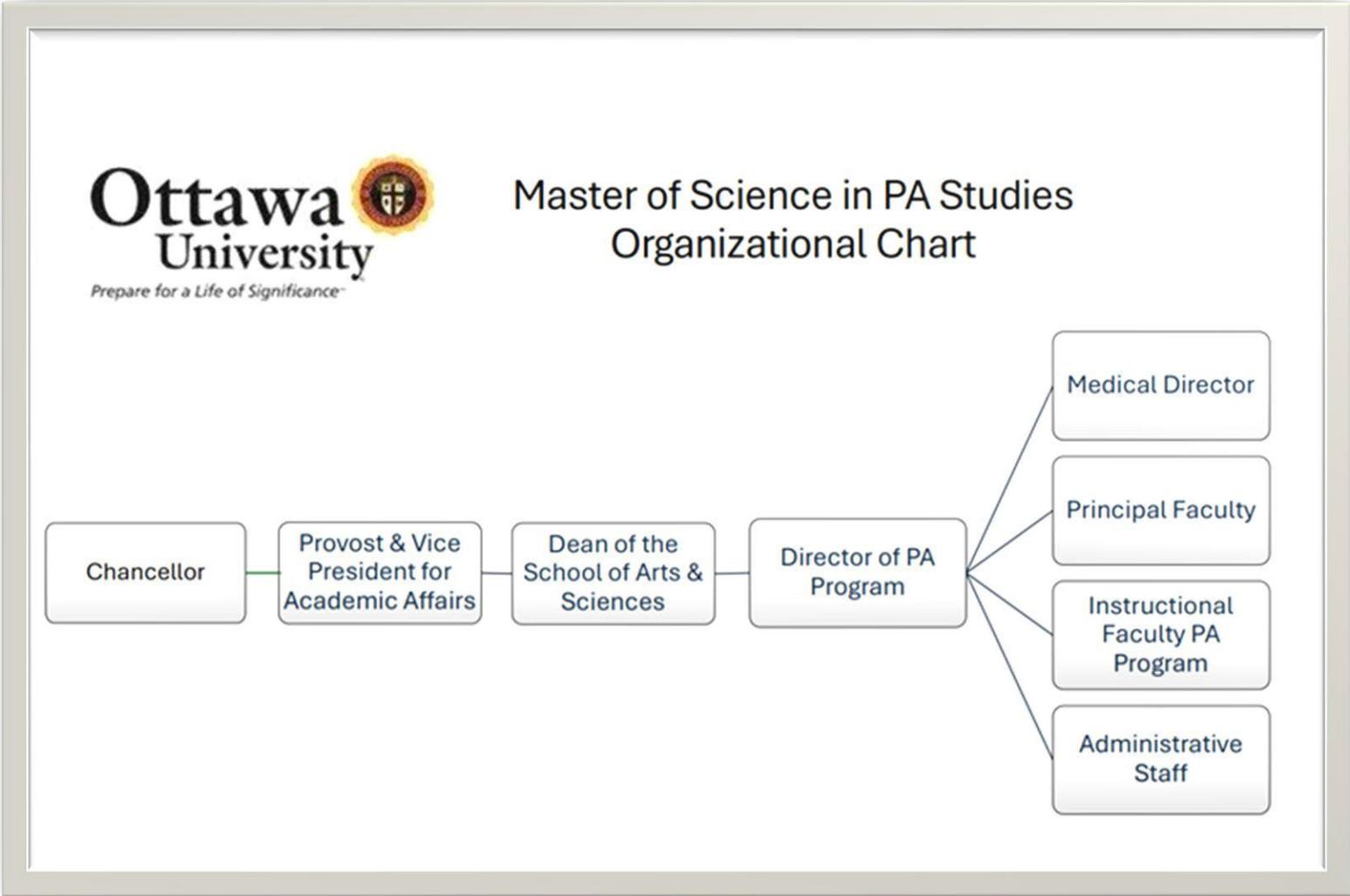
The Ottawa University PA Program reserves the right to change the curriculum, any provision, policy, procedure, requirement, regulation, or fee at any time, and at its own discretion subsequent to the publication of this handbook. Changes are applicable to all program learners regardless of date of admission application or enrollment. Nonetheless, every effort will be made to keep learners informed of all changes promptly and in writing. This Learner Handbook is neither a contract nor an offer to enter into a contract.

## **PA Program Accreditation Statement** (A3.11a)

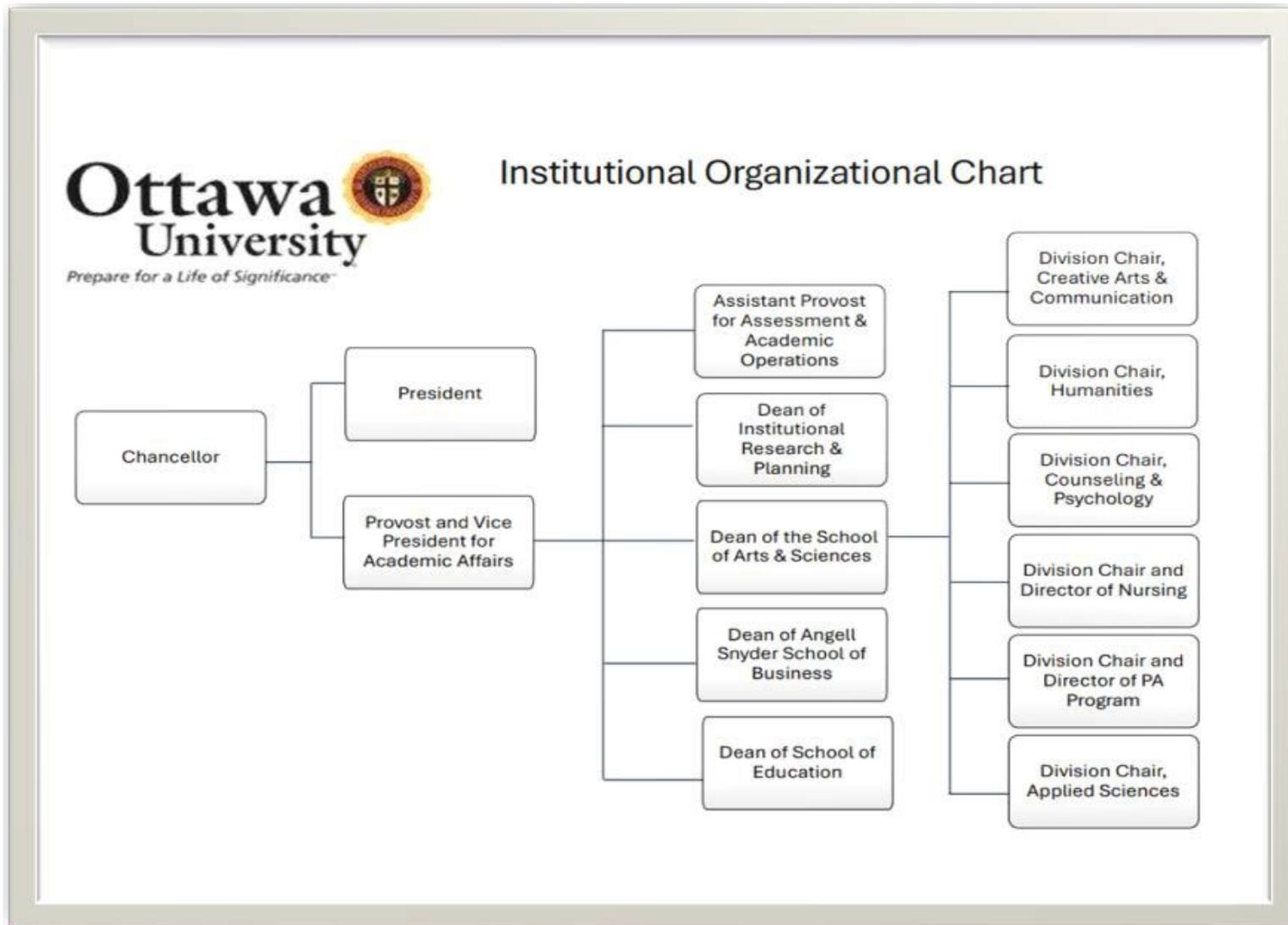
The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the PA (ARC-PA) has established Accreditation Standards to maintain and promote appropriate benchmarks of quality in the education process of PAs. These Accreditation Standards are used as guidelines in the development, evaluation, and self-analysis of PA programs. The ARC-PA provides recognition for educational programs that are in compliance with standards of quality for PA education. The [accreditation standards](#) are posted on the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the PA (ARC-PA) website. The policies and procedures stated in this Learner Handbook align and comply with these standards.

