

# **Middle Tennessee State University**

## **MS in Physician Assistant Studies**

### **Student Handbook**



*A supplement to the [MTSU Blue Raider Student Handbook](#) and the [MTSU Graduate Student Catalog](#)*

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# Student Handbook

Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by MTSU. The assistant to the President of Institutional Equity and Compliance has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached at the Cope Administration Building 116, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; 615-898-2185. The MTSU policy on non-discrimination can be found at [mtsu.edu/iec](https://mtsu.edu/iec).

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The information in this book was the best available at time of posting. The on-line document is updated as changes are required.

**Produced by MTSU M.S. in PA Studies Program**



## Welcome

*We are so pleased that you have joined the MTSU family as a member of the Physician Assistant Studies Program. The next twenty-seven months will be both challenging and fulfilling as you pursue your dream of becoming a PA. Our goal as faculty and staff members is to be with you every step of the way as you move through the program and into the profession. Ours will be a lifelong relationship. My door is always open to you. Feel free to come and share any thoughts or concerns you may have. I look forward to going on this journey with you.*

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. Marie Patterson*

Marie Patterson, MSM, DHSc, PA-C  
Program Director

## Disclaimer

The MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Student Handbook is meant to provide guidance to PA students on the usual procedures for day-to-day conduct. It is not an exhaustive list of all scenarios that might arise for faculty and students in the administration and training of the program. This handbook is a supplement to the [MTSU Blue Raider Student Handbook](#) and the [MTSU Graduate Student Catalog](#).

## Informing of, Adherence to, and Standardization of Policies

Each student will be given access to the online PA Student Handbook which will include all student policies and practices. The PA Student Handbook will be explained to all students during orientation prior to matriculation in the PA Program and again before the clinical year, and students will be given an opportunity to ask questions about the policies. Students will sign a form stating they received access to the PA Student Handbook. The PA Student Handbook will be kept online, and students will be directed in how to find this. All policies will be consistently applied to all students.



The Program's policies and practices apply to all students, all principal faculty, and the Program Director regardless of location. Presently the Middle Tennessee State University Physician Assistant Studies Program has one location. A signed clinical affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding may specify that certain program policies will be superseded by those at the clinical site.

All policies and practices will be listed in the PA Student Handbook for students and the Faculty Handbook for faculty and the Program Director.

## Accreditation

### Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

Middle Tennessee State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Middle Tennessee State University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website: [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools \(sacs.org\)](https://www.sacs.org). MTSU was reaffirmed in 2016 and found to be in compliance with all standards. The reaffirmation of the accreditation compliance certification report can be found at [Accreditations | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/accr).

### Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA)

#### Statement of Accreditation

The ARC-PA has granted **Accreditation-Provisional** status to the **Middle Tennessee State University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Middle Tennessee State University**.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class. The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-middle-tennessee-state-university/>.

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

It is the intent of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) to fully comply with the applicable provisions of federal and state civil rights laws, including, but not limited to, Executive Order 11246, as amended; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended; Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, as amended; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Pregnancy Discrimination Act; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Section 485(f) of the HEA, as amended by Section 304 of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, the regulations implementing these Acts found at 34 CFR § 668.41, §668.46, and Appendix A to Subpart D of Part 668 and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

MTSU will promote equal opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age (as applicable), status as a protected veteran, genetic information, and any other legally protected class. In doing so, MTSU affirms that it will not tolerate discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment and will not subject any student to discrimination or harassment under any educational program and no student shall be discriminatorily excluded from participation nor denied the benefits of any educational program on the basis of any of the protected categories listed above. Webpage: [25 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## Faculty & Staff

Faculty and staff information can be found at [Contact Us | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/contact-us). Additionally, this information can be accessed on the MTSU PA Studies Program at [Physician Assistant Studies, M.S. \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/physician-assistant-studies).

## Statement of Mission, Vision, and Goals

### Middle Tennessee State University Mission

Middle Tennessee State University offers exceptional academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels that prepare students to thrive in their chosen profession and prioritize student success. As one of Tennessee's largest comprehensive universities, MTSU places high value on outstanding teaching, research, creative activity, and public service that support the emerging needs and challenges of our state, nation, and world.

To fulfill its mission as a comprehensive, public institution of higher education, the University's diverse community of students, faculty, and staff

- educates and challenges students through a broad array of high-quality, affordable bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral programs grounded in a common core of arts and sciences;
- collaboratively promotes excellence through innovative teaching and learning, research, creative activity, service, and engagement;
- fosters a student-centered environment conducive to lifelong learning, personal development, and success for all students, including first-generation, Pell-eligible, transfer, veteran, non-traditional, and international students;
- enhances access through unique programs, distance learning, and advising to meet the needs of a diverse student population;
- supports student learning through effective teaching and advising, experiential and integrative learning, emerging technologies, research, and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities;



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- attracts and retains exceptional faculty and staff and develops resources to support excellence in instruction, research, creative activity, and public and professional service;
- develops and sustains academic partnerships, entrepreneurial activities, and public service to support instruction, research, and communities throughout the region;
- promotes ongoing engagement with its alumni, partners, and friends; and
- serves as an emerging center for international study, understanding, and exchange.

