

PA HANDBOOK: PROGRAM POLICIES

III. Program Policies

1. Professionalism

The concept of professionalism consists of the attributes of excellence, humanism, accountability, and altruism, with a dedication to service and a commitment to ethical principles. All students in the PA Program are expected to move intellectually and attitudinally toward developing these attributes of professionalism and the shared values which reinforce greater service to humanity.

Students must be clearly identified in the clinical setting to distinguish them from other health profession students and practitioners. This requirement is met by:

- Wearing the official UNMC PA student identification badge in a visible location.
- Wearing the UNMC-issued short white coat as designated professional attire.
- Verbally identifying yourself as a PA student to patients, families, students, and healthcare team members during introductions.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in removal from the clinical setting and referral for professionalism concerns.

2. Personal Conduct

The Program regards the principles of academic integrity, self-respect, respect for others, and individual responsibility for all aspects of professionalism as basic to professional development. Students enrolled in the PA Program assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with these principles. Should a student's personal conduct adversely affect other persons, the Program, the University, or the student himself or herself, the Progress and Promotion Committee will investigate and determine appropriate actions as necessary.

Examples of conduct for which students are subject to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty in any form, such as cheating, academic misconduct, fabrication, plagiarism, misuse of identification card, and furnishing false information to the academic institution or clinical rotation sites.
- Obstruction or disruption of any academic, social, or administrative activity.
- Threats, physical harm, or verbal abuse of any person on institutional property or at institutional-sponsored activities.
- Theft of or damage to property of the institution.
- Unauthorized entry into UNMC facilities
- Violation of UNMC computer and internet use policies.
- Violation of rules governing institution facilities.
- Use, possession, sale or distribution of narcotics or abuse of drugs or stimulants.
- Drunkenness, or use, possession, sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages on institution property.

- Gambling on institution property.
- Unauthorized possession or use on campus of explosives or firearms.
- Failure to comply with the directions of institution officials at UNMC and any affiliated training sites acting in the performance of their duties.

In addition to the above, all PA students are subject to the rules and regulations for students matriculating to the University of Nebraska Medical Center as described in the University of Nebraska Medical Center Student Handbook, including the University of Nebraska Medical Center Code of Conduct.

Professional behavior is expected in the classroom and clinical settings at all times. Behavior in the classroom should promote comfort and enjoyment for everyone. Respect is to be shown for fellow students and instructors in all interactions.

3. Use of Electronic Devices

The occasional use of a cellular phone or other electronic devices by students while learning may be necessary for personal needs. However, this can become a significant distraction if the student engages in excessive use. In the classroom, all electronic devices should be dedicated to the topic of instruction. Use of the electronic device should not be distracting to other students and faculty. If emergency phone calls are anticipated, the student should notify the instructor prior to the class period and every effort should be made to limit the disruption of the class.

In clinical settings, cell phones/pagers should be silenced during all health care delivery activities and professional meetings unless the student has been specifically instructed to be available "on-call" by the clinical preceptor.

4. Use of Live Models for Learning

The instruction of certain examination and procedural skills requires live models. Whenever possible, fellow students are asked to equally share the responsibility of serving as models, which gives the students helpful instruction from both the clinician's and the patient's perspectives.

In situations involving sensitive exams, appropriate staff supervision is provided to assure that modesty and respect is maintained while facilitating the instruction. In selected exams, such as male and female GU exams, trained live models are provided. The student should keep in mind at all times that he/she represents UNMC, the PA Program and the PA profession. Due courtesy and respect should be shown at all times to patients, faculty, instructors, medical staff and preceptors.

5. Leave of Absence

Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be granted a leave of absence. Detailed information regarding the UNMC Leave of Absence policy and procedures can be found at:

<https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/student-policies-procedures/leaveofabsence-policy/>

In cases where the designated start date of the Leave of Absence, as determined by the UNMC Leave of Absence policy, occurs after the date

specified by the Last Day to Withdraw from Classes found on the UNMC Academic Calendar, the current scores earned by the student for grading criteria outlined in the syllabus will remain the same upon returning from the leave of absence.

If a Leave of Absence results in a new program completion date, the student may experience a delay in eligibility for the NCCPA PANCE examination and in the temporary and/or permanent licensing process in various states, including Nebraska.

6. Policy on Student Work

Students may not work for the PA program. Students should avoid any activity that might conflict with the professional and educational objectives of the UNMC Physician Assistant Program during Phase I and Phase II, and avoid activity that substitutes themselves for regular staff. The following requirements protect the students from this misuse of their roles as learners.

- Students may not be hired as employees for any private or public health care practice to perform medical services while enrolled in courses in the Physician Assistant Program curriculum including the student's clinical clerkships.
- Students may not take the responsibility or place of qualified staff in any medical setting.
- Students may not be given any payments, stipends or other remuneration for medical services performed as a student enrolled in the Physician Assistant Program.
- Students may volunteer their medical services to charitable, humanitarian or community service organizations when such services are assigned or approved by the Physician Assistant Program.
- Students may not substitute for or function as instructional faculty.
- Students may not substitute for or function as clinical or administrative staff.

7. Health Care Services from Program Faculty

To protect your privacy and maintain professional boundaries, PA principal faculty, the program director, and the medical director will not provide health care to students in this program. The only exception is if an emergency occurs and immediate care is necessary. If students need medical care, they should use their own health care provider or campus health services.

If students are experiencing personal, health, or academic issues that may impact their progress in the program, the program will support them by helping connect them with the appropriate UNMC services in a timely manner. This includes referrals for:

- Medical care through their personal provider or campus health services
- Counseling and mental health support
- Academic support and tutoring services
- Student accessibility and accommodation services
- Other university resources as appropriate

The program role is to guide students to the right resources, so they can receive timely and professional support.

8. Classroom Attendance Policy (Year 1, Phase I)

Attendance at all classes is considered critical to the student's success in developing individual responsibility, professionalism and academic achievement. The student's presence in all scheduled learning activities is essential to understanding the content, structure and testing rationale of the rigorous, concentrated PA Program curriculum. Any student's absence prevents class peers from benefiting from his or her engagement. Attendance, therefore, is mandatory for all courses, labs and clinical experiences for the successful completion of the curriculum.

Regular checks of attendance are not possible for each class period, therefore, unannounced random checks of attendance may be performed and this may affect a student's course grade as outlined in the syllabus. Processes for emergent and planned absences will be described in the Program Handbook at orientation.

Phase II Policies (Year 2, Clinical)

1. Progression from Phase I to Phase II

Students must successfully complete and pass all Phase I course work and requirements (graded and non-letter graded) to be promoted to Phase II, as determined by the Progress and Promotion Committee. Any exception to this requirement must be approved and documented by the Program Director.

2. Clinical Attendance Policy

During the clinical portion of the PA Program, students must attend all scheduled courses, exams, and rotation activities. The student is expected to fully participate in supervised on-call responsibilities as assigned by the preceptor. The PA Program generally does not permit absences for any reason other than personal illness, a family emergency, or legal appearance. Students are not permitted time off to study for exams or other personal needs.

3. Policy on Assignment of Clerkships and Travel during Phase II

Link to: <https://www.unmc.edu/alliedhealth/academics/programs/pa/clerkship-policy.html>