The PA Program's current accreditation statement can be found on the program website: [Accreditation Statement](#)

# Master of Science in PA Studies Organizational Chart



# Ottawa University Institutional Organizational Chart



# PA Program Mission-Vision-Values

## ***Mission***

The mission of the Ottawa University PA program is to prepare graduates to serve their diverse communities\* with evidence-based patient-centered care, leading to service to humanity and professional fulfillment.

\*Communities: underserved, marginalized, health profession shortage areas, rural

## ***Vision***

The vision of the Ottawa University PA program is to serve others through leadership, advocacy, and lifelong learning.

## ***Values***

To achieve our mission and vision the Ottawa University Master of Science in PA Studies program will:

- Adopt an equity framework that seeks to be inclusive of all people, including those impacted by systematic disadvantage, marginalization, and exclusion.
- Be kind, compassionate, and respectful of all human beings.
- Create and foster an environment that supports inclusion and belonging.
- Strive for excellence through obtaining knowledge through life-long learning in all areas of study and performance.
- Cultivate and encourage self-care for its employees, students, and patients.
- Collaborate with our colleagues at Ottawa University to be fiscally responsible with our resources and talents.

## PA Program Goals (A3.11b)

Goal	Benchmark	Measure	Publish Date
Goal 1. Create and enhance competencies in diverse healthcare settings.	<b>Ensure that at least 30% of clinical phase training occurs in underserved areas, with historically marginalized patients, health profession shortage areas, Native American health facilities, or rural medical settings.</b>	After each cohort completes their clinical phase.	February after each cohort has graduated, first publication February 2028
Goal 2. Foster an inclusive environment through ongoing education.	<b>Provide three (3) workshops annually on equity, inclusion, access, ability, and belonging.</b>	Document workshops as they occur each quarter.	February after each year, first publication, February 2027
Goal 3. Encourage professional and community involvement.	<b>All learners will complete at least three community service experiences in their didactic year.</b>	Document community service as it occurs each quarter.	February after each year, first publication, February 2027
	<b>All learners will complete at least one community service experience in their clinical year.</b>	Document community service at the end of the clinical year.	February after each year, first publication, February 2028
	<b>10% of learners will be involved in leadership and advocacy at the local, state, or national level.</b>	Document involvement as it occurs each quarter.	February after each cohort has graduated, first publication February 2028
Goal 4. Recruit applicants from HRSA-designated medically underserved areas/populations with the following HRSA Indicators (first-generation, lives in an HPSA or Medically Underserved Area; the family received public assistance (e.g., Food stamps, Medicaid, etc., and	<b>10% of each cohort will represent rural (US Census Designated Rural Area), HRSA-designated medically underserved areas/population, first generation, reside in HPSA, lives in MUA, the family received public assistance, English is not the primary language.</b>	Document each cohort's HRSA indicators at matriculation.	Each February, first publication of February 2026

English is not the primary language).			
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## Program Competencies (A3.11g)

The Ottawa University PA Program is committed to providing learners with a learner centered educational environment where they will receive the requisite medical knowledge to provide culturally sensitive, empathic, patient-centered, evidence-based medical care in an interprofessional healthcare team.

Learner success in achieving the program learning outcomes and expectations will be evaluated through a variety of assessment tools such as: multiple choice questions on examinations, short answer questions on examinations, interprofessional collaborative group activities and projects, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), self-reflection summaries, clinical performance evaluations, clinical preceptor evaluations, process improvement project, and a research graduate project.

The Ottawa University PA learning outcomes and expectations are based on the Competencies for the PA Profession as developed jointly by the National Commission on Accreditation of PA (NCCPA), the Accreditation Review Commission for Education of the PA (ARC-PA), the PA Education Association (PAEA), and the American Academy of PA (AAPA).

Upon completion of the Ottawa University PA Program, graduates will demonstrate entry-level proficiency as PAs in the following domains:

Competencies		Outcomes Domain
PC 1	<p align="center"><b>MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE (MK)</b></p> <p>Demonstrate comprehensive* knowledge of the human organ systems.</p> <p><i>*Comprehensive means knowledge in the NCCPA task categories: history taking and physical examination, using diagnostic and laboratory studies, formulating most likely diagnoses, managing patients, applying foundational scientific concepts, and professional practice.</i></p>	KNWG
PC 2	<p align="center"><b>INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (IS)</b></p> <p>Demonstrate effective communication with team members, patients, and caregivers while considering cultural and ethnic backgrounds.</p>	CRPS, KNWG
PC 3	<p align="center"><b>CLINICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (CTS)</b></p> <p>Perform history, physical, and entry-level clinical* and technical skills** competently.</p>	IS, CTS, PFLM

	<p><i>*Clinical skills include history taking, performing physical exams (including vital signs), patient counseling, diagnostic reasoning, diagnostic studies interpretation, and teamwork.</i></p> <p><i>**Technical skills include venipuncture, peripheral IV, suturing, bladder catheterization, injections (IV, IM, SC), point of care testing (e.g., swabbing), pap smear, prostate exam, casting and splinting, incision, and drainage.</i></p>	
PC 4	<p><b>CLINICAL REASONING and PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES (CRPSA)</b></p> <p>Create differential diagnoses based on the evaluation of patients.</p>	<p><b>CTS, KNWG</b></p>
PC 5	<p><b>PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS (PB)</b></p> <p>Provide respect, compassion, empathy, and kindness in healthcare settings to patients, families/caregivers, and members of the healthcare team.</p>	<p><b>PFLM, IS</b></p>
PC 6	<p><b>LEADERSHIP &amp; ADVOCACY(LA)</b></p> <p>Address health inequities using leadership* and advocacy** skills.</p> <p><i>*Leadership skills include effective communication, trustworthiness, patience, cultural humility, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, adaptivity, conflict resolution techniques, collaboration, and ethical decision-making.</i></p> <p><i>**Advocacy skills include cultural sensitivity, confidence, knowledge of patient's rights, the healthcare delivery system, medical knowledge, ethical and legal considerations, and resourcefulness.</i></p>	<p><b>PFLM, IS</b></p>

\*Key for Outcome Domains: Knowledge (KNWG), Clinical Reasoning Problem Solving (CRPS), Interpersonal Skills (IS), Clinical and Technical Skills (CTS), Professionalism (PFLM)

# PA Program Description (A3.11d, A3.11e)

## Overview

The Ottawa University PA Program is a comprehensive and dynamic 24-month program committed to creating academic excellence in PA education by integrating medical knowledge, clinical practice, and exemplary professional performance.

We strongly emphasize respect and care for all human beings, a culture of physical and emotional wellness, and adopting an equity framework of inclusion to meet the needs of patients from a diversity of backgrounds in our community, including socio-economic, religious, cultural, sexual orientation, and gender identity, while practicing good stewardship. Learners receive instruction in leadership, advocacy, ethics, health policy, social determinants of health, population, and community health in an interprofessional environment to serve their communities and address health inequities.

Interprofessional education (where students from different professions learn about, from, and with each other) is essential to learning. Learners participate in interprofessional advocacy projects while considering the health inequities they see in the [Healthy-Kansans-2030-State-Health-Assessment-Report](#). Learners will be required to develop a written solution-oriented capstone project to address a priority area in the community needs assessment plan [Healthy-Kansans-2030-State-Health-Assessment-Report](#) and orally present the plan.