Middle Tennessee State University educates students to

- think logically, critically, and creatively;
- make sound judgments informed by ethical, moral, and aesthetic values;
- acquire knowledge of a discipline or a group of related disciplines;
- examine, analyze, and shape the rapidly changing world through scientific knowledge, creative undertakings, and an understanding of culture and history;
- communicate clearly and precisely and understand the proper role of free expression and civic engagement in our society; and
- demonstrate the effective and adaptive use of current and evolving technologies.

Webpage Link: [Mission Statement | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/mission-statement)

## MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program Mission Statement

The mission of the MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program is to provide comprehensive innovative medical education of the highest quality to prepare a diverse community of Physician Assistants to thrive as compassionate and collaborative members of the healthcare team with a commitment to community service and increasing access to care.

## MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program Vision

The MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program will be a leading educational program with national recognition for excellence in service-learning, quality and compassionate healthcare, and increased access to care to diverse populations.

## MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program Goals

1. Recruit, enroll, and retain highly qualified diverse applicants.

Metrics & Benchmarks:

- Applicant demographic and academic data (meeting/exceeding academic requirements & 30% of students meeting program mission aligned attributes)
- Overall Graduation Rate (meets or exceeds the national average as reported by PAEA for both on-time and delayed graduates equal to the national average as reported by PAEA)

2. Promote an environment that encourages a life-long commitment to community service.

Metrics & Benchmarks:

- Number of service-learning exposures and participation rate (component in each didactic semester with 100% student involvement)
- Faculty/staff involvement (100% either with program and/or personal commitments)

3. Prepare graduates to practice in areas of high need and increase access to care to diverse populations.

Metrics & Benchmarks:

- Clinical experiences in rural, underserved, and public health areas (100% of students will have clinical opportunity in at least one of these areas)

4. Provide quality medical education that prepares graduates to gain the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to practice as an entry-level Physician Assistant.

Metrics & Benchmarks:

- PANCE pass-rates (100% PANCE pass rate at the 1-year mark)
- Summative Evaluation (Summative Evaluation pass-rate of 100%)

## The Physician Assistant Professional Oath

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

- I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all human beings.
- I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice.
- I will recognize and promote the value of diversity.



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- I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.
- I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- I will work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- I will respect my professional relationship with the physician.
- I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.

## Technical Standards

Professional healthcare clinicians are challenged in environments that demand certain abilities, behaviors, and skills. The Physician Assistant must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Students must be able to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, consistently, quickly, and accurately, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data. A student for the Physician Assistant profession must have abilities and skills including observation, communication, intellectual, motor, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative, and behavioral and social. To be eligible to enroll in the program, the student must be able to perform these skills and behaviors successfully either unassisted, with dependable use of reasonable assistive devices, or by employing another reasonable accommodation. The following descriptions define the capabilities expected from an individual to successfully complete the Middle Tennessee State University Physician Assistant Studies Program.

### General Abilities

The PA student must possess the skills related to critical thinking, communication, gross motor dexterity, fine motor coordination, interpersonal skills, observational abilities, and social skills in an individual, group, classroom, laboratory, or other educational setting. The student is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, taste, and smell. All data received by the senses must be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. In addition, the student is expected to possess the ability to perceive pain,



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pressure, temperature, position, equilibrium, and movement. The student must be able to effectively perform and function in settings that are solitary, small group, large groups, social environments, public space, or even very large classroom settings without disruption of other students, patients, faculty, or staff. The student must be able to function and remain calm within stressful situations while maintaining a calm temperament. The student must be able to have on-time attendance and participate in classes and laboratory sessions, all supervised clinical practice experiences (including travel and which may include overnight call), and examinations and testing. All students are required to conduct comprehensive history and physical examinations on all patients throughout the program, regardless of age, sex, gender identity, race, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and disability status. (As required by ARC-PA Standards B2.06, B2.07)

## Observational Skills

The PA student is expected to participate in and observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic and health sciences including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations in animals, microbiological cultures, microscopic study of organisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states, human cadaver dissection, and medical procedures. The student is expected to observe the patient accurately at a distance and close at hand and accurately assess health/illness alteration. Inherent in this observation process is the use of the visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory sensations and sufficient motor capability to carry out the necessary assessment activities. These skills include the ability to inspect, palpate, percuss, and auscultate accurately during the physical examination.

## Communication Skills

The PA student must be able to effectively hear, understand, speak, and observe patients to elicit history and other information necessary to interact with patients, students, faculty, and staff. The student must be able to perceive nonverbal communication and cues, to describe patient mood or changes, to describe posture and appearance, and to interpret and describe patient activity and behavior. The student must be able to communicate in verbal, written, typed, and electronic manner that is effective, efficient, and sensitive and in the English language. The student must be able to receive and give communication effectively to others in a professional manner. The student is expected to give oral presentations in small and large group settings. The student must be able to interact, communicate, and understand other

students, clinicians, faculty, patients, and their families to respond appropriately and in a timely fashion.

