Westfield State University

Physician Assistant Studies Program

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Academic Year 2026

"The public serving the public"

Update 12/22/2025

All information in this manual is accurate at the time of publication. The PA Program reserves the right to make appropriate changes at any time with timely notification to students.

Disclaimer: *All material in this handbook is presented in good faith effort to inform prospective and current students of the University and Physician Assistant Program of current policies and procedures.*

The Physician Assistant program reserves the right to make changes in the rules and regulations of the program, its academic calendar, admission policies, procedures and standards, degree requirements, and standards necessary for successful completion of the program in its sole discretion. Additionally, change may include, but is not limited to changes in course content, scheduling of courses offered, and canceling of scheduled classes and/or other program related activities.

Westfield State University reserves the right to make changes in admission requirements, fees, charges, tuition, instructors, policies, procedures or standards, regulations, and academic programs offered in its sole discretion. Additionally, the University has the right to divide, cancel, or reschedule classes or programs if enrollment or other factors require such action.

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Westfield STATE UNIVERSITY

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

Faculty & Staff

Physician Assistant Studies Program

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Section 1

Introduction

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Introduction

Welcome to the Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies Program. This program is an intense, engaging, and rewarding educational experience. Faculty and staff of the Westfield State University PA Program are dedicated educators who will assist you in achieving successful completion of the program and becoming a certified physician assistant.

This handbook has been assembled to assist students through the PA Program and while at Westfield State University. Students should keep this handbook accessible for reference throughout the PA Program.

Westfield State University Mission and Values

Westfield State University fosters intellectual curiosity, encourages critical thinking, inspires civic engagement, and promotes a global perspective. A public teaching institution offering quality programs in the liberal arts and sciences, complemented by professional studies curricula, we are grounded in our founding principles of academic excellence and educating all in a diverse and welcoming community. Westfield State develops the knowledge, skills, and character essential for students to reach their full potential and become responsible leaders in society. We contribute to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the region.

Values

We commit ourselves to…
- Treating all members of our community with dignity and respect.
- Building community by being inclusive, supporting the personal development of all community members, and embracing multiple perspectives.
- Maintaining excellence and integrity in all that we do.
- Supporting civic engagement in local, regional, and global initiatives.
- Making decisions transparently and collaboratively.

Providing affordable public higher education.

Westfield State University is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)

Program Location

The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies Program is offered on the Westfield, MA campus only.

Physician Assistant Studies Program Mission and Values

Mission

The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program seeks to educate physician assistant students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to be compassionate, culturally aware healthcare providers who are prepared to practice in a patient centered team.

Values

The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies Program shares the Values of the University:

- Treating all members of our community with dignity and respect.
- Building community by being inclusive, supporting the personal development of all community members, and embracing multiple perspectives.
- Maintaining excellence and integrity in all that we do.
- Supporting civic engagement in local, regional and global initiatives.
- Making decisions transparently and collaboratively.
- Providing affordable public higher education.

Program Goals

Goal 1: Matriculate a student body with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, with a commitment to professional involvement and service to all members of the community.

Goal 2: Graduate Physician Assistant students with the knowledge, professionalism, and skills required for entry level practice as a PA.

Goal 3: Educate the Physician Assistant student to function effectively within a health care team.

Goal 4: Graduate students who achieve a first-time taker pass rate on the PANCE that is at or above the national average.

Section 2

Physician Assistant Studies Program Policies

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Attendance

Punctual classroom attendance is mandatory in all program courses. A student who arrives late or leaves early will be considered absent unless granted permission by the course instructor or coordinator. Excessive absences from class or clinical rotations may result in a reduction in grade, course failure, or both. Please refer to the course syllabus for instructions and policies regarding make-up work, absences, and lateness. Students are responsible for obtaining any notes and instructional materials for the missed time and classes. Instructors will be available to ask questions during regular office hours; however, they will not be providing individual instruction for missed materials. Instructors are not obligated to record or provide Zoom links for classes. For recording of lecture materials, see the recording policy.

Refer to individual syllabi for excessive absence policy. Excessive absences will result in reduction of course grade and possible course failure. Excessive absences are defined as more than 2 per course, including repeated tardiness or leaving class early. If a student exceeds the maximum number of absences, excused or un-excused, course failure or incomplete may be awarded. This may lead to the recommendation of leave of absence or dismissal from the program. All students must inform the program, Program Director, and course coordinator when absence or tardiness is anticipated.

Students who encounter difficulty in maintaining a professional commitment to their clinical training or academic studies must meet with the program director to discuss continuance in the program. Issues will be documented via the Professional Assessment Tool. For a student who has missed classes to remain in the program, all missed work must be completed by the end of the course. It is the student's responsibility to make up missed work. If work cannot be completed by the end of the course, the student may receive a reduction in grade, course failure, withdrawal, or an incomplete as determined by the course director. This may result in the recommendation of a leave of absence or dismissal from the program.

Classroom and Laboratory Policies

PA program curriculum is intensive and taught at an accelerated pace. Therefore, appropriate classroom and laboratory behavior is necessary to ensure a proper learning environment.

- In all professional settings, PA program faculty and staff should be addressed by their respective professional titles.
- Under no circumstances should the following activities take place in the classroom: dishonesty, disruption of class activities, expression of derogatory or disrespectful comments to instructors or classmates, confrontations with instructors or classmates, or displays of temper. Such behavior will be immediately referred to the Program Director for disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the program.
- Cell phones may be carried during class for use as reference materials or for searches. All phones will be in backpacks during class or laboratory sessions as requested by the instructor. At no time will students engage in a telephone call, e-mailing, texting, or any other social media while in a classroom or laboratory setting. If it is essential that you receive urgent information, arrangements can be made with the program administrative assistant or course instructor.
- Students should feel comfortable asking questions in class. This requires the cooperation of the entire class.
- Each student is required to be covered by malpractice insurance each year in which they are enrolled in the PA program. The insurance is linked to tuition payment. Therefore, non-payment of tuition will result in a lack of malpractice insurance, which will prevent students from engaging in the didactic year or clinical rotations.
- Students are expected to secure their own transportation (reliable car) to class, laboratory, on or off-campus patient encounters, simulation exercises, and clinical sites.

- Some clinical rotation experiences in the clinical year may require travel to sites outside the greater local area. Students are responsible for all costs associated with these clinical rotations, including travel, parking, and living expenses.
- All students are required to have a University ID and to have their WSU name tag listing their name and "Physician Assistant Student" along with their WSU ID badge and any other identification mandated by the institution to which they are assigned or attending off-campus.
- A Student Encounter Form (Appendix H) will be used to document irregularities in academic and behavioral performance and will be included in the student's permanent academic file.

E-mail Policy

Westfield State University E-mail

The University provides an email account to all of our students. Once enrolled, you are notified by mail of your assigned username and password. This account can receive messages from anywhere, including the Westfield faculty. You are required to check this email account regularly, so you do not miss important Westfield and PA Program communication. All WSU faculty or staff emails need to be responded to within two business days of being sent.

The PA Program will only use your Westfield State University e-mail for means of communication.

Technology-Related Issues and Problems

The Westfield State University ITS Department is always available to assist you with technology-related issues that may arise during your courses. The best way to contact them is through the Helpdesk at 413-572-4357. The student support desk can be reached at 413-572-5528.

Scheduling

The program will consist of full-time days and occasional nights and weekends. A module schedule will be issued 1 week prior to the start of each semester for student planning purposes. Content experts from the medical community are utilized for lecturing to facilitate student learning, which may require flexibility in scheduling.

Work Policy

Due to the program's intensity, students are strongly discouraged from attempting to work. Students should note that any work undertaken outside the program is not covered by the student malpractice insurance required during the program. Coursework and clinical experiences will not be arranged to accommodate any outside work. Students who plan to work during the academic semester are required to meet with the Program Director before scheduling working hours. The exception to this is peer tutors.

Use of Students as Staff and or Teaching/Instructional Faculty

The PA Program should be an educational experience for the student. Per program policy, at no time should a student work for the program, substitute, or function as instructional faculty or administrative staff in the didactic or clinical setting. Should the circumstance arise, the student should contact the program immediately for resolution. The University may hire a PA Graduate Assistant position that is utilized for peer tutoring and module review.

Survey/Assessment Expectations

The Westfield State University PA Program is engaged to pursue excellence; therefore, the program will collect and analyze data for continuous self-assessment. The following surveys/assessments will be conducted:

- Instructor Assessment Survey
- Professionalism evaluation
- Course evaluations
- Rotation logs
- Clinical Site evaluations
- Program evaluations

- Exit surveys
- PANCE scores
- Graduate surveys
- Faculty and Staff surveys

Because egregious issues have the potential to impact the safety and welfare of students, faculty, and the university. Students are expected to inform the program of any egregious issues in a timely manner; they may be listed as a comment on the evaluations, but it is preferred that the program is made aware as soon as possible after it is noticed by the student(s).

Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening

- Certain laws require health care agencies to request criminal background checks on volunteers, training positions, or prospective employees. The information is then reviewed to determine if a candidate is appropriate for the facility. A national criminal background investigation must be completed prior to matriculation into the program and again at the onset of the clinical year. The majority of clinical training sites must comply with these laws. It is each student's personal and financial responsibility to use the program-assigned agency.
- Infractions may result in the inability to matriculate students, assign rotation sites, and/or obtain a license to practice upon graduation.
- Drug screening is required based on clinical site requirements.

Section 3

Physician Assistant Competencies

Physician Assistant Studies Program

WSU PA Program Competencies of all PA Program Graduates

The Westfield State University has set the following core competencies required of all students to successfully complete and graduate from the program. The WSU PA Program used the Consensus statement of the four principal PA Professional organizations as to the requirements determined as required for entry-level PAs (see Appendix P).

1. **Medical Knowledge**: Demonstrate the attainment of core medical knowledge determined by the profession and apply this evidence-based knowledge to patient care in a variety of clinical settings as an entry-level practitioner.
2. **Interpersonal and Communication Skills**: Possess the ability to effectively communicate with various populations, including but not limited to other health care providers, members of the health care team, patients and their families, and the community.
3. **Patient Care**: Be able to provide compassionate, appropriate, equitable, high-quality patient care in a variety of settings as an entry-level practitioner. Elicit appropriate patient histories and competently perform physical examination as well as other clinical procedures considered essential in the area of practice.
4. **Professionalism**: Demonstrate the professional attributes of a high-quality health care provider through personal behaviors, interpersonal interactions with the healthcare team, patients, families, and the community. Demonstrate the ability to apply an ethical framework in medical decision-making, practice evaluation, and altruism to their profession, community and society.

Section 4

Professionalism

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Professionalism

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings, both on and off University property. Students should understand that professional behavior as a member of the PA program and their future profession reflects not only on themselves but also on their profession, fellow PA students, future colleagues, and the entire Westfield State University faculty and staff.