Learners are evaluated and expected to meet the highest standards of competency in the PA Program's six (6) areas of competencies: 1) Medical Knowledge, 2) Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving Abilities, 3) Interpersonal Skills, 4) Clinical and Technical Skills, 5) Professional Behaviors, and 6) Leadership and Advocacy for Healthcare Equity and Access, throughout both the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Learners are evaluated using various assessment tools such as multiple-choice questions, verbal case presentations, simulated activities, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), self-reflection summaries, graduate research projects, and clinical preceptor evaluations.

*Upon successful completion of all curricular elements of the program, the learner will be awarded a Master of Science in PA Studies.*

## Didactic Year (A3.11d)

The program begins with a 12-month rigorous didactic phase of 6 terms totaling 67 credit hours, which includes robust instruction in anatomy and physiology, clinical science, clinical medicine (including pathophysiology), pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics, history and physical lab, evidenced-based medicine research design, PA professional practice, legal and ethical issues in medicine, and cultural and social issues in medicine. Instruction in leadership, professionalism, patient safety, advocacy, and community engagement are interwoven throughout the curriculum. The program provides instruction on collaborative leadership and the four (4) core competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice:

1. Values/Ethics for Interprofessional Practice
2. Roles/Responsibilities
3. Interprofessional Communication, and
4. Teams and Teamwork

## Clinical Year (A3.08, A3.11d)

The didactic phase is followed by a 12-month clinical phase where the learners will engage in supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs). Learners participate in seven core SCPEs: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics & Adolescent, Women’s Health (including gynecology and prenatal care), Behavioral and Mental Health Care, and Emergency Medicine. They also will complete two elective SCPEs. Each SCPE is four weeks long. At the end of each SCPE, the learners have two (2) days during End-Of-Rotation Days. Learners will have further assessments and education as outlined in each SCPE syllabus during this time. Additionally, learners will complete two (2) clinical seminars; one focused on the summative evaluation to ensure learners meet the program competencies and another for preparation to successfully pass the PANCE.

*Prospective and enrolled learners are not required or permitted to solicit or negotiate an affiliation with a SCPE site.*

## Capstone Graduate Projects

Each learner will work collaboratively within a team to complete a capstone research project. This project aims to deepen understanding of public health priorities in Kansas and develop actionable solutions. Each group will complete and present a capstone project focused on a priority area identified in the State of Kansas Health Assessment and Improvement Plan, wherein they summarize their findings and recommendations. Groups will discuss the impact of health inequities and social determinants of health priorities.

## Curriculum and Academic Credit (A3.11d, A3.11e)

The Ottawa University PA Program curriculum consists of 96 credit hours spanning over 12 terms in a 24-month period. Upon successful completion of all curricular elements of the program, the learner will be awarded a Master of Science in PA Studies. This information is also available in the Curriculum section of the [PA Program website](#).

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	TERM	YEAR	CREDIT
PAS 7001	Anatomy & Physiology with Lab 1	1	1	2
PAS 7101	Clinical Medicine 1	1	1	4
PAS 7201	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics 1	1	1	1
PAS 7301	History & Physical with Lab 1	1	1	2
PAS 7401	PA Professional Practice 1	1	1	1
PAS 7500	Clinical Science (Microbiology & Genetics)	1	1	2
				<b>Total = 12 credits</b>
PAS 7002	Anatomy & Physiology with Lab II	2	1	2

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	TERM	YEAR	CREDIT
PAS 7102	Clinical Medicine 2	2	1	4
PAS 7202	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics 2	2	1	1
PAS 7302	History & Physical with Lab 2	2	1	2
PAS 7402	PA Professional Practice 2	2	1	1
				<b>Total = 10 credits</b>
PAS 7003	Anatomy & Physiology with Lab III	3	1	2
PAS 7103	Clinical Medicine 3	3	1	4
PAS 7203	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics 3	3	1	1
PAS 7303	History & Physical with Lab 3	3	1	2
PAS 7403	PA Professional Practice 3	3	1	1
				<b>Total = 10 credits</b>
PAS 7004	Anatomy & Physiology with Lab IV	4	1	2
PAS 7600	Evidenced-Based Medicine	4	1	1
PAS 7104	Clinical Medicine 4	4	1	4
PAS 7204	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics 4	4	1	1
PAS 7304	History & Physical with Lab 4	4	1	2
PAS 7404	PA Professional Practice 4	4	1	1
				<b>Total = 11 credits</b>
PAS 7005	Anatomy & Physiology with Lab V	5	1	2
PAS 7700	Clinical Seminar I	5	1	1
PAS 7105	Clinical Medicine 5	5	1	5
PAS 7205	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics 5	5	1	1

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	TERM	YEAR	CREDIT
PAS 7305	History & Physical with Lab 5	5	1	2
PAS 7405	PA Professional Practice 5	5	1	1
				<b>Total = 12 credits</b>
PAS 7701	Psychiatry (Behavioral and Mental Health Care)	6	1	2
PAS 7702	Geriatric Medicine	6	1	1
PAS 7703	Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine	6	1	2
PAS 7704	Emergency Medicine & Infectious Disease	6	1	2
PAS 7705	Surgery	6	1	1
PAS 7800	Clinical Skills & Procedures	6	1	2
PAS 7900	Clinical Integration	6	1	2
				<b>Total = 12 credits</b>
<b>Total credits for the didactic phase</b>	<b>67</b>			
PAS 8000	Emergency Medicine	7	2	3
PAS 8001	Family Medicine	7	2	3
				<b>Total = 6 credits</b>
PAS 8002	Internal Medicine	8	2	3
PAS 8003	Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine	8	2	3
				<b>Total = 6 credits</b>
PAS 8004	Psychiatry	9	2	3
PAS 8005	Surgery	9	2	3

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	TERM	YEAR	CREDIT
				<b>Total = 6 credits</b>
PAS 8100	Clinical Seminar 2	10	2	1
PAS 8006	Women's Health	10	2	3
				<b>Total = 4 credits</b>
PAS 8007	Elective 1	11	2	3
PAS 8008	Elective 2	11	2	3
				<b>Total = 6 credits</b>
PAS 8200	Clinical Seminar 3	12	2	1
				<b>Total = 1 credit</b>
<b>Total credits for the clinical phase</b>	<b>29</b>			
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>96</b>			

## Course Descriptions

All PA Program course descriptions can be found in the [OU Course Catalog Course Descriptions - Graduate](#).

## Technical Standards (A3.12e)

### Expectations:

All PA Program learners are expected to meet certain non-academic criteria in their training to become PAs.

The Dictionary of Occupational Titles defines the role of PAs in the healthcare delivery model, and learners should be able to perform the listed tasks. In addition, the O\*NET Program is a national resource for occupational information, including PA profession. [O\\*NET Program](#) has specific tasks, technology skills, and work activities.

The Ottawa University PA Program evaluates the following technical standards in all candidates for admission and graduation.

- I. **Observation.** Observe, identify, and interpret clinical findings accurately using visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile senses. This includes the ability to identify non-verbal cues, evaluate clinical presentations effectively, and recognize changes in patient status promptly.
- II. **Communication.** Demonstrate advanced interpersonal communication skills to establish trust and rapport. This includes adapting communication methods to suit diverse cultural and linguistic needs, using active listening, and effectively documenting patient encounters.
- III. **Motor.** Execute precise motor tasks, including the use of advanced diagnostic tools and equipment. Demonstrate dexterity and coordination in both routine and emergent care scenarios, ensuring the ability to perform lifesaving interventions when necessary.
- IV. **Intellectual.** Apply critical thinking and evidence-based decision-making to manage complex clinical scenarios. Use advanced reasoning to prioritize patient care, integrate multidisciplinary perspectives, and optimize treatment outcomes.
- V. **Behavioral and Social.** Exhibit resilience, adaptability, and professionalism in high-pressure and dynamic healthcare environments. Demonstrate self-awareness, compassion, and teamwork to foster a positive therapeutic relationship with patients and healthcare teams.