## Intellectual Capabilities

The PA student must possess and demonstrate the physical, emotional, intellectual, compassionate, and ethical capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum at normal pace with an on-time completion. The student must be able to learn, retain, and recall information and make a reasoned decision in a timely fashion. The student must be able to achieve a competent level of critical thinking and reasoning required to function in an entry level PA position. To achieve this level, the student must be able to perform in areas of reasoning, measurement, analysis, interpretation, synthesis, calculation, and deduction. In addition, the student should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures. These skills must be evident in dealing with other students, faculty, staff, patients, patient families, and other health care professionals. Critical thinking and problem solving, while in stressful situations, are necessary to complete the program.

## Interpersonal Abilities and Social Interactions

The PA student must be able to establish and maintain appropriate relationships in a professional manner with other students, faculty, staff, health care professionals, patients, as well as patient families. This will encompass possessing the maturity and emotional health necessary to function within the healthcare and educational environments while achieving full utilization of his or her abilities, intellectual function, sound judgement, sensory input, critical thinking, and promptness. The student must be able to demonstrate compassion, empathy, responsibility and tolerance towards patients, families, faculty, staff, other students, and colleagues. This includes the ability to remain calm and function at this level in stressful situations and with competing demands for the student's time and energy.

## Fine and Gross Motor Skills and Strength

The interaction with patients and the demands of the health care and educational environments while in training and practice require strength, coordination, and endurance of sufficient nature. The PA student should have sufficient fine and gross motor coordination to function within the patient care and educational environments that may include clutter, equipment, tables, family members, stairs, textbooks, supplies, and distractions. This includes the ability to ambulate, stand for long periods, concentrate, balance, interact, assist in movement, use medical instruments, use electronic devices, position patients, and lift heavy objects. In general, the student should be able to safely lift 50+ pounds without any assistance or injury. The student is





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required to be able to perform gross and fine motor movements needed to perform a complete physical examination (including male and female genital examination on patients). Interaction within the environment may include classrooms, treatment rooms, laboratory space, patient rooms, waiting rooms, operating rooms, public spaces, stairwells, outdoor movement, and any other space generally necessary to interact with and treat patients or interact in the educational environment. This interaction may require standing or sitting for very long periods of time without disruption or change in position. This interaction may require altering lighting including bright or fluorescent lights or low light conditions. The student is expected to be able to maintain consciousness, equilibrium, and stamina to perform satisfactorily in didactic and clinical experiences. The student must be able to travel to all required MTSU PA Program educational settings.

In addition to the abilities and skills set forth above, the student must possess the general physical health necessary for performing the duties of a Physician Assistant student without endangering the lives of patients and/or colleagues with whom the student might have contact. Students whose performance is impaired by abuse of alcohol or other substances are not suitable for admission, continuation, promotion, or graduation.

## Curriculum & Course Descriptions

An overview of the curriculum is available here: [Physician Assistant Studies, M.S. | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/physician-assistant-studies/)

## Program Competencies

### Medical Knowledge

1. Apply established, fundamental scientific principles to patient care.
2. Apply clinical sciences to diagnostic and therapeutic decision making.
3. Apply an epidemiological approach to population health through understanding of risk factors, disease prevention, and health promotion for various patients and populations.
4. Analyze the impact of social-behavioral sciences on the delivery of healthcare to diverse patient populations.

5. Use medical knowledge to distinguish normal/abnormal growth and development to guide investigatory approaches to patient evaluation.
6. Gather and critically appraise evolving bio-medical knowledge to promote evidence-based clinical practice to contribute to the fund of new knowledge and literature.

## Interpersonal Skills

1. Create and sustain a meaningful and therapeutic relationship with patients and families through effective communication and exchange of information.
2. Adapt communication style and messages to the cultural and socioeconomic context of the interaction.
3. Apply emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance.
4. Demonstrate compassion, sensitivity, and honesty within the context of difficult medical conversations.
5. Communicate effectively, work collaboratively, and facilitate conflict resolution with physicians and other health care professionals as both a leader and member of a health care team to promote a climate of mutual respect and trust.

## Clinical & Technical Skills

1. Elicit a history and perform an appropriate physical exam for ages across the lifespan, regardless of presentation or setting.
2. Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures considered essential for entry into clinical practice as a PA.
3. Compose basic counseling and patient-centered education which is culturally focused.
4. Demonstrate the use of clinical equipment for the diagnosis and management of disease.
5. Accurately and adequately provide comprehensive documentation regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes in a timely manner.
6. Provide concise oral case presentations appropriate for the audience and context of the presentation.