Student Code of Conduct

The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies Program has established a Student Code of Conduct, students in the PA Program are also expected to abide by the Westfield State University's code of conduct, found at Code of Conduct | Westfield State University. The PA Program's Code of Conduct as found in Appendix A, emphasizes the important role of professionalism in medical education. Students also expected to follow and should model themselves and their behavior by the PA Program's Code of Conduct.

See Appendix A

Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying Physician Assistants

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) attempts to ensure certified Physician Assistants meet specific standards of knowledge and skills as well as upholding appropriate standards of professionalism and ethics in practice. The NCCPA has established a Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying Physician Assistants, which outlines these principles.

See Appendix B

Professional Assessment Tool

Students' professionalism will be documented minimally each semester with their Academic Advisor. Additional documentation may be required at any point, as indicated by any principal faculty member. A Professional Assessment Tool (PAT) will be completed and included in the student's permanent record.

See Appendix C.

Didactic Attire and Appearance

Patients should be confident that you are part of a professional team involved in their care. Students must demonstrate a public image consistent with the quality of patient care services they intend to provide. Patients must never feel that their personal, ethnic, or religious convictions are compromised because of inappropriate dress. Dress must comply with the hospital, laboratory, or clinic's health and safety regulations to protect patients, staff, visitors, and students.

- Through the normal course of interaction with others, the wearing of a headscarf, hat or other head coverings in the building is unacceptable. An exception to this is when such items are worn as part of medical treatment, religious observance, or clinical rotation.

- In all didactic settings, students should be dressed in appropriate attire that is respectful of the professional medical faculty and community members who will be visiting the program.
- Students are not allowed to wear hospital-specific operating attire, such as scrubs, anywhere on the Westfield State University campus, except in lab classes as directed by a course instructor.
- Students are expected to wear appropriate footwear while attending class.
- Laboratory attire will be determined by the expected laboratory assignment. Students should be dressed appropriately at the onset of the laboratory session. Laboratory attire includes: gym shorts and tank tops, hospital gowns, and a lab coat to wear when not in the role of the patient.
- Laboratory coats are required at professional events, including grand rounds.
- Hair should be neat, clean, and secured away from the face.
- Facial hair must be neat, clean, and well-trimmed.
- Acrylic and gel fingernails are prohibited in all clinical settings.
- Jewelry should be kept to a minimum and close-fitting.
- Fragrances are inappropriate in all medical settings.
- Massachusetts state law requires students at healthcare facilities to wear an identification badge at all times. Therefore, Westfield State University PA students are required to wear an ID badge when attending classes, clinical sessions, and other functions at all healthcare facilities.

Clerkship Attire and Appearance

Clinical Attire

In the clinical setting, students are expected to be well-groomed and appropriately dressed when working with patients and other healthcare professionals. Students not meeting such standards of dress may be denied access to both clinical settings and patients to the point where the student's grade and satisfactory completion of the clerkship could be jeopardized.
Attire may be dictated by the practice/provider setting and will be adhered to accordingly. For purposes of example, the term "appropriately attired" can be described in the following manner:

- All students will wear a short white lab coat/jacket with a WSU name tag listing their name and "Physician Assistant Student" along with their WSU ID badge and any other identification mandated by the institution to which they are assigned.

- Students will wear conservative attire and closed-toe, professional shoes. Hair should be clean, neat, and styled to avoid obstructing patient care. Nails should be clean, short, and trimmed. Jewelry worn must be in good taste and may include wedding bands, engagement rings, and small earrings. No other jewelry is permitted. The use of ornamentation (buttons, lapel pins, etc.) is at the discretion of the preceptor and clinical site. The use of cosmetics should be minimal, and due to sensitivities associated with allergies, the use of fragrances is prohibited. Use of acrylic/gel nails is prohibited in clinical settings.

- Athletic shoes are not appropriate unless wearing "scrubs." Scrubs are to be obtained, worn, and returned in the manner prescribed by the clinical site. Hospital-issued scrubs are not to be worn outside the clinical setting.

Appearance projects a professional image that represents the student, the profession, and the University. Students improperly attired can expect to receive a verbal warning from a clinical preceptor or faculty member. A second infraction during the same clerkship will result in a letter of concern and/or dismissal from the clerkship until the student can appear in proper attire.

Seminar attire

At Seminar students are to be well groomed and appropriately dressed. Professional dress is required at Grand Rounds.

- White coats must be worn during Grand Rounds presentations.
- Jeans, shorts, T-shirts, sweatshirts, flip-flops, and other leisure or beachwear are not permitted. This dress code extends to any professional activity.

Section 5

Technical Standards for Admission and Graduation

Physician Assistant Studies Program

The technical standards for admission and graduation of the Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies Program are stated below. Westfield State University and the Physician Assistant Program are committed to meeting the special needs of students within established legal and institutional guidelines. However, the integrity of the medical curriculum and the required mental and physical capabilities to fulfill the obligation of that education must be sustained.

Observation

Students must have the appropriate visual and auditory capacity to observe and participate in lectures and demonstrations in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. Students must be able to observe the patient accurately from a distance and up close, while noting both verbal and nonverbal signs. Sensory skills for a physical examination are required, which include functional vision, hearing, smell, and tactile sensation. These evaluations include, but are not limited to, inspection, auscultation, palpation, the performance of special physical examination techniques, and the use of diagnostic tests and instruments.

Communication

Students must be able to effectively relate to patients, conveying a sense of compassion and empathy. They must be able to clearly communicate in academic and healthcare settings with patients, family members, and other healthcare professionals to obtain and convey information regarding the patient's status. Students must be able to read and write English effectively to fulfill academic requirements and maintain accurate and legally compliant clinical records related to patient care. Students must be able to read and efficiently, accurately and legibly record in legal documents such as patient records. Students must be able to elicit an appropriate history and physical exam from patients and concisely and clearly communicate with the medical team.

Sensory and Motor Coordination and Function

Students are required to possess sensory and motor skills sufficient to independently elicit information from patients using palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other manually based diagnostic maneuvers. Students should be able to conduct laboratory tests and carry out diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Students should possess and execute appropriate motor movements to provide basic medical care in a general medicine environment and coordinate fine and gross muscular movements to treat patients in emergency situations. Students must be able to move freely within patient care environments and between various settings, such as clinics, classroom buildings, and hospitals. Physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study is required. This includes, but is not limited to, long periods of sitting, standing, or moving which are required in a variety of classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrated and Quantitative Abilities

Students should possess the following abilities: an aptitude for rapid problem-solving, the capability to assess and interpret medical information independently, evaluate physical examinations, and formulate a logical diagnosis and an effective medical treatment plan. Students must possess good judgment in patient assessment, the ability to incorporate new information, understand comprehensive three-dimensional relationships and curricular threads, and retain and recall pertinent information in a timely fashion. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others. Students must be able to read and understand the medical literature.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must possess the physical and emotional health necessary for the application of their intellectual abilities and the employment of sound judgment in an appropriate and timely manner. Students must be able to function effectively under a physically taxing workload and in times of physical and mental stress. Students must display compassion, sensitivity, honesty, and concern for others while maintaining professional integrity at all times. Students are required to adapt to changing environments, have good interpersonal skills, flexibility, and be self-motivated. Students must have the ability to accept constructive criticism and handle challenging interpersonal relationships during training. Students must be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with colleagues, patients, and other members of the healthcare profession.

Section 6

Safety and Security

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Department of University Police

The Department of University Police (DUP) works to provide a safe and secure environment in which to live and work for the entire Westfield community. DUP officers also enforce the University's rules, regulations, and policies as well as town, state, and federal laws.

Westfield State University is a safe and secure environment. DUP operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week with an advanced e-911 system connected to the Westfield Police and Fire departments to handle emergency and fire situations. Residence halls are secured around the clock with electronic ID access, which is provided and maintained by University Police. In addition to the above duties, University Police offers escort services as needed, enforce parking regulations, assist in special events, and provide crime prevention and campus safety workshops throughout the year. DUP can be reached at 413.572.5262.

Clinical sites will be evaluated and approved for student safety prior to clerkship approval. Any additional safety regulations will be communicated to the student prior to attending clinical site.

Section 7

Health / Policies/ Compliance

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Professional Liability Coverage

A professional liability insurance policy providing adequate malpractice coverage for each student must be in effect throughout their educational experience and remain uninterrupted throughout the clinical year. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires all practicing physician assistants and physicians to have minimum liability coverage of $1M/$3M. Consistent with this requirement, all affiliated clerkship training sites require a minimum of $1M/$3M professional liability insurance coverage for each student.

The University, through payment of tuition, provides professional liability coverage of $1,000,000.00 per occurrence and $3,000,000.00 in the aggregate, ($1M/$3M), for claims made against students during their clinical clerkships. This policy covers all program-affiliated student clerkship activities throughout the clinical year. This policy DOES NOT cover a student for clinical or other activities, which are not directly associated with the PA Program or affiliated clerkship sites.

The student should inquire with legal counsel if they opt to acquire additional malpractice insurance.

Health Insurance

Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws mandates that every full or three-quarter-time student in a public or private institution of higher education shall participate in a qualifying student health insurance program. Westfield State University makes available a student health insurance plan to all enrolled students designed to provide protection against unexpected expenses or an accidents or illness. Students with proof of comparable coverage may be exempt from the University health insurance policy. The principal faculty, program director, and medical director will not participate in the health care of any PA student. Although the faculty and medical director work clinically, they will not get involved in a PA student's care unless it is an emergency situation with no other recourse or clinician.

The cost of the University student health insurance is payable upon registration if you are a graduate student enrolled in 7 or more credits, through the College of Graduate and Continuing Education. To waive this charge, go to http://www.universityhealthplans.com and submit an electronic waiver form. Students in less than nine credits may not purchase the college insurance. Failure to submit the proper waiver from will render you liable for the state-mandated coverage provided by the college, and you will be billed accordingly.

*Subject to change. For additional information regarding the student health insurance plan contact the office of student services.

HIPAA Compliance

Prior to entrance into the clinical year, all students are trained in the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA) which outlines medical privacy regulations. Students will not be permitted to begin the clinical year without HIPAA training and documentation. Students must demonstrate continuous compliance with these regulations throughout the clinical year. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.