The program policy on meeting these technical standards is available in the Technical Standards section of the [PA Program website](#).

## Commitment to Inclusivity

The Ottawa University PA Program is committed to ensuring all learners can meet these standards in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations will be made for documented disabilities to provide equitable opportunities for success.

## Accommodation for Learners

Learners with disabilities are encouraged to contact the [Disability Services Department](#) to discuss accommodations that enable them to meet these technical standards.

## Facilities and Services for Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodation for persons with known disabilities will be made in accordance with **section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008**. Learners wishing to receive accommodation for a disability should contact the Disabilities Services coordinator listed in the [Disability Services Department](#). Learners will be assisted in completing the request form and advised on the medical documentation required for accommodation. To read more about our facilities and services for learners with disabilities see: [Disability Services Department](#).

## **Tuition and Fee** (A3.11f)

Tuition and fees information can be found in the Cost section of the [PA Program website](#).

## **Refund Policy**(A1.02h)

The applicable refund policies for the PA Program can be found in the Cost section of the [PA Program website](#).

Students who are considering a program withdrawal or require academic separation or deceleration from the program are advised to consult with Student Financial Services to discuss the consequences of their changed status on payment of tuition/fees and their financial aid package, including any loans.

## ***PA Professional Oath***

I pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

- I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings.
- I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.
- I will recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.
- I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- I will work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- I will respect my professional relationship with the physician.
- I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.
- These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.

# Professionalism (B4.03e)

## Definition

Medical Professionalism is defined as the daily expression of the desire to serve people and society as a whole by providing quality health care to those in need<sup>1</sup>. The Core Competencies for PAs states "... it involves prioritizing the interest of those being served above one's own" which aligns with the principle of servant leadership<sup>2</sup>. As stated by Robert Greenleaf the father of servant leadership, "The servant leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first."<sup>3</sup>

## Expected Professional Behaviors

All currently enrolled learners of the Ottawa University PA Program are expected to always demonstrate behaviors consistent with the:

- [Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA](#), published by the American Academy of PAs.
- The Ottawa University Professionalism Rubric
  - ✓ Maintains a professional appearance, according to program and/or clinical site guidelines.
  - ✓ Arrives on time for all classes, assessments, and/or clinical experiences (including in clinic, hospital rounds, educational sessions, or any other activity assigned by clinical site).
  - ✓ Treats all learners, faculty, PA staff, patients, preceptors, clinical staff, and all persons with respect.
  - ✓ Demonstrates accountability, responsibility, dependability, and integrity.
  - ✓ Prepares fully for class and/or clinical experiences.
  - ✓ Completes and submits all assessments on time.
  - ✓ Abides by university, school, department, program, clinical field placement, clinical site, and professional association policies and procedures.
  - ✓ The PA Oath.

## Unacceptable Professional Behaviors\*

Examples of unprofessional behaviors that **will** result in **prompt** referral to the Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC) for potential **dismissal** from the program:

- Violation of principles related to academic integrity (i.e., evidence of cheating on an assignment or test) and plagiarism as outlined by the Ottawa University Standards of Student Conduct section of the most current Ottawa University Catalog, which can be found at Ottawa University - Standards of Student Conduct.
- Learner intoxication or presumed intoxication from alcohol, prescription, or other drugs.
- Learner communication or interaction that is openly discriminatory, demeaning, or could reasonably be perceived as mentally or physically harmful to others, including but not limited to faculty, learners, staff, patients, patient's family or caregivers, and healthcare providers.

\*These are listed as examples only and should not be construed as an exhaustive list of unacceptable behaviors. The program reserves the right to determine the degree of egregiousness of the behavior.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://abimfoundation.org/what-we-do/medical-professionalism> (08/26/2022)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aapa.org/career-central/employer-resources/employing-a-pa/competencies-physician-assistant-profession/> (08/06/2022)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/> (08/06/2022)

## Assessment of Professional Behaviors in Patient Care

Professionalism is a cornerstone of patient care and is assessed and monitored continually throughout the learner's tenure in the program. Faculty utilizes professional rubrics to evaluate behaviors during the program's didactic and clinical phases. These assessments are part of the assessment of learners and may be conducted more frequently if areas of concern are identified, underscoring the critical role of professionalism in healthcare delivery.

Whether reported by the community members, staff, faculty, or peers, professional concerns prompt a reflective process for the learner. The learner will complete a self-evaluation to identify areas for growth and review it with their faculty advisor/mentor and the Program Director. Behavior modification strategies are discussed and formalized into an **Individualized Plan of Improvement (IPI)**. This plan, which outlines specific expectations for professional conduct, must be signed by the learner, their faculty advisor/mentor, and the Program Director to ensure accountability and ongoing progress in the program.

Failure to demonstrate improvement after implementing the IPI will lead to a referral to the Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC). This committee formally reviews the learner's conduct and may recommend dismissal from the program if professionalism standards are not met. The process underscores the program's commitment to fostering professional excellence, essential for delivering safe, respectful, and compassionate patient care.

## Communication

All learners receive notification from the Ottawa University Office of the Registrar once the admission deposit is paid with instructions to activate a MyOttawa account and Ottawa University email account. It is mandatory that learners check their Ottawa University e-mail account daily (including weekends). The Ottawa University e-mail is considered the official University email and the only account that the PA Program uses to communicate with currently enrolled learners. Likewise, learners should only use their Ottawa University e-mail account for email correspondence with the program as this prevents identification problems related to outside email. Faculty and staff will not respond to learners who utilize outside email addresses. The PA program faculty and staff use e-mail and Microsoft Teams as important means for distributing information. The PA program is not responsible if a learner has inaccurate or missed information due to failure to routinely check, read, and/or clear their e-mail if necessary.

## Health Screenings, Immunization, Drug Screening, and Criminal Background Checks (A3.09a, A3.18, A3.18)

The PA Program considers the health, safety and welfare of its faculty, learner body, staff, and the community we serve of utmost importance. Therefore, the program has developed the Health Screenings, Immunization, and Criminal Background Checks policy, which can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

## Requirement to Report Criminal Incident

Learners are not required to inform the Program Director of any interaction with the police resulting in an arrest or being brought before the criminal justice system. A criminal incident may restrict supervised clinical rotations, resulting in a delayed graduation. Criminal convictions of any nature may create difficulty in placing a learner into clinical rotations. Additionally, a learner's criminal background may adversely affect the ability to obtain licensure or clinical privileges. It is the applicant's and learner's responsibility to address any such issues and determine the continued viability of their status in the PA Program.

## Medical Records and Patient Confidentiality

Patient confidentiality is a cornerstone in PA practice and essential for establishing and maintaining the patient-provider relationship built on trust.

PA learners are privileged to learn information that patients share only with healthcare professionals and be present in very personal moments of patients' lives. Patients, in turn, trust that PA learners will preserve their confidentiality; as a key component of medical professionalism, PA learners must honor this trust.

Learners are not to discuss a patient in any manner or situation that would reveal any information about that patient to anyone not directly involved in the patient's health care. Learners must refrain from discussing patients in public places (e.g., cafeterias, elevators, etc.) where conversations may be overheard. Learners should remind those who may be inappropriately discussing patient information about patient confidentiality.

Learners will adhere to ethical principles and use practical reasoning when dealing with patients at all times. No learner should medically treat other PA learners, friends, or family members while a learner is in the PA Program. All learners will receive formal instruction on and must follow the Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rules when participating in clinical activities at affiliated hospitals and clinics; HIPAA compliance includes maintaining confidentiality of paper and electronic health records. When violations of HIPAA by a learner are identified by a hospital, clinic, physician's office, etc., the violation will be reviewed by the Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee. Disciplinary actions may include remediation and/or sanctions, including the possibility of dismissal from the program.

## Dress Code and Learner Identification (A3.04)

Learner professional dress and conduct should always reflect the dignity and standards of the medical profession. PA learners should dress respectfully toward their professors, classmates, patients, interprofessional colleagues, and administrative colleagues. The Ottawa University PA program has the authority to determine dress code requirements for learners admitted to the program.