## Clinical Reasoning & Problem Solving

1. Demonstrate investigative and analytic thinking approaches to clinical situations.



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2. Compare and contrast normal and abnormal health states.
3. Discern between acute, chronic, and emergent disease states.
4. Apply advanced critical thinking skills to evaluate sources of information including discerning between important and extraneous information.
5. Synthesize and prioritize therapeutic actions and clinical care decisions based on medical knowledge, available information, and urgency of presentation.

## Professional Behaviors

1. Demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that balances quality and cost, while maintaining the primacy of the individual by providing comprehensive and personalized healthcare in a system-based practice.
2. Demonstrate professionalism through strict adherence to the standards of the PA profession and devotion to the medical, ethical, legal, and fiscal foundations of healthcare by
  - a. Maintaining professional relationships with patients, patient's family, and all members of the healthcare team.
  - b. Understanding the role of the physician assistant in the delivery of healthcare includes demonstrating self-awareness in the recognition of personal/professional limitations and humility in the ability to seek help.
  - c. Maintaining a commitment to patient safety through prevention of medical errors, quality improvement, and risk management.
3. Promote cross-cultural and socioeconomic sensitivity, confront prejudice, and support the development of effective medical practice in a diverse society.
4. Engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience for the purposes of self- and practice-based learning and improvement.
5. Exhibit attributes of engaged citizenship and community service through active involvement in community and population health.

## University Information/Policies

### Graduate Student Resources

Graduate Students at MTSU have many resources available to them. If you need to know how to get your books, where to find the next bus, or you are hitting the career path and need a nice suit, check out the **Campus Services** below. If you want to be involved but don't know what's available, look through the **Graduate Involvement** listing. MTSU is full of life, and there are tons of things to explore and participate in where you may discover something you love.

Website Link: <https://mtsu.edu/graduate/StudentResources.php>

### Substance Use

1. The University complies with the provisions of the [Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989](#), and the [Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1989](#).
2. Alcohol
  - a. The use, distribution, and/or possession of alcoholic beverages on university owned, leased, or otherwise controlled property is governed by Policy 755 Alcoholic Beverages and Policy 540 Student Conduct. The enforcement of alcohol laws on campus is the primary responsibility of University Police.
  - b. Pursuant to T.C.A. §§ 1-3-113 and § 57-4-203, it is unlawful for any person under the age of twenty-one (21) to buy, possess, transport (unless in the course of employment), or consume alcoholic beverages, wine, or beer. Such an offense is classified as a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than eleven (11) months, twenty-nine (29) days, or a fine of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00), or both. The receipt, possession, or transportation of alcoholic beverages without the required revenue stamp is also a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment of not more than thirty (30) days or a fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00), or both. Such laws are strictly enforced by University Police.
  - c. MTSU will impose sanctions against individuals determined to have violated policy concerning the use, possession, or distribution of alcohol. Students are subject to Policy 540 Student Conduct; employees are subject to Policy 800 General Personnel. Sanctions for students using or possessing alcohol include disciplinary probation and, in appropriate cases, suspension or expulsion from the University. Employees, including



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students, are prohibited from reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or consuming alcohol during work hours. Sanctions against employees for use or possession of alcohol in the workplace include termination of employment for gross misconduct. Referral for criminal prosecution may be made in appropriate cases.

## 3. Drugs

- a. MTSU prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia and the illegal use of drugs on campus property or on institutionally owned, leased, or otherwise controlled property. The lawful use of prescribed drugs taken under a doctor's care is not prohibited.
- b. Various federal and state statutes make it unlawful to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or sell, or possess with intent to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or sell controlled substances. Such laws are strictly enforced by University Police.
- c. MTSU will impose sanctions against individuals determined to have violated policy prohibiting the use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs pursuant to Policy 540 Student Conduct. Sanctions for students involved in the using, possessing, selling, or distributing illegal drugs include probation and, in appropriate cases, suspension or expulsion. In addition, residential students will be removed from the housing system for the use or possession of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia. Referral for criminal prosecution may be made in appropriate cases.
- d. All employees, including students, agree as a condition of employment to abide by the prohibition concerning illegal drugs in the workplace. Sanctions against employees for use or possession of drugs in the workplace include termination of employment. Additionally, employees are required to notify the University of any drug convictions resulting from a violation in the workplace no later than five (5) days after the conviction.

4. Drug and Alcohol Abuse Education Programs. MTSU recognizes that the use of alcohol and drugs can have a negative impact on students and the learning process. In order to inform students of these hazards, MTSU Student Health Services provides educational outreach programs that are available on the MTSU Student Health Services website.