Immunization Requirements

Based on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) immunization guidelines for healthcare providers and Westfield State University policy, the following immunizations are required for matriculation to the PA Program. The student must provide documentation to the PA Program that he/she is in compliance with the following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines:

- All childhood immunizations must be current.
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that all full-time undergraduate and graduate students, regardless of year of birth, as well as all part-time and full-time graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in health science programs, have two doses of MMR vaccine. Laboratory proof of immunity is acceptable if immunization dates are unavailable.
- A completed Hepatitis B series of vaccinations **and** documentation of a protective titer (Hepatitis B Surface Antibody) are required. The series can be a 3-dose series of Recombivax HB or Engerix-B (dose #1 now, #2 in 1 month, #3 approximately 5 months after #2) or a 2-dose series of Heplisav-B, with the doses separated by at least 4 weeks. Get an anti-HBs serologic test 1-2 months after the final dose.
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) immunity is necessary. If you do not have chickenpox (varicella) documented, if you haven't had varicella vaccine, or if you don't have an up-to-date blood test that shows you are immune to varicella (i.e. no serologic evidence of immunity or prior vaccination) get 2 doses of varicella vaccine, 4 weeks apart.
- **Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap or Dtap)** immunization may be as many as five and must be within the last 10 years. Pregnant Health Care Workers need to get a dose of Tdap during each pregnancy.
- Annual influenza vaccine prior to the flu season.
- COVID-19 vaccination and booster is required by most clinical sites.
- A single IGRA-test (QuantiFERON Gold test) is required prior to the start of the student's didactic year and annually thereafter. The student must provide evidence and documentation to the Director of Clinical Education prior to the start of the clinical rotations. It is the student's responsibility to have the test repeated annually as long as patient contact continues. If the student has a **Positive Test**, the student must submit a report of a negative chest X-ray before the university certifies that immunizations are complete.

  Communicable Tuberculosis
  Students with a positive X-ray for communicable tuberculosis may not attend classes until a physician or the Department of Public Health documents that they are free of the disease in a communicable form. Documentation may be through submission of the report of a large X-ray film of the chest, taken not more than ninety days prior thereto, and such other laboratory and clinical examination as may be required for the exclusion in a communicable form. That documentation must be provided to the Program's Director of Clinical Education to demonstrate that the student can return to clinical practice.

Note: Immunizations are subject to change per CDC guidelines.

In addition, be advised that some clerkship training sites may have immunization requirements beyond the general requirements noted above. It is the student's responsibility to meet any additional immunization requirements of specific sites to which he/she is assigned.

The WSU PA Immunization Verification Form can be found here:

https://www.westfield.ma.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/WSU_PAS_Immunization_Form_v2025.pdf

Section 8

Travel and Transportation

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Travel

To provide students with exposure to patients in various practice settings, travel beyond the local area may be required. Students are responsible for traveling to and paying for all costs incurred during these assignments. The estimated costs for students is posted on the program's website https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/degrees/ms-physician-assistant-studies/cost-attendance

Transportation

The student will be responsible for their own transportation to and from all assigned clerkship sites, regardless of their location. In addition, the student is also responsible for any expenses incurred while rotating at the clinical site, including food, parking, and any other incidentals. The estimated costs for students is posted on the program's website https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/degrees/ms-physician-assistant-studies/cost-attendance

Section 9

Incident Reporting

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Incident Reporting

On rare occasions, incidents involving students may occur on or off campus while fulfilling requirements of the physician assistant program. In the event of an incident, the student should notify the PA Program immediately. These incidents must be documented for the protection and safety of all students. If an incident occurs involving a student, he or she must fill out the Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies Program Incident Report, which is available from the PA program or in the Student Handbook.

See Appendix D – Incident Report

During the first year of the program, each student received training on isolation precautions, infection control, and sharps-related injuries. Students learned about the appropriate methods of handling blood, tissues and bodily fluids as well as dealing with the management of communicable diseases. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies and procedures for employing these precautions at each of the clerkship sites to which the student is assigned.

In the event that a student has an exposure to a bloodborne pathogen, the student should contact the PA Program immediately following emergency medical evaluation per the Physician Assistant Studies Program Infection Control Policy. If a student is at a healthcare facility or hospital that can provide the appropriate exposure protocols, they should immediately be evaluated on-site. If students are at a facility that cannot accommodate the appropriate evaluation, students should be evaluated at the nearest Emergency Department, or Urgent Care capable of quick evaluation and prophylaxis. Follow up care should be as directed by the treatment facility or the students' primary care provider, if able. All costs associated with any incident or exposure are the responsibility of student.

Guidelines for Student Exposures during Clinical Clerkships

Each clerkship-training site has policies and procedures in place to guide individuals who may have been exposed to blood, tissues, and/or bodily fluids during the course of their work and services at the site. Each site should review these policies with the student as part of the orientation process. Program training does not supersede any site specifically required bloodborne pathogen exposure training or requirements.

If, while rotating at an affiliated clerkship training site, the student comes in contact with blood, tissue or bodily fluids which may place an individual at risk for infection, the student should **immediately notify the supervisor (preceptor) and seek immediate medical consult at the clerkship training site and/or care by their primary medical provider or the nearest emergency department**. This will help to ensure that appropriate procedures are initiated. After receiving any appropriate counseling and/or treatment, the student should contact the PA Program and complete an incident form so that the exposure can be properly documented to the PA Program. Students are responsible for all costs associated with an exposure.

See Appendix F- Infection Control Policy

Section 10

Mailboxes

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Student Mailboxes

All students will have a mailbox located in the PA Program offices. This mailbox will house all correspondence from the PA Program. It is the student's responsibility to check the mailbox regularly. Additionally, students are required to clean out their mailboxes at the end of each semester. Any items left in mailboxes will be discarded.

Section 11

Academic Policies and Procedures

Physician Assistant Studies Program

General Admission Standards for the Physician Assistant Studies Program

Minimum admissions requirements for the M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies program include:

- A baccalaureate or graduate degree from an accredited institution with a minimum overall GPA of 3.0. Degree must be completed and verified by the August 1 deadline.
- A personal statement of interest and intent is required at the time of application.
- The WSU-PA Program will not allow advanced standing for any professional courses or clinical experiences.
- A minimum of 500 hours of patient contact hours are required by application deadline. Examples of patient contact hours can include but are not limited to EMT, Scribe, Paramedic, Lab Tech, Volunteer, and Nurse's Aide as long as direct patient contact has occurred.
- Three academic and/or professional letters of recommendation.
- Special admissions consideration for veterans and military service members and Massachusetts public university graduates with outstanding applications (see below).
- Minimum cumulative GPA of all college science coursework of greater than or equal to 3.0.

All prerequisite courses listed below must be completed with a grade of "C" or better and a minimum overall and prerequisite GPA of 3.0.

- 30 semester hours of biological, chemical, and physical sciences
- Required: Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II with lab, Microbiology, Genetics, and Biochemistry.
- Human Anatomy and Physiology, Microbiology, Biochemistry, and Genetics must have been completed within the past 10 years.
- One University-level statistics course
- One University level General Psychology Course

Applications will be scored and admissions decisions will be made by:

- overall GPA
- prerequisite GPA
- science GPA
- overall coursework
- reference letters
- quantity of healthcare experience

Program gives preference to candidates that have:

- Additional preparatory Courses
- Average Course Load
- Last 3 Full-Time semesters
- In Personal Statement
    - Understanding of PA Role and Profession
    - Match to mission/goals of a program
    - Other special qualities or experiences
    - Spelling/grammar
- Other Qualities
    - Leadership/Service
    - Extracurricular activities
    - Military Service

The WSU-PAS Program will not allow advanced placement for any professional courses or clinical experiences.

Admissions Protocol for Graduates of Massachusetts Public Four-Year Institutions

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies at Westfield State University is the only public physician assistant program in Massachusetts and all of New England. The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program intends to educate a diverse student body of highly skilled and culturally aware healthcare providers who will utilize a patient-centered care approach and be committed to serving the public, either in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or beyond. To help achieve this goal, the program will grant one time an interview for all students who have graduated from a Massachusetts public four-year institution, if the following criteria are met.

- Successful completion of a baccalaureate degree from a Massachusetts public institution. Degree must be completed and verified by August 1 deadline.
- Overall GPA of all college coursework of greater than or equal to 3.6.
- Cumulative GPA of all college science coursework of greater than or equal to 3.6.
- Cumulative GPA greater than or equal to 3.6 in all PA Program prerequisite courses.
- A recommendation from a Physician, Physician Assistant, or Nurse Practitioner indicating support for consideration of the applicant.
- Successful completion of a minimum of 500 hours of patient contact prior to application.
- Successful completion of all general admissions requirements and standards prior to application.

An applicant with a baccalaureate degree from a Massachusetts public institution who does not meet these requirements but meets the general admission requirements of the program may apply and will be considered with all other applicants.

Instructional Resources

Courses within the PA Program use multiple resources to help students acquire the knowledge and skills essential to success in the Program and Profession. The course coordinator for each course will provide students with the essential resources needed for success in that course. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the resources required for all courses and laboratory sessions.

Students can expect to spend upward of $3,200 for direct educational resources throughout the program. These are reflected on the PA Program Website PA Cost of Attendance | Westfield State University. Program and education resources include, but not limited to the following:

- BLS certification ($100*)
- ACLS certification ($300*)
- Typhon access ($90*)
- Background check ($75*)
- Drug screening ($35*)
- Hardcopy books ($400*)
- WSU ID card ($20*)
- Graduation application ($75*)
- Annual WSU parking pass ($60* per year)
- PAEA Assessment Box Fee ($420)
- Clerkship travel costs (can be up to $2500*)

*Costs are estimates

Students are also required to purchase an equipment kit, which will be used in the instruction of history and physical examination techniques. The cost of the equipment kit is approximately $2,000.00 - $2,600.00. Some students may elect to purchase additional equipment in the clinical phase of the program. All costs are the responsibility of the student. There will be a designated "Equipment Day" after the start of the program, during which students will have the opportunity to review the Kit below in preparation for purchase.

- The student white coat must be purchased from the program vendor to assure uniformity.
- Laptops and/or tablets/iPads (MAC or PC) must be compatible with ExamSoft system requirements & PAEA system requirements.

The Equipment kit is as follows for ALL students:

Supplies	
Otoscope/ophthalmoscope set	$500
Blood pressure cuff	$100
Stethoscope	$350
Reflex hammer	$20
Tuning forks	$30
Eye chart/measuring tape/penlight	$15
Watch with second hand	$20
Patient gown	$20
Short lab coat	$100
Suture set	$50
ID	$15
Safety glasses	$5
Computer	$1200

Note: all costs listed above are estimates

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to guide Westfield State University Physician Assistant (PA) students in the responsible, ethical, and professional use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. This policy ensures AI is used appropriately to support learning while upholding patient privacy, academic integrity, and the professional standards expected of future PAs.

Scope
This policy applies to all WSU PA students in:

- Didactic coursework
- Clinical rotations
- Simulation and laboratory training
- Research, assignments, and assessments
- Any WSU- or clinical-site–approved electronic systems

This policy works in conjunction with WSU academic integrity policies, the PA Program Student Handbook, and all clinical site regulations.

Definitions

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Any system that generates, predicts, or analyzes information (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Med-PaLM, Perplexity, or clinical decision support tools).
- Generative AI: Tools that create text, images, or content based on prompts.
- Clinical AI: Software integrated into electronic health record (EHR) or hospital systems to support diagnosis, documentation, or workflow.