Additionally, learners must be identified as learners to promote safety and ensure security.

The PA Program Dress Code and Student Identification Policy can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

## Social Media and the Medical Professional

The Ottawa University PA Program supports the [AMA Policy: Professionalism in the Use of Social Media](#). The opinion has been included in the policy below with modifications to align with PA education and practice.

The PA Program Policy on Social Media and the Medical Professional can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

## **Learner Employment** (A3.02, A3.03a, A3.03b, A3.14i)

The PA Program strongly discourages any form of employment during the program and does not require enrolled learners to be employed by the program. The Learner Employment policy can be found in the section of the [PA Program website](#).

Employment (paid/volunteer) during the program will not be accepted to excuse absence from scheduled learning activities, justify poor performance, or be considered extenuating circumstances when assessing the learners' academic and professional progress. No exceptions or accommodation will be granted to didactic or clinical course work, scheduling of classes, labs, exams, special assignments, community service work, or supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) assignments due to outside employment.

***The program does not permit matriculated learners to substitute for or function as instructional faculty, nor is it required that they work (paid or voluntary) for the program in any capacity.***

During SCPEs, learners may not substitute for clinical or administrative staff and must ensure all patient services are supervised. Learners must not accept compensation for any services provided during supervised clinical experiences.

Any violations of any component of this policy will result in referral to the Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC).

## **Attendance**

The PA Program is an in-person program. Due to its intense rigor and rapid pace, attendance for all classes, labs, and curriculum-related activities is mandatory. Learners are expected to be on time for class and should plan their schedules accordingly.

## **Didactic Phase Monthly Personal Day**

To support learners in balancing their academic and personal commitments while maintaining high attendance standards, learners are permitted one personal day off per calendar month during the didactic phase of the program. This day off can be used for personal, medical, or other needs without requiring documentation or justification.

**Learners must notify the Program Director and Course Director via email by the start of the day they plan to be absent.**

Personal days do not carry over to the following month if unused. Each month's allowance is independent and must be used within that calendar month.

## **Exclusions and Limitations:**

Personal days may not be used on days when there are exams, assessments, or other critical activities unless explicitly approved by the Program Director.

Excessive absences beyond the allotted personal day may be subject to the program's general attendance policy and could require documentation. ***Any learner absent more than 2 days in a month must contact and schedule a meeting with the Program Director.***

## **Student Responsibility:**

Learners are responsible for catching up on any missed work or lectures during their personal day and must coordinate makeup work with the Course Director.

The PA Program aims to provide flexibility while ensuring academic consistency and responsibility. Learners should use their personal days judiciously and communicate effectively with program faculty and staff.

## **Absences Beyond the Allotted One Day Per Month**

Requests for absences outside of the one-day-per-month allotment described above must be submitted to the Program Director using the program's Didactic Phase Absence Request Form prior to the absence. In the form, the learner must detail how they will make up the missed work. The request may or may not be approved. Requests will be reviewed by the Program Director who will determine approval and notify the learner, the course director, and the learner's advisor. An obligation for professional organization responsibility may be considered. Requests for social events (early start to vacation, family reunion, weddings, etc.) will not be approved.

*Learners absent for more than two days a month must meet with the Program Director. Persistent tardiness or repeated absences may be deemed unprofessional behavior and referred to the Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC) for potential disciplinary action.*

All absences outside of the one day per month allotment which are due to illness, accident or other unexpected personal or family events must be reported via e-mail to the Program Director and the Course Director as soon as the learner is aware that they may miss class time.

Only urgent medical or emergent absences will be excused on exam days unless approved in advance for religious observation or to appear in a court of law.

## **Clinical Phase Attendance**

Additional attendance requirements during the clinical phase are addressed in the Clinical Handbook and learners are expected to reference and abide by those requirements.

## **Absence Due to Professional Activities**

Absence from didactic coursework or a clinical site during a PA educational conference (e.g., AAPA, PAEA, NCCPA, etc.) for conference attendance or committee responsibilities may be permitted with the permission of the Program Director as appropriate, after consultation with the Course Director. A formal request must be submitted in writing to the Program Director. The learner remains responsible for all assignments and assessments associated with coursework or the SCPE.

## **Missed Examinations or Assignments Due to an Absence**

Learners are expected to be physically present for all scheduled examinations, written or practical, and assignments. Assignments include, but are not limited to, clinical facility visits, interprofessional activities, interactive case-based sessions, and professional development sessions.

## Documented Absence

Approved absences on exam days are limited to urgent medical or emergent absences, pre-approved requests for time off for religious observations, or pre-approved requests to appear in a court of law. When absences result in learners missing a written test or practical examination, learners must provide reasonable evidence to the Program Director. The Program Director will consider the evidence presented and determine if a make-up exam will be granted.

## Absence without Notification

Learners absent from an examination without notifying the Course Director and the Program Director *in writing* will receive a score of 0 (zero) for the examination.

Whether the learner is permitted to complete a make-up examination or assignment is at the discretion of the Program Director. The Course Director will determine the date and time of the make-up. The content and format of the make-up examination or assignment may differ from that of the original examination or assignment and will be determined by the Course Director. The maximum score a learner can earn on an absence with no notification make-up examination is the minimum passing score for the examination (70% or C). If the learner is absent for the scheduled make-up, they will receive a grade of zero for that examination or assignment. The Program Director and the Course Director will be informed. The learner will then be referred to the Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC) for disciplinary action, which may include a recommendation for dismissal from the program.

***\*NOTE: If a learner is absent from a scheduled examination or assignment more than twice during a semester in any course(s), the learner will be referred to the PAPC (even if a make-up exam was completed successfully). Excessive absences, even for documented illness, injury, or family emergency, may interfere with the learner's ability to complete a course or remain enrolled in the program successfully.***

## Religious Observances

All learners, faculty, and staff at Ottawa University have a right to expect the University to reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices, and beliefs. The faculty will make every attempt to schedule required classes and examinations given customarily observed religious holidays of those religious groups or communities comprising the University's constituency.

No learner shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time prohibited by their religious belief.

To balance this support with the PA Program's operational and educational requirements, the following applies to requests for time off due to religious observance:

- Learners are required to provide documentation supporting the request, such as:
  - A religious leader or organization letter verifying the nature of observance.
  - An official calendar or reference material indicating religious observance.
  - This documentation is intended to confirm the observance and ensure appropriate accommodation.
- The Program Director will review the requests. Approved requests will ensure that no academic penalties are incurred.
- Accommodation will be made so that learners can complete any missed coursework, exams, or clinical hours in a manner consistent with program policies.

- It is the learner's responsibility to coordinate and arrange markup work with course directors and arrange for rescheduling of missed assessments.
- Failure to provide appropriate documentation or adequate notice may result in the denial of the request.

This process is designed to respect learners' religious practices while maintaining the program's academic and clinical integrity. If you have concerns or questions regarding this policy, please contact the Program Director for further clarification or support. Any learner who believes they have been treated unfairly regarding a request for accommodation for religious observation should reference the PA Program Grievance and Appeal Process for Allegations of Student Harassment or Mistreatment Policy found in the Policies and Data section of the [PA Program website](#) and report their concern to the appropriate contact.

## Timeliness

Timeliness is an essential professional behavior required of all PA learners. Learners are expected to arrive early or on time for all **didactic** coursework and activities. The course syllabi outline specific expectations for timeliness, including its impact on grading as part of the professional behavior components. This standard extends into the clinical phase, where timeliness expectations are detailed in the Clinical Handbook.

If learners arrive late for an examination during the didactic or clinical phase, they may begin the exam upon arrival. However, no additional time will be granted, and the learner must complete the exam within the originally designated time limit.

Timeliness is a professional behavior that all PA learners must exhibit by arriving early or on time for all didactic-related coursework and activities. The course syllabi include specific information related to faculty expectations for timeliness in a course and the impact on grading for the professional behavior components of a course if tardiness occurs. The expectation of timeliness as a professional behavior continues in the clinical phase while at clinical sites. Timeliness expectations during the clinical phase are addressed in the Clinical Handbook.