## Campus Safety

MTSU's University Police department provides [safety and security](#) for all campus employees, visitors, and community constituents. The University Police Department additionally provides community-oriented policing services, as well as services to support victims of crimes. One



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such support service is the University Police's Self-Defense training known as "Rape Aggression Defense Systems" or R.A.D. training. Additional information regarding the support services of MTSU's University Police, including information on R.A.D. training can be found at [University Police | Middle Tennessee State University | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

MTSU also complies with the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act") and the Higher Education Opportunity Act ("HEOA"). Copies of MTSU's Annual Security Reports, in compliance with the Clery Act and HEOA, can be found on the University Police Department's website under '[Crime Statistics](#).' The University's annual Fire Safety Report, as well as a Tennessee Bureau of Investigations Crime Report, also can be found on the University Police's website: [University Police | Middle Tennessee State University | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

MTSU Policies 700-799 cover a range of Campus Health, Safety, and security and can be accessed at [700-799 Campus Health, Safety and Security | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## **Student Harassment and Mistreatment Policy** **University Harassment Policies**

This policy provides for the orderly resolution of complaints of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age (as applicable), status as a protected veteran, genetic information, and/or any other legally protected class. Such discrimination and harassment are strictly prohibited by Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University). Information regarding this policy can be found at [26 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

Sexual misconduct and harassment are forms of sexual discrimination prohibited by state and federal law and MTSU. MTSU is committed to eliminating all acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment. An environment free from such acts is necessary to a healthy learning, working, and living atmosphere because such misconduct, discrimination, and harassment undermine human dignity and the positive connection among all people at this University. Information regarding this policy can be found at [27 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).



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## PA Studies Program Mistreatment Policy

The MTSU PA program has a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment, violence, hazing, or mistreatment, both on-campus and off-campus (i.e., supervised clinical practice experiences). If the student or preceptor perceives harassment, mistreatment, threat, or discrimination, the student/ preceptor should immediately notify the Director of Clinical Education and/or the clinical coordinating team. These detrimental behaviors are not conducive to learning and potentially harmful to students, patients, and other healthcare team members. Students should not avoid or delay reporting allegations of harassment and mistreatment due to concerns of changing sites, delaying graduation, or fear of retribution. Student safety is of utmost importance.

## Library

PA students have equal access to the James E. Walker Library and its services. The university library includes records for all MTSU libraries, including books, periodicals, journals, and online resources. Visit the library site and you can also find information on library hours, policies and services, special collections, featured lists and other department information on the main and upper levels of the library. Website: [Walker Library: Home - Home - Walker Library at Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/walker-library/)

## Parking

Student parking passes are available from MTSU Parking Services at no additional charge. PA students may only park in student parking designated areas. Students parking in faculty, staff, or guest areas are subject to ticketing by University Security officers. The parking in front of Cason-Kennedy Nursing Building, as well as the parking lot beside it, are reserved for MTSU faculty and staff use. A full list of Parking Regulations can be found on the Parking Services website: [MTSU Parking Services | Middle Tennessee State University](https://www.mtsu.edu/parking-services/)

## Campus Recreation

Students are encouraged to engage in physical activities to maintain their health and well-being. Students have access to the campus recreation facilities outlined on their webpage: [Campus Recreation | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/campus-recreation/)

## Health Center

Students have equal access to MTSU Student Health Services which is located at the Campus Rec Center. Health Services offer services including health screening, appropriate care for minor illness and referrals are provided to meet the immediate health needs of this population.

Website: [MTSU Student Health Services | Middle Tennessee State University](#)

## Counseling Services

The MTSU Counseling Center offers a variety of counseling services including group therapy, short-term counseling, crisis services, referral services, stress management, and psychiatric services. These services are provided by licensed professional counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Access to the full range of counseling services is available to currently enrolled students.

The Counseling Center adheres to extremely strict confidentiality standards. Any information provided is strictly confidential (exceptions required of all counseling professions include life-threatening situations and cases of suspected child or elderly abuse). The principal faculty, the PA program directors, and the Medical Director will not work in the Counseling Center and will not be able to access student records. Counseling records are not part of the student's educational record. For more information regarding the Counseling Center, please visit their website: [Counseling Services | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## Dining & Meal Plans

The University offers a variety of food choices and dining plans to accommodate students' lifestyles and schedules. Website: [Food | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## Tuition & Fees

Tuition and fees may change during the course of a student's enrollment. Please reference the [MTSU Graduate School Student Catalog](#) or the [PA Studies program website](#) (under information section) for the current tuition and fees. The admissions deposit is not refundable if the student does not matriculate.



MTSU Website: [What Does it Cost? | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office is available to assist students with financial matters while at MTSU. Financial Aid includes scholarships, grants, loans, and any aid used to pay for your education expenses at MTSU. MTSU OneStop can assist with the process. Graduate Financial Aid information and links can be found: [Graduate Financial Aid | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

Additional resources for paying for Graduate School can be found at: [Funding for Graduate Students | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## Registration & Verification

Each PA class is a cohort and will follow the same course of study throughout the program. Students will register for the predetermined course of study for the first semester of classes, a program staff member will then register the PA students for classes in the subsequent semesters. Once accepted to [MTSU College of Graduate Studies](#) the student will be able to enroll in courses via the MTSU student PipelineMT Account.