Acceptable Use
Academic Use
WSU PA students may use AI to support learning in the didactic phase for:

- Summarizing complex topics
- Generating study questions or rationales
- Brainstorming ideas for written work
- Clarifying medical terminology or concepts
- Drafting outlines for assignments if allowed by the instructor

All academic AI use must meet the following requirements:

1. Disclosure: Students must state in the assignment if AI was used and for what purpose.
2. Verification: Students are responsible for fact-checking AI content against evidence-based resources.
3. Instructor Compliance: Some assignments may prohibit or limit AI use; these rules take precedence.

Clinical Use
Students may use only clinical-site–approved AI tools while on rotation. Permitted uses include:

- Learning from clinical decision support tools integrated into the EHR
- Practicing differential diagnoses or case-based reasoning outside of actual patient care
- Enhancing understanding of clinical guidelines

Students may not enter any patient information into non–WSU or non–clinical-site–approved AI platforms.

Prohibited Use
WSU PA students may not:

- Enter any Personal Health Indicators or identifiable patient information into public or consumer AI tools.
- Use AI to generate or complete clinical notes, SOAP notes, H&Ps, or rotation assignments unless explicitly authorized.
- Submit AI-generated work as their own without disclosure.
- Use AI to fabricate references, sources, clinical data, or case details.
- Rely on AI for medical decision-making in patient care.
- Use AI during exams, quizzes, or practical evaluations unless explicitly permitted.

Any use of AI that violates academic integrity or clinical professionalism standards is strictly prohibited.

Privacy & Confidentiality
PA students must follow:

- HIPAA regulations
- Westfield State University privacy policies
- All clinical-site confidentiality policies

Students must ensure that:

- No patient identifiers are shared with AI tools unless the tool is formally approved by a clinical site.
- All case discussions used in AI prompts for educational purposes are fully de-identified.

Academic Integrity
AI is a tool, not an author. Students must be able to:

- Explain and defend all submitted work
- Demonstrate their own reasoning on assessments
- Cite or acknowledge AI according to instructor guidelines

Improper AI use may be considered an academic integrity violation under WSU policy.

Professional Responsibility
PA students are responsible for:

- Critically evaluating all AI-generated content
- Verifying medical information with reputable clinical sources
- Seeking clarification from faculty, preceptors, or supervisors when uncertain
- Maintaining clinical judgment independent of AI suggestions

Students must never use AI output in place of supervised medical decision-making.

Training and Support
The PA program will:

- Provide orientation on safe and ethical AI use
- Offer guidance on evaluating AI-generated information
- Reinforce professional expectations consistent with the PA Competencies

Students are encouraged to stay informed about AI-related updates issued by WSU or clinical partners.

Policy Violations
Violations of this policy may result in:

- Reassignment or resubmission of academic work
- Grade penalties or academic integrity sanctions
- Clinical remediation or removal from clinical sites
- Disciplinary action in accordance with WSU and PA Program policies

Repeated or serious violations may place the student at risk for dismissal from the program.

ADA Policy

Services for Students with Disabilities

Westfield State University is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment for students, employees and other members of the University community, which values the diverse backgrounds of all people. The University is committed to assuring that the "university experience" is one that challenges, empowers, supports and prepares its students to live in, work in, and value our increasingly global and diverse world.

Achieving full participation and integration of people with disabilities requires the cooperative efforts of the departments, offices and personnel. To this end, the University will continue to strive to achieve excellence in its programs and services and to assure that its services are delivered equitably and efficiently to all of its members.

Disability Services is committed to supporting students as they learn to self-advocate and negotiate the campus and academics at the University. The program provides a wide array of reasonable, appropriate accommodations for students with learning, physical, psychological, or medical challenges. Students are expected to provide current documentation of their disabilities.

Course Recording Policy

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to outline expectations for the recording of lectures and instructional activities within the Westfield State University (WSU) PA Program. This policy ensures protection of intellectual property, maintains a respectful learning environment, and supports students with approved accommodations.

General Policy on Lecture Recording
Recording of any lecture, laboratory session, small-group activity, or other instructional event is not permitted unless explicit permission is granted by the course instructor prior to the recording.

- Permission must be requested in writing (email is acceptable).
- Approval is granted at the discretion of the instructor and may be limited to specific sessions or content areas.
- Instructors reserve the right to deny or revoke permission at any time if recording is determined to disrupt learning, compromise confidentiality of patients, students, or others, or violate professional standards.

Limitations on Use and Distribution
Any approved recording is subject to the following restrictions:

1. **Educational Use Only**
    - Recordings may be used solely for personal academic study by the student who received permission.
    - Recordings may not be used as an adjunct for the arguing of exam grades and content.
2. **Prohibited Redistribution**
    - Students may not share, post, publish, sell, or otherwise distribute recordings in any format (audio, video, screenshots, transcripts, etc.).
    - This includes, but is not limited to, posting on social media platforms, file-sharing sites, messaging apps, commercial services, or study repositories.
3. **Intellectual Property Protection**
    - Recorded content is the intellectual property of the instructor and/or the WSU PA Program. Unauthorized use or distribution constitutes a violation of program policy and may result in disciplinary action.
4. **Prohibition on Recording Clinical Content**
    - Recording any patient-related content, standardized patient encounters, clinical skills sessions, or clinical environments is strictly prohibited.

ADA Accommodations
The PA Program is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all students.

- Students with documented disabilities who require recording as an approved accommodation must work with the accessibility/disability services at Banacos Center.
- When recording is granted as an official accommodation:
    - Instructors will be notified of the accommodation.
    - Students must still follow all distribution and usage restrictions.
    - Recordings made under ADA accommodations may not be shared with other students or used for any purpose beyond the accommodation.
- In limited circumstances, instructors may provide alternative reasonable accommodations if recording is not feasible due to confidentiality, sensitive material, or regulatory requirements.

Violations
Unauthorized recording or distribution of instructional material may result in:

- Professionalism citations or remediation
- Referral to the Program Director or Academic Honesty Committee of the Graduate Education Council.

Program Course Requirements

Semester	Course Number	Course Name	Semester Hours
Spring Didactic I	PAS 0601	Professional Practice Issues I	1
	PAS 0645	Evidence based medicine	2
	PAS 0626	Hematology/Oncology	3
	PAS 0631	Otolaryngology/Ophthalmology	3
	PAS 0634	Pulmonology	4
	PAS 0627	Infectious Disease	4
	PAS 0620	Cardiology	5
	PAS 0641	Integration I	3
Summer Didactic II	PAS 0623	Gastroenterology	4
	PAS 0635	Nephrology	4
	PAS 0622	Endocrinology	3
	PAS 0624	Genitourinary	2
	PAS 0621	Dermatology	3
	PAS 0602	Professional Practice Issues II	1
	PAS 0642	Integration II	3
Fall Didactic III	PAS 0629	Neurology	3
	PAS 0633	Behavioral Medicine	3
	PAS 0628	Musculoskeletal	4
	PAS 0632	Pediatrics	2
	PAS 0625	Geriatrics	3
	PAS 0636	Surgery	2
	PAS 0630	Obstetrics & Gynecology	2
	PAS 0603	Professional Practice Issues III	1
	PAS 0643	Integration III	3
	PAS 0646	Transition to Clinical Practice	3
Clerkship Courses	PAS 0667	Inpatient Medicine	4
	PAS 0662	Ambulatory Medicine	4
	PAS 0671	Surgery Clerkship	4
	PAS 0670	Pediatrics Clerkship	4
	PAS 0672	Women's Health	4
	PAS 0668	Behavioral Medicine	4
	PAS 0664	Emergency Medicine	4
	PAS 0669	Musculoskeletal Medicine	4
	PAS 0661	Addiction Medicine	4
	PAS 0663	Elective Clerkship	4
	PAS 0673	Elective II Clerkship	4
Spring	PAS 0651	Clinical Seminar I	1
Summer	PAS 0652	Clinical Seminar II	1
Fall	PAS 0653	Clinical Seminar III	1
	PAS 0690	Capstone	2
Total Credits			120

Examination Policy

Students are expected to be present for all evaluations. The following practices will take place for all evaluations:

- Students are expected to take examinations at designated times.
- Students who arrive late are a disturbance to classmates and, therefore, may not be allowed to enter the exam room. Students will be given a makeup examination.
- In the event a student misses an exam, they must contact the course coordinator and the Program prior to the exam time. The student will also need proper documentation to miss an exam.
- A proctor is always present in each testing room throughout the examination.
- If a student must take a personal (restroom) break during an exam, the student WILL NOT be allowed additional testing time to make up for time lost during absence from the room.
- Personal belongings are not allowed into the seating area of the testing room.
- The following items are prohibited in the seating area of the testing room. Having any of these items will result in expulsion from the examination and a score of zero for the exam. Students may also face disciplinary actions related to the Academic Integrity and Social Behavior Policy.
  - Watches with an alarm, computer or memory capability
  - Cellular phones
  - Smart glasses or enhanced camera/audio eye wear
  - Paging devices
  - Recording/filming devices
  - Personal digital assistants of any kind
  - Reference materials
  - Backpacks, briefcases, coats
  - Hats of any kind, hoods from sweatshirts and sunglasses are not permitted to be worn during the examination.
- Students will be assigned seats by the proctor.
- Each student will sign the honor code prior to beginning the exam. *Please See - Appendix E*
- Each student is responsible for properly marking answers on the computer.
- At the end of the testing period, the testing platform stops the testing period and submits the completed exam.
- No questions are allowed during the examination, unless of a clerical nature. The proctor will NOT answer any questions regarding content.

Grading Policy

The Westfield State University and the Physician Assistant Program grading system is as follows:

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Grading
A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.7	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.00	84-86
B-	2.70	80-83
C	2.0	70-79
F	0.00	<70

Grades indicated in red constitute a PA Program failure.

Progression Requirements

Students in the PA program must achieve a grade of B minus (B-) (>79.5%) in PAS didactic and clinical courses to remain in good academic standing. Students who receive less than a B minus (B-) in **one** course **may** be offered the opportunity for course remediation. Remediation will require registration in an additional Remediation Course that must be passed for successful course completion. A Remediation Course fee will be assessed in the amount of one graduate credit. If course remediation is unsuccessful, a leave of absence or program dismissal will be recommended. A student may only

remediate one course per year.

Due to course scheduling, a leave of absence will result in a delay in the program. In addition, because the courses offered each semester are interrelated, students who join a new cohort are required to pass a competency exam for prior learning, attend all courses in the semester in which the failed course is repeated, attend all classes, and pass all evaluation requirements. Failure to achieve a B minus (B-) or better on a second attempt of a course following a leave of absence will result in recommendation of dismissal from the program. All coursework must be completed within five (5) years of matriculation.