## Academic Standards (A3.14a, A3.14b, A3.14c, A13.14d)

### Required Academic Standards (A3.14a-b)

Ottawa University maintains university-wide academic standing requirements for graduate students. In addition, the PA Program has standards or requirements specific to the program that apply in addition to the university-wide standards.

One of the overarching goals of the Ottawa University PA Program is to educate leaders who will successfully demonstrate entry-level proficiency in the Competencies of PA Practice. Leaders place the needs of others ahead of their personal needs and share responsibilities with others. To ensure that learners successfully achieve the expected competencies, they will be formally and frequently evaluated using various assessment tools. This includes three mandatory faculty advising/mentoring meetings with the faculty advisor at the beginning of the 1st, 3rd, and 6th term advising meetings. The learner may also request to meet with their faculty advisor to address concerns at any other time.

The program has developed academic standards to provide appropriate guidance and feedback to those learners who encounter difficulty meeting established learning outcomes, instructional objectives, and expected competencies. These standards guide administrative decisions and procedures regarding continued learner progression in the

program, remediation, academic standing, and deceleration. All academic plans concerning learner progress, remediation, academic standing, and deceleration will be individualized and implemented when deficiencies are identified.

The PA Program Required Academic Standards policy can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#). Ottawa University and the PA Program reserve the right to edit, update, or change the academic standards contained in this

### **Remediation of the Didactic Phase Evaluation (A3.14c)**

At Ottawa University, your success is our priority. We are committed to supporting you in achieving your full potential as a future PA. The remediation policy reflects our dedication to your academic growth and professional development, ensuring you are prepared to provide exceptional, patient-centered care.

This policy is designed to uphold the rigorous standards of entry-level PA practice and to help you develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to excel on the NCCPA PANCE and in diverse healthcare settings. By addressing challenges through structured remediation, we aim to foster your ability to meet program competencies, achieve academic success, and confidently advance your PA career.

Our goal is to identify areas for improvement and provide the resources and guidance needed to overcome them. Together, we will work to ensure your readiness to join the PA profession as a competent and compassionate healthcare provider.

This policy and procedure outline a structured remediation process for didactic-phase learners who fail to meet academic or professional standards and can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

### **Progression from the Didactic Phase to the Clinical Phase (A3.14a)**

Information on Academic Standing can be found in the Academic Standards policy found in the Policies section on the [PA Program website](#). Learners should carefully review this policy and refer to the [Ottawa University Graduate Catalog](#) for more information.

Information regarding clinical phase assignments, assessments, remediation and progression can be found in the Clinical Handbook which is available to enrolled learners through their MyOttawa account.

### **Referrals for Personal Issues Impacting Progress in the Program (A3.07)**

The PA program director, medical director, principal, and/or instructional faculty are expected to make an appropriate and timely referral of learners to university resources as soon as they have knowledge of a learner facing personal, physical, or mental health issues that may impact their continued progress in the program. Learners are advised that there may be resource or scope of practice limitations from university service providers. If PA personnel are concerned that continued progress in the program may be impacted, Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC) will also be notified.

Program staff and faculty strive to ensure that referrals are made as quickly as possible and generally within 72 hours, or within a reasonably practicable time frame following receipt and review of all necessary information.

The PA Program Referrals for Personal Issues Impacting Progress in the Program policy can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

### **Withdrawal (A3.14e)**

Withdrawal from the Ottawa University PA program should only be considered after a judicious and thorough assessment of the academic, financial, and personal impacts of such action. Before requesting an official program withdrawal, learners must meet with the financial aid office and submit evidence of that meeting to the program director 24 hours prior to meeting with the program director to discuss options.

Learners may withdraw from the program at their discretion and at any time. Unless a leave of absence is requested and granted (see Deceleration Policy below), withdrawal from any individual course will not allow a learner to progress in the program and, therefore, constitutes withdrawal from the entire program. The program has no “partial withdrawal” or “part-time” status.

Learners considering withdrawal can find the withdrawal policy and procedures in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

### **Academic Dismissal (A3.14f)**

The university-wide graduate academic policy requires that two consecutive semesters or academic sessions below a cumulative 3.0 GPA be grounds for dismissal. Furthermore, any learner receiving more than 3 credits of F is subject to dismissal.

In addition, a learner is subject to Academic Dismissal if they fail to meet any of the following PA program-specific standards are more restrictive than those of the university due to the responsibilities and professional conduct expected from healthcare providers in society. In the program, learners must:

1. Complete each required course/rotation with a grade of 70% (C) or higher,

**AND**

2. Fulfill remediation requirements as directed and specified by the Course Director,

**AND**

3. Comply with professional and program standards for professional behaviors and meet the program's technical standards.

If learners are being dismissed from the program, they will be notified in writing to their ottawa.edu email. The notice will include the right to appeal the decision per the Appeals Process for Grading and Other Academic Issue Disputes procedures unless a prior stipulation while under University and/or Program Academic Probation prohibits additional appeals.

Information on Academic Dismissal is found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

### **Deceleration Policy (A3.14d)**

At Ottawa University, we are deeply committed to your success as a learner and future PA. Our mission is to prepare you to deliver evidence-based, patient-centered care with professionalism, compassion, and excellence. Achieving this goal requires that every learner meet the rigorous academic and clinical standards of our Master of Science in PA Studies program. Deceleration is defined as an interruption or delay in the continuing progress of a learner from their admitted cohort but who remains enrolled in the PA program. The number of learners in the PA Program and those considered decelerated cannot exceed the maximum limit approved and designated by our accrediting agency, the

ARC-PA. Therefore, the PA Program reserves the right to decline to offer an option for deceleration to a learner if it exceeds the maximum limit permissible.

To ensure success, all learners must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, demonstrating the mastery required for both graduate-level academic achievement at Ottawa University. These standards align with the expectations for entry-level competency in PA practice, passing the NCCPA PANCE, and effectively serving patients in diverse healthcare settings.

While we understand that challenges may arise during your journey, our deceleration policy is designed to provide support while maintaining the integrity of the program's requirements. Deceleration is a structured approach that allows for an adjusted program timeline, enabling learners to address significant personal or academic difficulties. This option is granted in rare and well-documented circumstances to ensure learners have the opportunity to succeed without compromising their readiness for PA practice.

This policy reflects our commitment to supporting you while upholding the standards necessary for your professional development and future contributions to the healthcare field. The policy can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

### **Degree Completion and Graduation (A3.14a-b)**

Ottawa University's university-wide policy requires that graduate learners must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to graduate.

In addition, the PA Program policy requires that to graduate all learners must:

- Complete each required course/rotation with a grade of 70% (C) or higher **AND**
- Complete each element of the Summative Evaluation with a grade of 70% (C) or higher **AND**
- Complete the Graduate Project based on the grading rubric **AND**
- Complete the PA Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Test (PACKRAT) for self-assessment only **AND**
- Comply with program standards of conduct and guidelines for ethical conduct **AND**
- Complete the Ottawa University PA National Commission on Certification of PAs (NCCPA) Board Review Course.

### **Time Limits on Degree Completion (A3.14b)**

Learners are expected to complete all curricular components in twenty-four (24) consecutive months, and in the prescribed sequence, unless on Academic Separation and approved under the Deceleration Policy for a temporary separation from the program.

## Grade Breakdown (A3.14a)

Percentage	Grade
90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 - 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
<60%	F

## Summative Evaluation (B4.03a-e)

The PA Program conducts a summative evaluation of each learner within the final four months of the program. The purpose of the summative evaluation is to verify and validate that each learner has successfully achieved the Learning Outcomes and Expected Competencies established by the program; and are necessary to enter clinical practice. The assessments composing the summative evaluation correlate with all didactic and clinical curricular components of the program. The elements of the summative evaluation can be found in the Clinical Handbook, which is available to enrolled students through their MyOttawa account.