## Personal Information

The school must be notified regarding all changes in personal information, such as name change, change of legal address, change of mailing address and any other pertinent contact information. This can be accomplished using the following web-form: [Change of Address Form | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## Transcripts

Official Transcripts of the student's record can be requested at: [Transcripts | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#) using TranscriptsPlus. You may still order **official paper transcripts** directly from MTSU at no charge by completing the MTSU Transcript Request form at [tranreq.pdf \(mtsu.edu\)](#). There is **no** order confirmation, processing confirmation, tracking, or



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delivery confirmation available if you choose to order directly from MTSU. Additionally, Unofficial transcripts can be accessed on-line using PipelineMT.

## **FERPA & Student/Faculty Records Policy Privacy of Information**

This policy establishes principles to guide the evolution of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) community standards of information privacy. This is a first step to clarify the level and protection of information privacy that may be expected by the campus community for whom MTSU collects information. This policy can be found at [121 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## **Education Records at MTSU**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. Students must be afforded notice of their rights under FERPA and the types of personally identifiable information considered as directory information. The University policy can be accessed at [121 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## **Access to Education Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. This policy outlines those rights, provides definitions of related terms, and describes the circumstances under which Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) may release personally identifiable information (PII). This policy can be found at [318 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## **Information Security**

This policy ensures the confidentiality, integrity, availability, and regulatory compliance of Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU or University) information assets. This policy can be found at [920 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## Access Control

This policy establishes a minimum expectation, with respect to access controls, in order to protect data stored on computer systems at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University). This policy can be found at [960 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## Personnel Records

This policy establishes the criteria and process regarding personnel records at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University). This policy can be found at [811 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## PA Studies Program Specific Student Records Policy

The MTSU PA Studies Program will utilize a strict minimal access plan regarding student and faculty records. Student and faculty records and personal information will be kept in a secured electronic file which will only be accessible by certain MTSU employees on a need to know and minimal access basis. PA Studies Program staff, faculty, and directors will only have access to the areas of the student and faculty record that facilitate the core function of their university job duties. The Program Director will need access to all students' entire academic records to deem students eligible for graduation.

## Required University Employee Training

In addition, and to reiterate the University's compliance with, and adherence to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), employees are required to review annual FERPA training information. The FERPA training information particularly applies to all employee users of the University's existing, and new, internal platforms and software. Employees must also certify that they have read, and understand, the FERPA training information, which is provided internally. More information regarding this training is located at [FERPA Information | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#).

## Information Technology Division (ITD)

PA students have equal access to MTSU ITD support. ITD staff can reset network passwords, help with common network, email, or other software issues. Website: [ITD | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## Veterans Services

PA students who are military veterans have equal access to the MTSU Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center (Daniels Center).

Website: [MTSU Military & Veterans Center | Middle Tennessee State University](#)

## Academic Success Center

PA students have equal access to the Student Success Center. The center provides students and faculty with guidance on the university's academic support resources. The Student Success Center is an online student resource.

Website: [Student Success | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## ADA and Accommodations Policy

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to providing all offerings in the most accessible way possible by maintaining compliance with standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended.

To help provide the best possible service to students, staff, faculty and visitors with disabilities, MTSU has a Director of ADA Compliance. The Director of ADA Compliance assists anyone with questions about access; provides consultation on policy reviews and facilities planning; serves as a clearing house for disability access related complaints; and develops disability access related initiatives. Please do not hesitate to contact the Director with questions or concerns.

The Director works closely with departments like Campus Planning, Facilities Management, and Parking Services to actively work toward physical space compliance and address individual needs as they are brought to the university's attention.

As MTSU continues to increase its varied usage of technology, the accessibility of electronic information is an important focus. The Director leads initiatives in this area including the



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implementation of a plan created by several departments, including but not limited to the James E. Walker Library, Faculty Instruction and Technology Center, the Center for Educational Media, the Disability & Access Center, and Procurement Services. The goal of this plan is that accessibility in our electronic offerings will not only improve but also become a commonly recognized need.

Website: [Americans with Disabilities Act | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## Institutional Review Board

Student researchers must comply with all requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Detailed information is available on the MTSU IRB website: [Institutional Review Board | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

## MS in PA Studies Policies

### Admission Requirements

PA Studies Program specific admission requirements may be found here: [Physician Assistant Studies, M.S. | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

Graduate Admission requirements may be found here: [Admission to Graduate School | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

### Background Checks

Students must pass a background check, using the program's approved vendor, prior to matriculation into the program and another background check prior to beginning the clinical year of the program. Additional background checks may be required as requested by clinical sites. Students are financially responsible for the background checks. Instructions for requesting background check and appropriate consent forms are provided to students. Results of the background check that indicate a criminal conviction may be shared with applicable clinical sites, so they may decide about student eligibility. Results that limit the program's ability to secure clinical experiences may prevent a student from being promoted to the clinical education phase or recommended for graduation. If any false information is given regarding drug use or criminal offenses in any documents relating to their admission or attendance, if findings of a



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grievous nature are revealed, or if a student declines to undergo a background check while enrolled in the program, this will be grounds for dismissal from the program. In the event of an aberrant finding on the required criminal background check, acceptance into and successful completion of the MTSU PA Studies Program does not imply or guarantee that the student will be able to obtain state licensure upon graduation. The program does not accept responsibility for any student being ineligible for coursework, continued enrollment in the program, or subsequent licensure as a physician assistant for any reason, including failure to pass a background check.