According to the graduate catalog: to be considered in good academic standing and to remain in a graduate program, students must maintain an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher throughout their course of study. In addition, students may not earn a B- in more than three courses. Students are immediately dismissed from a program if they receive two (2) F's or more than three (3) grades of B- or lower.
All matriculated students are reviewed by DGCE within thirty (30) days after the grade submission deadline of the fall, spring, and summer II terms to ensure they are in good academic standing.

Academic Probation and Dismissal
A student is placed on academic probation if the overall cumulative GPA is below a 3.0, or if the student has received two grades of a "B-" or lower at the time of the PA Program Student Progression Committee or Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE) review. The student will receive official written notification of academic probation status from the DGCE. The student's academic advisor, the Program Director, and DGCE Program Chair is copied with this notification. Students on academic probation are required to meet with the PA Program Student Progression Committee and to develop a written academic success plan for improvement and must submit a copy of this plan to the Student Progression Committee or as otherwise designated within thirty (30) days of notification. Students without a written success plan on file will not be permitted to enroll in future terms.

Students placed on academic probation have two full consecutive terms of enrollment to achieve good academic standing unless provided an extension by permission of the Program Director, Graduate Program Chair, and the DGCE Dean. Students on probation must complete all outstanding incomplete grades before enrolling in future terms. Students are required to repeat course(s) in which they have received a deficient grade (per the Deficient Grades and Course Repeat Policy) as soon as possible within their course of study. Academic probation may not be appealed.

Students are immediately dismissed from a program if they receive any grade of C or below, or more than three (3) grades of B- or lower, and they have exhausted their course repeat option (below). Students on academic probation who do not achieve good academic standing within their two consecutive term time frame will automatically be dismissed from their program. Students may appeal academic program dismissal, please see academic dismissal appeals process for more information.

Course Remediation Policy

The performance of all students will be reviewed each by semester by the Student Progression Committee. Students who have demonstrated academic deficiency (<83.5%) in a program course may be offered a remediation process. Students are only eligible for remediation in one course per year (one didactic course and one clinical course), as long as the remainder of the semester grades are a B minus (B-) or higher and the student is in good professional standing. Failure of a second course per didactic year will result in the recommendation of a leave of absence or dismissal.

Remediation will be offered if the student demonstrates behavior, attitude, and ethics consistent with professional demeanor expected of a physician assistant student, as determined by the Promotions and Remediation Committee.

The course coordinator will refer a remediation plan to the Student Progression Committee. If remediation is approved, students will be required to register for a Remediation Course, which will include an assigned academic remediation plan and assessment by the Director of Didactic Education. The Remediation Course outlines the steps a student will take to address any performance issues.

Remediation will include repeating some portion of the module, course, or clerkship and reexamination. In all cases, the process of content remediation shall be at the discretion of the course coordinator and the Director of Didactic or Clinical Education.

OSCE Remediation Policy

As part of the WSU PA Program Assessment process, all medical module courses will require that each OSCE assessment be passed successfully to pass the course. If a student fails the OSCE, they will be offered one opportunity to remediate the OSCE. If they fail the repeat OSCE, it is considered a course failure, and they will be referred for course remediation or dismissal, per program policy.

If a student fails four different course OSCEs on the first attempt, they will be referred to the Academic Advisor and Program Director for discussion of areas of concern and planning.

Failure of six first-time attempts at an OSCE will result in referral to the Program Director for dismissal.

Student Encounter Form

A Student Encounter Form (SEF) will be used to document student interactions with faculty which include irregularities in academic performance, student advising, professionalism, or other deficiencies. These forms will be included as a part of the student's permanent academic file.

See Appendix H

Program Dismissal

Students that do not meet the program expectations will be recommended for dismissal to the Program Director by the Promotions and Remediation Committee:

- Students fail to achieve a course grade of B minus (B-) (>83.5%) or better after a Remediation Course is completed.
- Students fail to achieve 3.0 GPA after returning from a leave of absence.
- Lack of resolution of documented professional behavior issues.
- Failure of 2 clinical courses or failure to pass a repeated clinical clerkship.
- Academic Dishonesty.

Program Withdrawal

A student wishing to withdraw voluntarily from the University must inform the PA Program Director in writing. Further details about the University refund policy and procedures are found with the University catalog here.

Leave of Absence

- In the event a leave of absence is needed, students are urged to submit a request to the Program Director and Registrar as soon as possible.
- To obtain a leave of absence, students must be in good academic standing.
- Leave of absence is granted for up to one academic year.
- Upon return, students will be required to provide additional documentation, complete competency exams for prior learning, and obtain medical clearance, as determined by the type of leave of absence.
- Please refer to the Westfield State University Graduate Catalog for further information.

Section 13

Westfield State University Policies/Services

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Student Health Services

Health Center

The Health Center is located in Scanlon Hall. Graduate students are not eligible to use the Health Center on campus, but the Center will assist/direct students to appropriate medical facilities. The Counseling Center is located in Lammers Hall and will refer the students to appropriate resources that are available. The Physician Assistant Faculty will not provide medical advice, nor function or substitute as a medical provider for physician assistant students.

Ely Library

Ely Library offers an inviting setting for individual and group study and provides Westfield students with carefully selected information resources and technology for the 21st century, including Wi-Fi. The collection includes books, periodicals, videos, DVDs, and CDs, as well as electronic books and databases delivered by high-speed Internet access. In addition, Westfield students may borrow, either in person or by interlibrary loan, from the over one million volumes held at the academic libraries of the Cooperating Universities of Greater Springfield and the Springfield City Library.

The Ely Virtual Library enables students, faculty, and staff to connect at any time to online databases, with full-text sources including journals and major newspapers, from any computer on campus or from any remote computer with Internet access. Other resources in the Ely Virtual Library include high-quality, course-related Web sites, information for commuter students, and online help.

Reference librarians at Ely Library are available in person, on the phone, or by e-mail to assist students with research, assignments, or library resources. Librarians also work closely with the Westfield faculty and participate in teaching to ensure that students have the research and information skills required for life-long learning. Ely Library is open seven days a week most of the year; special holiday and summer hours are posted in the library and available on the Web site.

Most required PA Program textbooks are available on reserve at Ely Library. Additional medical reference books and electronic media are also available.

Westfield State University Policy on Academic Integrity & Social Behavior

"Academic Honesty, a necessary foundation of a learning community is expected of all students. Violations are unacceptable and are subject to academic penalties including failure of a course. A record of the violation is submitted to Academic Affairs; repeated violations may result in suspension or dismissal from the college. Violations of academic honesty include cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and submission of the same paper for credit in two or more courses." Academic Honesty, (WSU Bulletin)

Students in the graduate program are expected to have high standards of integrity. Any graduate student who violates academic honesty through activity such as cheating or plagiarizing on examinations, papers, assignments or within a research setting is subject to dismissal from the program. Graduate students are required to follow departmental processes for field placements (practicum, internships). Failure to do so may be grounds for removal of students from the graduate program. Cases involving failure to follow process shall be referred for adjudication.

Grade Appeals and Grievance Policy and Procedure

Questions or concerns relating directly to a college course grade should first be raised with the course instructor. The Program Director is available to consult on appeals at the program level. If you have continued unresolved questions or concerns about grading, academic policies and regulations of the PA Program or Graduate School, you should direct them in writing. A formal appeal form may be found here.

Harassment Policy

Westfield State University does not tolerate harassment. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome verbal, non-verbal and/or physical behavior of a sexual nature that has the effect of interfering with student employment, academic or other status, of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. It is a form of sex discrimination that was made illegal by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 as amended, and under Chapters 151B and 151C of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Any member of the College community who believes she/he has been a victim of sexual harassment may initiate informal or formal complaint procedures. Full text of the current Sexual Harassment Policy is available in the Graduate and Continuing Education Office, and within the Student Handbook. Additional information on the full University Bullying and Harassment Policies can be found here. Further information or advice may be obtained by contacting the Dean of the College of Graduate and Continuing Education.

All complaints of student mistreatment should be reported to the Program Director or the Dean of Students Office immediately.

State and Federal Resources

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time-period from alleged offense for filing a claim (EEOC-180 days; MCAD-6 months).

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)
One Congress Street, 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
Tel. 617.565.3200

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)

Boston Office: One Ashburton Place
Room 601
Boston, MA 02108

Springfield Office:
436 Dwight Street
Room 220
Springfield, MA 01103

Alcohol & Other Drug Policy

A full description of the Westfield State University alcohol and drug policy can be found in the University Catalog. The Westfield State University policy and regulations pertaining to the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages and the possession, use, distribution, and sale of illicit drugs are designed (1) to conform to the state and federal laws and/or (2) enhance the health, safety, property, and educational interests of all members of the university community. The purpose of the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy is to promote a campus environment that is compatible with and supportive of academic success and personal growth. A campus atmosphere dominated by overt use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs is contrary to this goal. Accordingly, any violation of the student conduct code and/or a violation of the federal, state, or local laws shall subject the offender to the university disciplinary process and/or to criminal prosecution. In accordance with the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (Public Law 105-244) the University regulations and laws pertaining to alcoholic beverages and the possession, use, distribution, and sale of illicit drugs shall be strictly and consistently enforced.

Violations of this policy may result in criminal sanctions. Criminal convictions, even if sanctions are minimal, can adversely affect internship and job opportunities, admission to graduate or professional schools, and eligibility for training and financial aid opportunities. The Higher Education Act of 1998 states that students convicted under state or federal law for drug sale or possession will have their federal financial aid eligibility suspended. This includes all federal grants, loans, and work-study programs. Students convicted of drug possession will lose their eligibility for one year; two years for a second offense; and indefinitely for a third offense. Students convicted of selling drugs will be ineligible for two years; and indefinitely for a second offense. Eligibility can be regained through successful completion of an approved drug rehabilitation program. The filing of criminal charges does not prevent the University from imposing its own sanctions in addition to criminal penalties. These sanctions are described within the policy.

Tobacco Policy

The use of tobacco products will not be permitted on any university property or university leased property, effective September 1, 2012. More details can be found in the University policy.

Firearms and Weapons

Based on Massachusetts state law:

> Whoever, not being a law enforcement officer and notwithstanding any license obtained by the person pursuant to chapter 140, carries on the person a firearm, loaded or unloaded, or other dangerous weapon in any building or on the grounds of any elementary or secondary school, college or university without the written authorization of the board or officer in charge of the elementary or secondary school, college or university shall be punished by a fine of not more than $1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than 2 years or both. A law enforcement officer may arrest without a warrant and detain a person found carrying a firearm in violation of this paragraph.
>
> Any officer in charge of an elementary or secondary school, college or university or any faculty member or administrative officer of an elementary or secondary school, college or university that fails to report a violation of this paragraph shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and punished by a fine of not more than $500.