# Professionalism & Academic Progress Committee (PAPC)

## Overview

The PA Program has established a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of any PA learner who does not meet the established academic and professional performance standards. The process is generally positive in approach and committed to supporting learners in successfully completing the course work required by the program. Elements essential to the effectiveness of the process include but are not limited to:

- timely notice of the impending action
- disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based
- an opportunity for the PA learner to respond and
- an opportunity to appeal to any adverse decision related to progression, academic standing, or graduation.

The PAPC is responsible for systematically reviewing academic performance (didactic and clinical phases), professional behaviors, and adherence to the technical standards for each PA learner. Based on this review, the PAPC makes appropriate recommendations to the Program Director regarding progression in the program, including from the didactic to clinical phases, remediation strategies, academic standing (including academic separation, deceleration, and dismissal), graduation, and re-entry following academic separation or deceleration.

Also, PAPC ensures that the policies outlined in all program policy manuals (including this document) are applied fairly to all learners. However, claims of discrimination, harassment, mistreatment, or sexual harassment, including retaliation, should be submitted to the appropriate office at Ottawa University by the learner. Please refer to the PA Program Grievance and Appeal Process for Allegations of Student Harassment or Mistreatment found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#). PA Learners who believe they have experienced mistreatment should report such conduct as quickly as possible. The Code of Conduct and Ethics section of the [APGS Handbook](#) outlines the process for reporting improper conduct, which can be found under the University-wide: Code of Conduct and Ethics section on page 12 of the APGS Handbook.

## Composition

The Program Director will appoint all members each term. The PAPC will rotate members to act as chair. Voting members include program faculty (principal faculty, instructional faculty, medical director). While the Program Director is a program faculty member, they are not present or vote.

## Ex-officio (Non-voting) Members (by invitation)

- Institutional representatives who may provide support and insight into the learner's performance include course directors, registrar, financial aid, tutoring services, or university legal counsel.

## Requirements Adoptive Action

- All actions of the committee require consensus.
- In extenuating circumstances only, the committee chair cannot attend; they will designate an acting chair for that meeting.

## Review Process and Confidentiality

- The PAPC may convene meetings for any purpose, including helping prepare for the PAPC meeting.
- No prior written notice is provided to learners that the routine end-of-term, didactic to clinical phase progression, and graduation reviews are occurring. For reviews regarding a learner to come before the PAPC, learners are notified in writing to their ottawa.edu email within 72 hours of referral to the PAPC. The notice will explain why the learner must come before the PAPC and documents that will be reviewed during the meeting.

During review, each learner is considered individually, emphasizing their performance relative to the university and program-specific standards for continued progress in the program, including academic standards, professional behaviors, and technical standards. The PAPC may review all available information on a learner's progress, which may include course assignment/exam/assessment grades, final course grades, Learner Professional Evaluation, Individualized Plans of Remediation, improvement plans, and any additional information provided by other parties (i.e., course directors, clinical preceptors, administrative support staff, or learners).

- The PAPC has the authority to gather additional information to assist with its deliberation and evaluation of the matter in the context of the learner's academic performance, professional behaviors, and adherence to technical standards.
- All deliberations and proceedings of the PAPC are confidential. Except as specified in this policy, the meetings are closed to persons other than individuals specifically authorized by the Program Director. Program faculty must be apprised of the confidential nature of the information.
- During the meeting with the learner, the learner can respond to the information presented. The learner may have an individual present to provide support and advice; however, that individual may only advise the learner and not address the PAPC member(s) directly or examine or cross-examine witnesses. The learner does not have the right to be represented by an attorney, and no attorney shall be permitted to attend the meeting on the learner's behalf or in any other capacity.
- The PAPC allows witnesses to present pertinent information at the meeting with the learner regarding any incidents involving adherence to professional behaviors or technical standards, if any. The chair has the authority to exclude witnesses who provide redundant or duplicative information. Character witnesses shall not be permitted to testify at meetings. If witnesses make presentations at any meetings, the learner shall be entitled to pose relevant questions to such witnesses.
- The PAPC makes recommendations to the Program Director regarding continuing progression in the program, including from the didactic to clinical phases, remediation strategies, academic standing (including academic separation, deceleration, and dismissal), graduation, and re-entry following academic separation and/or deceleration.
- The learner must not record the meeting, and it considered a professionalism violation with immediate dismissal from the program.

## Program Director Review of PAPC Recommendations

- The PAPC's recommendations are reviewed by the Program Director, who either accepts, amends, or rejects the recommendations.
- The Program Director will meet with a learner before issuing a decision.
- The Program Director is responsible for notifying learners of their decision within the timeframes in the Appeals Process for Grading and Other Academic Issue Disputes procedures. If an Episodic Review is necessary, the PAPC will provide a recommendation to the Program Director within 24 hours of the

conclusion of the meeting. The Program Director will notify the learner of their decision and timeframes to appeal within the next 24 hours.

- Learners are advised that the timeframes for appeal may be very short given the intensive nature of the program and will require immediate action from the learner. To meet time restrictions, a virtual meeting may be necessary.
- The Program Director's decision will be forwarded to appropriate university officials, who will include, at minimum, the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Registrar, and Financial Aid Office.

**Appeals must be filed in accordance with the PA Program Academic Disputes - Student Grievance and Appeal Process which can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).**

## Documentation of PAPC Meetings

Written decisions sent to the Program Director serve as the official records of all PAPC meetings. The PAPC may make one or more of the following recommendations to the Program Director regarding the disposition of a matter considered by the PAPC:

- Find that the matter does not warrant action.
- Issue a written reprimand or warning.
- Allow the learner to repeat or otherwise remediate academic, professional behavior, or technical standard deficiencies.
- Recommend changing the learner's academic status, including university/program warning, academic separation, or deceleration, OR returning to good academic standing.
- Recommend re-entry for a learner who satisfies the conditions related to an academic separation or deceleration or
- Dismiss the learner from the PA program.

## Leave from the Program

### Overview

A learner requiring a break of five (5) days or longer from the PA Program must notify the Program Director in writing. The learner will need to provide documentation of 1) the reason for the break of 5 days or longer, 2) the plan for meeting the expectations of the program during the break from the program, and 3) the date of return.

The Program Director and Dean will make the determination within 72 hours of the request in consultation with other university personnel. The learner will be required to make up coursework, exams, and clinical experiences within the timeframes specified in their approval letter. If the learner is unable to complete the required makeup, they will be offered deceleration (see Deceleration section in this handbook) or withdrawal (see Withdrawal section in this handbook) before permission to be reinstated in the program will be considered.

### Petition for Reentry

- Reentry into the program following an approved deceleration in the program is not guaranteed.
- The learner must notify the Program Director of intent to resume enrollment in writing within the timeframes outlined in their approval letter. The request for reinstatement and any supporting documentation will be forwarded to the PAPC for review.
- Petitions for reentry may be considered at any regular or called meeting of the PAPC. The timing of reentry will be based upon which is deemed most appropriate to the learner's status and scheduled by the PAPC.

- The learner must show to the PAPC that they have satisfied all conditions in the deceleration approval letter before reinstatement.
- Reinstatement is dependent on the availability of clinical training sites. Learners may be denied reinstatement if all available seats are filled, even if the learner meets all other qualifications for reinstatement.

## Learner Grievances and Allegations of Discrimination, Harassment, Mistreatment, and Sexual Harassment (A1.02g, A3.14g)

Ottawa University and the PA Program are committed to maintaining academic and work environments that are free of discrimination, harassment, mistreatment, and sexual harassment. The PA Program has developed a policy covering discrimination, harassment, mistreatment sexual harassment, and retaliation occurring on campus, or otherwise within the context of university education programs and activities, whether those are on campus or off campus. The policy can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

## Guidelines for Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards (A3.05a-c)

The PA Program is committed to protecting the health and well-being of students, faculty, staff, and patients. As a learner in the PA Program, students may be exposed to infectious disease and or environmental hazards. Examples include possible exposure to allergens such as latex in gloves, needlesticks, bloodborne pathogens, and communicable diseases. While the risk of transmission is relatively small, the PA Program has processes in place to minimize that risk.