Students are required to self-report involvement in any incident, which may appear as part of a criminal background check within 48 hours of the incident to the Program Director. This includes any criminal offense, drug or alcohol related misdemeanor, felony or pending adjudications. Students failing to self-report may be subject to immediate dismissal.

## Student Conduct Policy

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or the University) is committed to fostering a campus environment that is devoted to learning, growth, and service. We accept and practice the core values of honesty and integrity, respect for diversity, positive engagement in the community, and commitment to non-violence. The [Office of Student Conduct](#) was created to uphold these values, educate the community about behavioral expectations, and hold members of the student community accountable to these rules and expectations.

Student members of the University community are expected to uphold and abide by standards of conduct that form the basis of our Student Conduct Rules. Each member of the University community bears responsibility for their conduct. When community members fail to exemplify and uphold these standards of conduct, student conduct procedures are used to assert and uphold these standards.

The student conduct process at MTSU exists to protect the interests of the University community and the individual student while striking a balance between these two interests. Students and student organizations that do not act in accordance with MTSU rules and expectations will be challenged and may be sanctioned accordingly. Sanctions are designed to assist students and student organizations in achieving acceptable standards of behavior while providing tools and resources for life-long learning and conflict resolution.



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The University is committed to respecting students' constitutional rights. This policy shall be interpreted in a way that does not violate students' constitutional rights including, without limitation, the rights protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Information regarding this policy can be found at [540 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://540.mtsu.edu).

## Drug Screening

Students must pass a 10-panel drug screen, using the program's approved vendor, prior to matriculation into the program and another drug screen prior to beginning the clinical education phase of the program.

There is a possibility that the student will need additional drug screens:

- As requested by certain clinical sites
- Random drug screens. If a student is selected for a random screening, the student must complete the screening within 24 hours.
- Suspicion of chemical impairment or abuse

Students are financially responsible for the pre-admission, pre-clinical phase, and any clinical site requested drug screens. Any additional drug screens required of the student by the program that have negative laboratory results will be the financial responsibility of the program.

The consequences of chemical impairment are considerable, especially in circumstances in which patient care activities are conducted. The program regards student misuse or abuse of chemical substances as misconduct subject to disciplinary action including possible dismissal from the program.

However, impairment as a condition will be considered an illness for which rehabilitative efforts will be offered. The program will work with the Tennessee Professional Assistance Program to coordinate treatment for all cases of substance abuse involving students.

## Transfer Students & Advanced Placement Policy

The MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program does not accept transfer students from other Physician Assistant programs. The MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program does not grant transfer credits or advanced placement to any matriculating student. Graduate coursework from

other institutions which may correspond to courses within the program curriculum will not be considered as substitutions for PA Program curriculum.

## Fair Practice Policy

In accordance with the ARC-PA standards, the MTSU PA Studies Program will define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available general program information to prospective and enrolled students. The Program will also define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available admission related information to prospective students.

General program information includes the program's ARC-PA accreditation status as provided to the program by the ARC-PA, the evidence of its effectiveness in meeting its goals, the most current annual NCCPA PANCE Exam Performance Summary Report Last 5 Years provided by the NCCPA through its program portal, no later than April first each year, all required curricular components including required rotation disciplines, academic credit offered by the program, estimates of all costs (tuition, fees, etc.) related to the program, and program required competencies for entry level practice, consistent with the competencies as defined by the PA profession.

Admissions related information includes admission and enrollment practices that favor specified individuals or groups (if applicable), admission requirements regarding prior education or work experience, practices for awarding or granting advanced placement, any required academic standards for enrollment, and any required technical standards for enrollment.

General program information will be posted on the MTSU PA Program website and be included in the Student Handbook. Admissions related information will be posted on the MTSU PA Program website. The MTSU PA Program website and Student Handbook will be updated frequently to keep all information current.

## Academic Misconduct Policy

An education at Middle Tennessee State University is to be valued. By violating the [True Blue Pledge](#) to be "honest in word and deed," a student cheats not only himself or herself, but also the whole university. Further, the risks associated with damaging one's academic reputation greatly outweigh the potential of a better grade.





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Suspensions or evidence of academic integrity violations must be reported to the course director. The course director will follow the University Academic Misconduct policy and report alleged incidents accordingly. The detailed process for investigations, possible sanctions, and appeals is located at [312 | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/312).