Section 14

Requirements for Matriculation

Physician Assistant Studies Program

Requirements of Didactic Year

The following rules and regulations reflect the minimum academic and behavioral standards expected of students during the didactic year of the program. To complete the didactic year, students must:

- Earn a grade of at least “B minus (B-)” in all program courses.
- Demonstrate mastery of history taking and physical examination skills and critical thinking skills. Students will not be assigned their clinical rotations until they have demonstrated mastery of history-taking and physical examination skills, as well as critical thinking skills, as determined by the course instructor, program faculty, and program director. Student must pass all Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) practical examinations. Students will have one opportunity to repeat each practical exam. Students will not matriculate to the clinical year without successful completion of all OSCE examinations, even if the course grade is a B minus (B-) or better.
- Completes successful remediation of the PACKRAT reflection.
- Complete and pass didactic OSCE examinations.
- Complete all course examinations.
- Meet with assigned advisors at least once per semester.
- Obtain Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certification.
- Demonstrate professional behavior and attitude consistent with the Program Code Of Conduct *(Appendix A)* as documented by the Professional Assessment Tool *(Appendix C).*

Requirements of the Clinical Year

For all Clerkships successful demonstration of all components is required:

Preceptor’s Evaluation of the Student
Clerkship Specific End of Clerkship Examination
Professional Behavior Assessment

Clinical Seminar III Summative Assessment Requirement

Successful completion of summative assessments must be completed within 4 months of graduation for a student to graduate. Failure of the Summative Assessment on the first time taking may cause a delay in the student's completion of the program, and subsequent taking of the PANCE, licensure, credentialling and employment. Students who fail the written component of the Summative Evaluation (PAEA End of Curriculum Exam) must wait 60 days to re-take the exam. Students who fail on the second attempt will be recommended for dismissal to the Program Director.

The following are assessed during the clinical seminars:

- PA Summative Exams – Clinical Seminar III
- Clinical Skills Assessment – Clinical Seminar III
- Clinical Data – Clinical Seminars I & III
- TYPHON Completion – Clinical Seminars I, II, & III
- Grand Rounds Presentation – Clinical Seminars I & III

Refer to Clinical Clerkships Manual for specific clinical competencies.

PA Program Graduation Requirements

The following requirements are required for graduation from the WSU PAS Program.

1. Demonstrated passing in required skills and procedures.
2. Successful completion of all didactic courses.
3. Successful completion of all clinical clerkships.
4. Successful completion of all clinical seminar courses.
5. Successful completion of the summative evaluation.
6. Successful completion of Capstone project.
7. Demonstrate professional behavior and attitude consistent with the Program Code Of Conduct (Appendix A) as documented by the Professional Assessment Tool (Appendix C).

University Graduation Requirements

Candidates for master's degrees will be required to meet the University's academic graduation requirements for graduate degrees. To qualify for any master's degree, candidates must:

1. Complete a specific minimum number of approved graduate credits with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0.
2. Complete all designated courses and fulfill all program curricular policies as outlined in the program curriculum.
3. Complete degree requirements within time allotted by the statute-of-limitations which is 5 years from matriculation.
4. Complete the Application for Graduation sent to prospective graduating students early in the final semester.
5. Receive faculty approval for the award of the degree.

Participation in Commencement

Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program holds one PA Graduation celebration each year, usually during the second or third week in December. Students who are in good academic standing but have not finished their degree requirements may in certain circumstances, at the discretion of the program, be allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Section 15

Professional Organizations

Physician Assistant Studies Program

American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA)

- PA students are eligible for membership in the Student Academy of American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA). Members receive official publications of the Academy, have access to a job service, and are eligible to compete for scholarships. Membership involves a onetime enrollment, with fee of $75.00 which expires 4 months after graduating from the PA Program.

Massachusetts Association of Physician Assistants (MAPA)

- MAPA is a constituent chapter of AAPA. Students are chosen from the programs in Massachusetts to sit on the MAPA Board of Directors. Each year MAPA offers one or more scholarships to MAPA student members and supports student projects in a variety of ways. Membership is $48.00.

Students are encouraged to join any or all of the above organizations, including other state organizations.

Section 16

Appendices

A: Student Code of Conduct
B: Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying PA's.
C: Professional Assessment Tool
D: Accident/Incident Reporting Form
E: Honesty Statement
F: Infection Control Policy
G: Appeal Procedure
H: Student Encounter Form
I: Declaration of Understanding
J: Technical Standards
K: Participation of Students as Human Subjects
L: Release of Health Information
M: Statement of Confidentiality
N: Disclosure Statement
O: Web Information
P: PA Professional Organizations' (AAPA, PAEA, ARC-PA, NCCPA) Competencies for Entry Level PAs.

Appendix A

Student Code of Conduct

Members of the physician assistant profession must act in an appropriate way to monitor and maintain the integrity of the standards of the profession. The WSU PA Program is committed to excellence in patient care and education and the training of physician assistant students. To further this goal, staff members and students are expected to adhere to a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics in their interactions with patients, colleagues and other health professionals, and the public.

The following code of conduct and ethics is adapted from the Dartmouth University Medical School and Hitchcock Medical Center Code.

Professional Obligations

1. Respect for Persons

- Practice the doctrine of informed consent for any patient diagnostic test or therapy
- Treat patients, colleagues, students and teachers with the same degree of respect you would wish them to show you
- Treat patients with kindness, gentleness, dignity, empathy, and compassion
- Do not use offensive language verbally or in writing when referring to patients of their illnesses
- Respect the privacy and modesty of patients
- Do not harass others, physically, verbally, psychologically, or sexually
- Do not prejudge others on the basis of gender, religion, race, age, or sexual preference

2. Respect for Patient Confidentiality

- Do not share the medical or personal details of a patient with anyone except those health care providers integral to the well-being of the patient or within the context of an educational endeavor
- Do not discuss patients or their illness in public places where conversations may be overheard
- Do not publicly identify patients in spoken words or in writing without adequate justification
- Do not invite or permit unauthorized persons into patient care areas of the institution
- Do not share your confidential computer system password with nonprofessionals

3. Honesty

- Be truthful in verbal and in written communications
- Acknowledge your errors of omission and commission
- Do not knowingly mislead others
- Do not cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise act dishonestly
- Do not falsify or fabricate scientific data

4. Responsibility for Patient Care

- Assume 24-hour responsibility for patients under your care; when you go off duty, assure that your patients' care is adequately covered by another practitioner
- Follow-up on ordered laboratory tests and complete patient record documentation conscientiously
- Coordinate with your team, the timing of information sharing with patients and their families to present a coherent and consistent treatment plan
- Do not use alcohol or other drugs that could diminish the quality of patient care or academic performance

5. Awareness of Limitations, Professional Growth

- Be aware of your professional limitations and deficiencies of knowledge and abilities and know when and of whom to ask for supervision, assistant or consultation

- Do not engage in unsupervised involvement in areas or situations where you are not adequately trained
- Avoid patient involvement when you are seriously ill, distraught, or overcome with personal problems
- Have all patient workups and orders countersigned by the appropriate supervisory personnel

6. Deportment as a Professional

- Clearly identify yourself and your professional level to patients and staff; wear your name tag when in patient areas
- Do not allow yourself, as a student, to be introduced as a physician assistant or doctor
- Dress in a neat, clean, and professionally appropriate manner
- Maintain a professional composure despite the stresses of fatigue, professional pressure, or personnel problems
- Do not have romantic or sexual relationships with your patients; recognize that if such relations develop, seek help and terminate the professional relationship

7. Responsibility for Peer Behavior

- Take the initiative to identify and help rehabilitate impaired students, nurses, physicians, physician assistants, and other employees
- Report important breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

8. Respect for Personal Ethics

- You are not required to perform procedures (e.g., abortions, termination of medical treatment) that you feel are unethical, illegal, or may be detrimental to the patient
- Inform patients and their families of available treatment options that are consistent with acceptable standards of medical care

9. Respect for Property and Laws

- Respect the property of Westfield State University and other facilities with which you are affiliated
- Adhere to regulations and policies such as fire safety, hazardous waste disposal and universal precautions or Westfield State University and all other facilities with which you are affiliated
- Adhere to local, state, and federal laws and regulations

Appendix B

Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying Physician Assistants

As obtained from the NCCPA.

Preamble
The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants endeavors to assure the public that certified physician assistants meet professional standards of knowledge and skills. Additionally, NCCPA attempts to ensure that the physician assistants it certifies are upholding appropriate standards of professionalism and ethics in practice. The NCCPA's *Code of Conduct for Certified and Certifying Physician Assistants* outlines principles that all certified or certifying physician assistants are expected to uphold.

Breaches of these principles may be cause for disciplinary review. Disciplinary actions taken at the conclusion of that review may include formal censures, fines, revocation of certification or eligibility for certification and/or other actions as deemed appropriate by NCCPA. Some disciplinary actions are reported to the state licensing authorities and the Federation of State Medical Boards. This *Code of Conduc*t represents some, though not necessarily all, of the behaviors that may trigger review under NCCPA's Policies and Procedures for Disciplinary Review.

Principles of Conduct

Certified or certifying physician assistants shall protect the integrity of the certification and recertification process.
They shall not engage in cheating or other dishonest behavior that violates exam security (including unauthorized reproducing, distributing, displaying, discussing, sharing or otherwise misusing test questions or any part of test questions) before, during or after an NCCPA examination.
They shall not obtain, attempt to obtain or assist others in obtaining or maintaining eligibility, certification, or recertification through deceptive means, including submitting to the NCCPA any document that contains a misstatement of fact or omits a fact.
They shall not manufacture, modify, reproduce, distribute or use a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized NCCPA certificate.
They shall not represent themselves in any way as a Physician Assistant-Certified (PA-C) designee unless they hold current NCCPA certification.
When possessing knowledge or evidence that raises a substantial question of cheating on or misuse of questions from an NCCPA examination, fraudulent use of an NCCPA card, certificate or other document or misrepresentation of NCCPA certification status by a physician assistant or any other individual, they shall promptly inform the NCCPA.

Certified or certifying physician assistants shall comply with laws, regulations and standards governing professional practice in the jurisdictions and facilities in which they practice or are licensed to practice.
Certified or certifying physician assistants shall respect appropriate professional boundaries in their interactions with patients.
Certified or certifying physician assistants shall avoid behavior that would pose a threat or potential threat to the health, well-being or safety of patients apart from reasonable risks taken in the patient's interest during the delivery of health care.
Certified or certifying physician assistants shall recognize and understand their professional and personal limitations.
Certified or certifying physician assistants shall practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency or mental illness.
Certified or certifying physician assistants shall maintain and demonstrate the ability to engage in the practice of medicine within their chosen areas of practice safely and competently.

Appendix C

Professional Assessment Tool

Directions: This evaluation instrument is designed to assist students in self-assessment of their professional development towards becoming a Physician Assistant. The following rating scale is to be used by the student and the faculty advisor. Ratings are based on student assessment of self in the classroom, laboratory, as well as clinical and other professional situations.