The PA Program Guidelines for Exposure to Infectious & Environment Hazards policy covers prevention, procedures for care and treatment should a learner experience an exposure incident, and health insurance and financial responsibility and can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

It is the learner's responsibility to become familiar with the policies and procedures for employing these precautions at each of the clinical sites to which the learner is assigned. All learners will participate in the clinical affiliation requirements for safety and quality assurance compliance at the direction of the clinical affiliation personnel. It is also the learner's responsibility to inform their course director and the Program Director if they have a concern that may impact their health or safety while participating in the PA Program or may impact the health or safety of those that the learner will be in contact with in the PA Program (patients, instructors, staff, other learners or faculty.)

It is important to understand that learners are not classified as an employee of Ottawa University or any affiliated clinical sites. Therefore, you are not eligible for worker's compensation coverage through Ottawa University or these sites. To ensure your safety and well-being during the program, it is mandatory that you maintain your own personal health insurance coverage throughout your enrollment. This coverage is essential to address any healthcare needs that may arise during clinical rotations or other program-related activities.

## Pregnancy/New Child

If a learner is expecting the birth or adoption of a child during their enrollment in the PA Program:

- The learner is encouraged to provide early and written notification to the Program Director to obtain information that will help the learner establish a plan that will lead to satisfactory completion of the program.

- Throughout the PA Program, all learners are expected, with or without accommodation, to meet all technical standards (please see the Tech Standards section of the [PA Program website](#)) and academic standards (please see the Required Academic Standards policy found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#)).
- The learner is strongly encouraged to consult with their health care provider regarding any limitations on their participation or activities that need to be restricted.
- A learner interested in accommodations or time off for pregnancy or parenting-related issues, including a request to decelerate in the program for up to one year, is advised to meet with the Program Director and financial aid for guidance.
- A learner planning to decelerate should familiarize themselves with the deceleration portion of the PA Program Academic Standards and Requirements for Progression and Completion which can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program](#).
- A learner may be required to decelerate and delay graduation if there are medical restrictions which prevent the learner from completing requirements of the didactic or clinical phases, with or without accommodations, to satisfy learning outcomes.
- While pregnancy is not generally considered a disability, learners must contact the [Disability Services Department](#) if they believe accommodation may be necessary due to any temporary medical condition, including pregnancy. Accommodation is not retroactive.
- If a learner must decelerate, all requirements outlined in the terms of the approval must be verified by the PAPC as having been successfully completed prior to a learner being able to re-enter the program.

## Provision of Health Services (A3.06)

The Program Director, Medical Director, and the faculty of the program will not participate as health care providers for learners in the program, except as bystander intervention in a critical or emergency medical situation. Learners in need of medical care should seek care from their own care providers based on individual student private health insurance benefits and coverage. Please see the Provision of Health Services policy, which can be found in the Policies section of the [PA Program website](#).

### If an emergency call 911

In the event of an illness or injury requiring urgent or emergency treatment learners may visit (**NOTE:** *the list below is simply to provide information about what services are geographically close to the PA Program campus and are not meant as an endorsement or recommendation by the program. Learner should always make their own decision as to where they will seek care*):

Urgent care:	Emergency Room:
Take Care Health Systems 6400 Sprint Parkway Overland Park, KS 66211 Phone: 913-315-6432	St. Luke's South Hospital/ Emergency 12300 Metcalf Ave Overland Park, KS 66213
St. Luke's Convenient Care 6655 Martway Mission, KS 66202 913-323-8875	Advent Health College Boulevard Emergency Room 7025 College Boulevard, Suite 100 Overland Park, KS 66211

## Closing of Campus (including Inclement Weather)

OU Alert is Ottawa University's contract text messaging system. It can send emergency notifications instantly and simultaneously to all registered cell phones, smart phones, and personal email addresses. Student and Support Services' emergency messages include severe weather warnings, campus closings, and campus emergencies. Information about OU Alert and how to register is available in the Campus Safety and Security section on pages 33 and 34 of the [APGS Handbook](#).

## Temporary Remote Learning Procedures

If the University or PA Program determines that coursework must be remote temporarily, learners must be prepared to access lectures or other educational activities remotely via software (i.e., Zoom, MyOttawa, etc.) designated by the PA Program.

The following is expected of learners approved to attend lectures or other educational activities remotely:

- Turn on camera. If you are unable to turn your camera on due to extenuating circumstances, you must email the instructor and course director in advance requesting an exception.
- Use an appropriate background
- Ensure your workspace is clean and neat.
- Follow the same dress code as would be required if you were in person.
- Follow the speaker/instructor's instructions for questions and discussion. Raise your hand or put questions in the chat as directed. Avoid interrupting the speaker.
- Mute yourself unless speaking to limit distractions for others.
- Close other browsers and turn off your cell phone.

**Academic Calendars** can be found in the [OU Catalog](#).

**Appendix A:**

**Learner Incident Report Form**

Today's Date:
Learner Name:
Semester:
Year:
Course/Rotation:
Course Director:
Instructor:
Preceptor:
Learner's Faculty Advisor:
Date of Incident:
Location (address) of Incident:
Time of Incident:
Learner's Account of Incident:
Learner Signature:
Date:
Course Director/Instructor/Preceptor Comments:
Course Director/Instructor/Preceptor Signature:
Date:
Received by:
Signature:
Date:

## Appendix B:

### Individualized Plan of Remediation

Date:
Learner Name:
Course Number and Title:
Course Director:
Assessment:
Term:
Remediation Attempt: <input type="checkbox"/> First <input type="checkbox"/> Second
Cause for Remediation
Areas of Deficits
Individualized Plan of Remediation
Learner Signature
Date
Course Director Signature
Date
Faculty Advisor/Mentor Signature
Date
<b>By signing this document all parties agree to adhere to the program's Remediation and Deceleration Policy</b>

# PA Program Learner Handbook Acceptance and Acknowledgments

As a Master of PA Studies Learner at Ottawa University PA Program, I have read, understand, and accept, and agree to be bound by all the rules, policies, and procedures of the Learner Handbook.

I also acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the technical standards required for successful completion of the Ottawa University PA Program.

I understand that these technical standards outline the essential functions, abilities, and skills required to perform the duties of a PA, and that the Ottawa University PA Program evaluates the following technical standards in all candidates for admission and graduation:

- 1) **Observation.** Observe, identify, and interpret clinical findings accurately using visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile senses. This includes the ability to identify non-verbal cues, evaluate clinical presentations effectively, and recognize changes in patient status promptly.
- 2) **Communication.** Demonstrate advanced interpersonal communication skills to establish trust and rapport. This includes adapting communication methods to suit diverse cultural and linguistic needs, using active listening, and effectively documenting patient encounters.
- 3) **Motor.** Execute precise motor tasks, including the use of advanced diagnostic tools and equipment. Demonstrate dexterity and coordination in both routine and emergent care scenarios, ensuring the ability to perform lifesaving interventions when necessary.
- 4) **Intellectual.** Apply critical thinking and evidence-based decision-making to manage complex clinical scenarios. Use advanced reasoning to prioritize patient care, integrate multidisciplinary perspectives, and optimize treatment outcomes.
- 5) **Behavioral and Social.** Exhibit resilience, adaptability, and professionalism in high-pressure and dynamic healthcare environments. Demonstrate self-awareness, compassion, and teamwork to foster a positive therapeutic relationship with patients and healthcare teams.

I affirm that I can meet these technical standards **with or without reasonable accommodation** as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable institutional policies.

I further acknowledge that:

- Meeting these technical standards is mandatory for successful completion of the PA program and progression into the clinical phase.
- Failure to meet these standards, with or without accommodation, may result in dismissal from the program.

Learner Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print) □ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Learner Signature \_\_\_\_\_

This acknowledgement is to be signed after reviewing the Learner Handbook during the program orientation and when revised. **Note: If learners do not sign and return the form, they will still be held to the standards outlined in the handbook.**