0= Unsatisfactory: *The student does not demonstrate the required level of professional skill. The student's behavior is predicted to interfere with the ability to establish satisfactory therapeutic relationships with patients or effective working relationships with co-workers.*
1= Needs Improvement: *The student, while beginning to demonstrate the required level of professional skill, needs improvement in either quality or quantity.*
2= Satisfactory: *The student demonstrates the required level of professional skill.*

*****Note: Score >32 is satisfactory**

	STUDENT	FACULTY ADVISOR
HONESTY / INTEGRITY	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Adheres to code of ethics* ▪ *Admits and corrects mistakes* ▪ *Maintains confidentiality* ▪ *Represents self appropriately*		
RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK / SUPERVISION		
Behavior Descriptors	0 1 2	0 1 2
▪ *Respectful to instructors* ▪ *Chooses appropriate time to approach instructor* ▪ *Proactively identifies problems and possible solutions* ▪ *Accepts feedback in a positive manner* ▪ *Modifies performance in response to feedback*	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
ABILITY TO WORK AS TEAM MEMBER	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Aware of others verbal/nonverbal reactions* ▪ *Responsive and respectful to the needs of others* ▪ *Allows others to express their opinions* ▪ *Remains open minded to different perspectives* ▪ *Tactful in giving others suggestions/feedback* ▪ *Participates as part of the team when doing group projects*		
COMMUNICATION	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Actively participates in discussions* ▪ *Initiates thoughtful / relevant questions* ▪ *Summarizes verbal or written messages clearly and concisely* ▪ *Recognizes impact of non-verbal communication* ▪ *Communicates with others in a respectful, confident manner*		

SELF DIRECTEDNESS	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Independently seeks out learning experiences* ▪ *Takes initiative to direct own learning* ▪ *Assumes responsibility for learning* ▪ *Uses adequate and appropriate resources to achieve goal* ▪ *Demonstrates functional level of confidence and self-assurance*		
DEPENDABILTY / RESPONSIBILITY	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Attends all scheduled sessions* ▪ *Is on time for class / scheduled meetings* ▪ *Hands in assignments / papers when due* ▪ *Complies with program / course expectations* ▪ *Fulfills commitments and responsibilities* ▪ *Maintains a safe environment in class / lab*		
JUDGEMENT / CLINICAL REASONING	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Uses an inquiring or questioning approach in class and analyzes options prior to making a judgment* ▪ *Develops rationale to support choice* ▪ *Demonstrates awareness of possible bias* ▪ *Makes sound decisions based on factual information* ▪ *Generates alternative hypotheses / solutions to issues*		
ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Has all material ready for class* ▪ *Budgets time/material to meet program requirements* ▪ *Prioritizes multiple commitments* ▪ *Assist in organizing group assignments / projects*		
PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION	0 1 2	0 1 2
Behavior Descriptors	COMMENTS	COMMENTS
▪ *Wears neat clean clothing appropriate to setting* ▪ *Projects professional image to peers, clients, supervisors* ▪ *Display a positive attitude toward becoming a professional*		

Student Final Score: _____ Faculty Final Score: _____

Final Score: _____

Additional comments/ Plan of Action:

_____ _____ _____

Student's signature Faculty Advisor signature Date

Appendix D

Accident/Incident Reporting Form

Name _____

Location/Date/Time of Accident/Incident

_____

_____

_____

Location of injury (if applicable)

_____

_____

_____

Description of Accident/Incident

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

Disposition:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature _____ Date _____

_____

Name & Title of Person Preparing Form (if not injured party) Date

This form may be photocopied

Honesty Statement

I pledge that I have not given or received, nor will I give or receive unauthorized aid on this examination, paper and/or assignment.

HONESTY PLEDGE

Westfield STATE UNIVERSITY
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

Student Name: _____

Student signature: _____

Student ID Number: _____ Date _____

Infection Control Policy

The following policy refers specifically to Westfield State University. Other policies may exist at clinical sites and will be distributed at those sites.

I. Exposure Determination

A. Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program faculty and students in the course of teaching or learning may be involved in exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials through skin, eye, mucus membrane or parenteral contact.

Exposure does not include incidental exposures that may take place at the school and that are neither reasonably nor routinely expected to incur in the normal school duties.

The term 'other bodily fluids' and 'other potentially infectious materials' refer to semen, vaginal secretions, cerebral spinal fluid, plural fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental procedures, and any other body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, as well as any fixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead).

B. The following tasks involve exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials:

1. Class assignments and/or laboratory exercises in which the blood or other body fluids of human subjects are tested
2. Activities involving phlebotomy, whereby blood samples are taken and analyzed for the purposes of scientific research
3. Activities involving the administration of first aid to injured persons

II. Precautions to Prevent Transmission of HIV, HBV, and Other Blood Borne Pathogens

A. Universal Precautions

Blood and body fluid precautions should be consistently used in all instances when blood or other bodily fluids are present. "Universal blood and bodily fluid precautions" or "universal precautions", should be used whenever there is a presence of blood or other body fluids.

1. The individuals should routinely use appropriate barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucus membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids of any subject is anticipated. Gloves should be worn for touching blood and body fluids, mucus membranes, or other non-intact skin of all subjects, for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids, and for performing venipuncture and other vascular access procedures. Gloves should be changed after contact with each subject. Masks and protective eye wear or face shield should be worn during procedures that are likely to generate droplets of blood or fluids to prevent exposure of mucus membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes.

2. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.

3. Individuals should take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices during procedures, when cleaning used instruments, during disposal of used needles, and when handling sharp instruments after procedures. To prevent needle stick injuries, needles should not be recapped, purposely bent or broken by hand. After they have been used, disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, and other sharp items should be placed in puncture resistant containers for disposal. The puncture resistant containers should be located as close as practical to the use area. Large-bore needles should be placed in a puncture resistant container for transport to the reprocessing area.

4. Individuals who have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis should refrain from all direct contact with equipment until the condition resolves.

5. Pregnant individuals are not known to be at greater risk of contracting HIV infection than other individuals. However, if a pregnant individual develops HIV infection, the fetus is at risk for infection. Because of this risk, pregnant individuals should be especially familiar with and strictly adhere to precaution to minimize the risk of HIV transmission.

B. Precautions for Laboratories

Blood and other body fluids from all subjects should be considered infective. To supplement the universal blood and body fluids precautions listed above, the following precautions are recommended for individuals in clinical laboratories.

1. All specimens of blood and body fluids should be put in a well-constructed container with a secure lid to prevent leaking during transport. Care should be taken when collecting each specimen to avoid contaminating the outside of the container.

2. All persons processing blood and body fluid specimens (e.g. removing tops from vacuum tubes) should wear gloves, masks and protective eye wear. Gloves should be changed and hands washed after completion of the process.

3. Mechanical pipetting should be used for manipulating all fluids. Mouth pipetting must not be done.

4. Laboratory work surfaces should be decontaminated with an appropriate chemical germicide after a spill of blood or other body fluids, and when work activities are completed.

5. Contaminated materials used in laboratory tests should be decontaminated before processing or be placed in bags and disposed of in accordance with institutional policies for disposal of infective waste.

6. Scientific equipment that has been contaminated with blood or body fluids should be decontaminated and cleaned before being repaired in the laboratory or transported to the manufacturer.

7. All persons should wash their hands after completing laboratory activities and should remove protective clothing before leaving the laboratory.

Implementation of universal blood and body fluids precautions for all subjects eliminates the need for warning labels on specimens since blood and body fluids from all individuals should be considered infective.

III. Post Exposure Follow-up

A. Should any individual exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials by means of a specific eye, mouth or other mucus membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact, they must report the incident to the PA Program and complete the incident report form. A copy of the report shall be immediately furnished to the appropriate administrative.

B. Following the exposure of a student to a blood born pathogen the student should contact the PA Program immediately. If a student is at a healthcare facility or hospital that can provide the appropriate exposure protocols they should immediately be evaluated on site. If students are at a facility which cannot accommodate the appropriate evaluation, students may be evaluated at Baystate Urgent Care. If the exposure occurs in the evening, weekend or holiday students should be evaluated at the Baystate Medical Center Emergency Department. All costs associated with any incident or exposure are the responsibility of student.

Appendix G

Appeal Procedure

A. Appealing a PAS Final Grade

Students enrolled in the Physician Assistant (PA) Program have the right to appeal a final grade in a PAS course. The process begins with the student requesting a review of the record with the course coordinator. If unsuccessful, students may appeal to the program director and the Dean, in that order. A written request describing the circumstances of the appeal must be submitted within 3 days of the notification of the disputed grade. The final decision rests with the Dean. Due to the scheduling of PA program courses, this must be completed before the start of the next academic semester. Students may continue in coursework until resolution.

B. Appealing to the Graduate Education Committee after Dismissal

Reasons for dismissal from the program may include, but are not limited to, poor academic achievement, academic dishonesty, and behavior and attitude not consistent with the physician assistant profession. Students who have been dismissed from the program may appeal to the Graduate Education Committee. While an appeal is in process, the student may NOT continue in program activities. The following procedure will be followed:

1. Any student wishing to appeal dismissal from the program must submit a written request for a meeting with Graduate Dean within one week of receiving notification of dismissal. The student must clearly specify in writing why he or she feels the dismissal should be overturned.

2. The Graduate Dean will form a GEC Appeals Committee within one week from receipt of the written appeal.

3. The Appeals Committee will review all the facts along with any supporting documentation from the student and faculty. The appeal should be specific enough so that members of the committee will have a clear understanding of the student's reason for the request. The student and the faculty member may be asked to present his or her statement concerning the appeal to the Appeals Committee during the formal meeting of the committee.

4. The Graduate Dean will notify the student in writing within 1 week after receiving the Appeals Committee's recommendation of the final decision.

Appendix H

Student Encounter Form

Student_____ **Date** _____

Mode of Contact:

- Student contacted faculty
- Faculty contacted student
- Other_____

Reason for Contact:

- Academics
  - Student concerns_____
  - Faculty concerns_____
  - Course grade below minimum
  - Late/missing assignments
  - GPA below minimum
  - Academic integrity
  - Other_____
- Professional
  - Tardiness
  - Unexcused absences
  - Disruptive in Classroom
  - Conduct/behavior
  - Dress code
  - Other _____
- Advisor Meeting
  - Routine
  - Requested _____
  - Other _____
- Personal
- Other
  - _____

Describe reason for encounter_____

Describe discussion content

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Result of Encounter:

- Advisement
- Counseling
- Referral
  - Student Affairs
  - Academic Support
- LOA
- Withdrawal

Recommended Follow Up:

- Faculty Advisor_____
- Course Coordinator_____
- Course Instructor_____
- Program Director
- Program Dean

Encounter Summary:

- Location_____
- Length_____
- Copies of SEF to:
  - Student File
  - Student
  - Advisor
  - Student Affairs
  - Academic Support
  - Counseling

Faculty Signature_____ Date_____

Student Signature_____ Date_____

- Student declined to sign

Appendix I

Declaration of Understanding

I have read and understand the document entitled STUDENT HANDBOOK containing requirements, rules and regulations, policies and procedures, and expectations of the student enrolled in the Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program. I further understand that all policies will be applied to all phases of student education and evaluation. I agree to uphold all the policies stated herein for as long as I am enrolled as a student in the Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program.

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Technical Standards

I have reviewed and understand the Technical Standards for Admission and Graduation of the Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program. I declare that I have the abilities and skills as described in the Technical Standards for observation, communication, motor, intellectual and behavioral and social attributes.

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Participation of Students as Human Subjects

Functional anatomy and physical diagnosis are best learned through the study of living subjects. The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program will instruct all students in physical examination and diagnosis. For the purpose of student learning, students will be required to serve as "patients" and examiners during selected courses. All students are expected to participate in all aspects of physical diagnosis in a professional, cooperative manner. The physical examination may include use of sonography. If there is an abnormality noted, the student must follow-up with a provider.

Physical examination will NOT include the genitalia or breast examination. These physical examination skills will be acquired via model and simulation experiences.

Laboratory attire will coincide with the expected laboratory assignment. Students should be dressed appropriately at the onset of the laboratory session. Laboratory attire includes: gym shorts, tank tops, and hospital gowns for men and women.

I have reviewed and understand the Participation of Students as Human Subjects policy. I agree to abide by the policy as well as all attire and appearance policies as indicated in this manual.

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Release of Health Information

By signing below, I hereby grant Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program the ability to provide health care training facilities the required health and immunization information as stated within the contractual affiliation agreements of said facilities and Westfield State University.

My signature acknowledges my understanding and agreement to provide the above stated information.

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Statement of Confidentiality

By signing below, I hereby acknowledge my responsibility under federal law and as stated within the contractual affiliation agreements of clinical training facilities and Westfield State University to keep confidential any information regarding the facility or facility patients. I also agree, under penalty of law, not to reveal to any person/s, except authorized personnel, any information regarding patients or the facility.

My signature acknowledges my understanding and agreement to the Statement of Confidentiality.

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Disclosure Statement

The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program, in accordance with the standards set forth by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education of the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), will engage in surveys of students, preceptors, graduates and employers to assess development, skills, scope of practice and knowledge base.

The Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program uses all surveys and evaluations for continued evaluation and advancement of the program. The program also uses, but is not limited to, admission criteria; didactic and clinical phase performance measures, Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) and any other summative instrument.

My signature acknowledges my understanding and agreement of the Disclosure Statement.

STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Appendix O

Web Information

Westfield State University Physician Assistant Studies page
http://www.westfield.ma.edu/PAstudies
Physician Assistant Studies Facebook page
www.facebook.com/wsupas
Physician Assistant Studies Twitter page
www.twitter.com/wsu_pa
Physician Assistant Studies Instagram page
www.instagram.com/wsu_pa
Westfield State University
www.westfield.ma.edu/

Westfield State University Graduate Catalog
http://catalog.westfield.ma.edu/index.php
Westfield State University Policies
http://catalog.westfield.ma.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=747
http://catalog.westfield.ma.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=740
Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE)
https://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments/division-graduate-and-continuing-education
University Health Center
http://www.westfield.ma.edu/student-life/health-services
University Counseling Center
http://www.westfield.ma.edu/student-life/counseling-center
Ely Library
http://lib.westfield.ma.edu/home
Banacos Academic Center
http://www.westfield.ma.edu/academics/banacos-academic-center
Financial Aid
http://www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid
Ely Fitness Center
http://www.westfield.ma.edu/student-life/fitness-centers/Fitness-Center

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA)
www.arc-pa.org
National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)
www.nccpa.net
Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Assistants (SAAAPA)
https://www.aapa.org/member-central/
The Massachusetts Association of PAs (MAPA)
www.mass-pa.com
Typon
www.typhongroup.net
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
www.hhs.gov/hipaa
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov

Appendix P

Expected Competencies and Outcomes of a PA Graduate

The competencies in this appendix are those set forth in a joint document by the PA professional organizations. These are the basis on which the Westfield State University as set as the program's competencies for a graduate from the program.

***Adopted 2012* by ARC-PA, NCCPA, and PAEA**
Adopted 2013 by AAPA

Physician Assistant graduates are expected to perform and be competent in many functions and tasks as entry-level physician assistants. The entry-level physician assistant must be able to function in various clinical encounters, including: initial workups, continued care, and emergency care. The graduate must be able to identify, analyze, and manage clinical problems and apply a scientific method to the solution of medical problems. The graduate's functions and tasks are based on the foundation of the Competencies of the Physician Assistant.

1. Knowledge for Practice

Demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care. PAs should be able to:

1.1 Demonstrate investigative and critical thinking in clinical situations.
1.2 Access and interpret current and credible sources of medical information.
1.3 Apply principles of epidemiology to identify health problems, risk factors, treatment strategies, resources, and disease prevention/health promotion efforts for individuals and populations.
1.4 Discern among acute, chronic, and emergent disease states.
1.5 Apply principles of clinical sciences to diagnose disease and utilize therapeutic decision-making, clinical problem-solving, and other evidence-based practice skills.
1.6 Adhere to standards of care and to relevant laws, policies, and regulations that govern the delivery of care in the United States.
1.7 Consider cost-effectiveness when allocating resources for individual patient or population-based care.
1.8 Work effectively and efficiently in various health care delivery settings and systems relevant to the PA's clinical specialty.
1.9 Identify and address social determinants that affect access to care and deliver high-quality care in a value-based system.
1.10 Participate in surveillance of community resources to determine if they are adequate to sustain and improve health.
1.11 Utilize technological advancements that decrease costs, improve quality, and increase access to health care.

2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals. PAs should be able to:

2.1 Establish meaningful therapeutic relationships with patients and their families to ensure that patients' values and preferences are addressed and that their needs and goals are met, delivering person-centered care.
2.2 Provide effective, equitable, understandable, respectful, quality, and culturally competent care that is responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.
2.3 Communicate effectively to elicit and provide information.
2.4 Accurately and adequately document medical information for clinical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.

2.5 Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in all conversations, including challenging discussions about death, end of life, adverse events, bad news, disclosure of errors, and other sensitive topics.
2.6 Demonstrate emotional resilience, stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.
2.7 Understand emotions, behaviors, and responses of others, which allows for effective interpersonal interactions.
2.8 Recognize communication barriers and provide solutions.

3. Person-centered Care

Provide person-centered care that includes patient- and setting-specific assessment, evaluation, and management and health care that is evidence-based, supports patient safety, and advances health equity. PAs should be able to:

3.1 Gather accurate and essential information about patients through history-taking, physical examination, and diagnostic testing.
3.2 Elicit and acknowledge the story of the individual and apply the context of the individual's life to their care, such as environmental and cultural influences.
3.3 Interpret data based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and clinical judgment to make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.
3.4 Develop, implement, and monitor effectiveness of patient management plans.
3.5 Maintain proficiency to perform safely all medical, diagnostic, and surgical procedures considered essential for the practice specialty.
3.6 Counsel, educate, and empower patients and their families to participate in their care, enabling shared decision-making.
3.7 Refer patients appropriately, ensure continuity of care throughout transitions between providers or settings, and follow up on patient progress and outcomes.
3.8 Provide healthcare services to patients, families, and communities to prevent health problems and maintain health.

4. Interprofessional Collaboration

Demonstrate the ability to engage with a variety of other health care professionals in a manner that optimizes safe, effective, patient- and population-centered care. PAs should be able to:

4.1 Work effectively with other health professionals to provide collaborative, patient-centered care while maintaining a climate of mutual respect, dignity, diversity, ethical integrity, and trust.
4.2 Communicate effectively with colleagues and other professionals to establish and enhance interprofessional teams.
4.3 Engage the abilities of available health professionals and associated resources to complement the PA's professional expertise and develop optimal strategies to enhance patient care.
4.4 Collaborate with other professionals to integrate clinical care and public health interventions.
4.5 Recognize when to refer patients to other disciplines to ensure that patients receive optimal care at the right time and appropriate level.

5. Professionalism and Ethics

Demonstrate a commitment to practicing medicine in ethically and legally appropriate ways and emphasizing professional maturity and accountability for delivering safe and quality care to patients and populations. PAs should be able to:

5.1 Adhere to standards of care in the role of the PA in the health care team.
5.2 Demonstrate compassion, integrity, and respect for others.
5.3 Demonstrate responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest.
5.4 Show accountability to patients, society, and the PA profession.
5.5 Demonstrate cultural humility and responsiveness to a diverse patient population, including diversity in sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and abilities.
5.6 Show commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of care, confidentiality, patient autonomy, informed consent, business practices, and compliance with relevant laws, policies, and regulations.
5.7 Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and education of students and other health care professionals.

5.8 Demonstrate commitment to personal wellness and self-care that supports the provision of quality patient care.
5.9 Exercise good judgment and fiscal responsibility when utilizing resources.
5.10 Demonstrate flexibility and professional civility when adapting to change.
5.11 Implement leadership practices and principles.
5.12 Demonstrate effective advocacy for the PA profession in the workplace and in policymaking processes.

6. Practice-based Learning and Quality Improvement

Demonstrate the ability to learn and implement quality improvement practices by engaging in critical analysis of one's own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self-evaluation, lifelong learning, and practice improvement. PAs should be able to:

6.1 Demonstrate self-awareness to identify strengths, address deficiencies, and acknowledge limitations in knowledge and expertise.
6.2 Identify, analyze, and adopt new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.
6.3 Identify improvement goals and perform learning activities that address gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
6.4 Use practice performance data and metrics to identify areas for improvement.
6.5 Develop a professional and organizational capacity for ongoing quality improvement.
6.6 Analyze the use and allocation of resources to ensure the practice of cost-effective healthcare while maintaining the quality of care.
6.7 Understanding how practice decisions impact the finances of their organizations, while keeping the patient's needs foremost.
6.8 Advocate for administrative systems that capture the productivity and value of PA practice.

7. Society and Population Health

Recognize and understand the influences of the ecosystem, including the person, family, population, environment, and policy, on the health of patients, and integrate knowledge of these determinants of health into patient care decisions. PAs should be able to:

7.1 Apply principles of social-behavioral sciences by assessing the impact of psychosocial and cultural influences on health, disease, care seeking, and compliance.
7.2 Recognize the influence of genetic, socioeconomic, environmental, and other determinants on the health of the individual and community.
7.3 Improve the health of patient populations.
7.4 Demonstrate accountability, responsibility, and leadership for removing barriers to health.