## Examinations Policy

Examinations may be given via electronic or traditional paper format (with or without bubble sheets for Scantron grading) as decided upon by the course director. If an electronic route of delivery is chosen as an assessment method by the course director, students may be required to utilize their personal computer or other suitable device for the assessment. Students bear the responsibility for assuring that their device is properly charged in advance of the assessment session and that they have a program approved screen protector in place. In addition, as a requirement of electronic test delivery, students may be required to utilize Internet browser lockdown programs or other downloaded programs for assessment integrity. No headwear (e.g., hats, hoodies, headphones) can be worn during examinations unless worn for religious purposes. Scratch paper or a whiteboard will be provided by the program and will be turned in at the end of the exam session. All personal belongings including bags, backpacks, cell phones, smart watches, etc. will be placed in the student's personal lockers outside of the classroom prior to the start of the examination so they are not easily accessible during the testing period.

Students are expected to take all examinations as scheduled by the program. The Student Progression Committee may allow rescheduling of an examination if circumstances warrant and with communication before the missed examination. Otherwise, there will be no exceptions to this policy. If a student fails to take a scheduled examination without prior communication, the student will receive a zero on that scheduled examination.

Examinations are generally timed; therefore, all examinations will begin on the scheduled date and at the scheduled time. Students who arrive at the examination room after the scheduled examination time will not be given additional time to complete the exam. Additionally, students arriving for the exam after peers have completed the exam will not be allowed to take the exam. Under extenuating circumstances and with timely notification from the student, exceptions to this policy may be considered by the course director.



## Examination Review

Examinations will not be returned to students. Students may receive a categorized strengths and opportunities report that will inform them of deficiencies if requested or if deemed necessary by the course director. Individual test items may not be challenged. Test items will be reviewed by the faculty prior to administration of the exam to ensure correctness and completeness. Following the exam, a statistical analysis of the test will be performed and reviewed by the faculty. Test items deemed invalid by the faculty will be credited to all students and the exam will be rescored. Faculty may also deem a distractor to be counted as correct after analysis.

## Summative Exam Policy

The program *must* conduct and document a *summative evaluation* of each student within the final four months of the program to verify that each student meets the program *competencies* required to enter clinical practice, including: (different categories of competencies)

## EOC Exam

The PAEA End of Curriculum (EOC) Exam will be completed after rotation six call-back days. This examination will be pass/fail. A student must have a score that qualifies them to be in the “Satisfactory Medical Knowledge” category based on the PAEA scaled scoring method. This exam is nationally standardized. The EOC will assess clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities and medical knowledge. According to PAEA, the EOC is a standardized evaluation of a student’s medical knowledge. The task areas and objectives utilized in the EOC require the students to apply their medical knowledge to guide clinical reasoning and problem-solving decisions on the exam. For example, the exam assesses how students gather patient information, develop, and implement a patient plan, provide preventative education and service, and apply scientific evidence to patient care. If a student is not successful in passing the EOC Exam, they will have the opportunity to remediate the knowledge. Each student is given feedback by content and task areas. This feedback will help guide the remediation process and allow students to gain insight into areas where they need improvement. Students will be required to reassess the EOC Exam after the remediation process. Passing an EOC Exam is a requirement for graduation.

## Competency Assessment Tasks

The students must complete a series of tasks and brief patient encounters after rotation six call-back days. These sessions will help to assess the students' clinical and technical skills,



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interpersonal skills, and professional behaviors. Each station will be set up to assess a specific program competency or competencies. Each station will be graded as entrustable (pass) or pre-entrustable (fail). Each station will have its own behavioral anchors to define the entrustment decision. These criteria will be decided on by the faculty. For example, a suturing station will have behavioral anchors based on technique, timing, and overall appearance of the final product for being deemed entrustable. A professionalism station may request the student to deliver bad news to a simulated patient in a sensitive manner. Behavioral anchors for the entrustment scale for that station will include things like eye contact, tone, sensitive language, and allowing for questions. For each station that a student is deemed to be pre-entrustable, they will be required to complete a remediation process. Students will reassess the specific station competencies to ensure that they meet programmatic expectations. They will be required to be deemed entrustable in all assessed competencies to graduate. The purpose of having these station-based assessments is to allow for focused assessment of student performance regarding the development of clinical/technical skills and other non-cognitive competency domains not otherwise assessed on the EOC exam.

## Summative OSLER

The students will be required to complete a summative OSLER (Objective Structured Long Examination Record) after rotation six call-back days. Students will be told to prepare for several types of patient encounters (e.g., preventative, acute, emergent, or chronic) in several settings (inpatient, outpatient, or emergency department) for ages ranging across the lifespan. When students arrive to complete their Summative OSLER, they will randomly select a patient visit and then begin their encounter with the simulated patient. Each patient visit option will be created by faculty and will incorporate all program competencies. For this reason, this OSLER will be longer and more detailed than previously completed program OSCEs. The purpose of the Summative OSLER is to allow for an additional comprehensive review of all domains of competence with each student. The Summative OSLER evaluation will be broken down by the following tasks: history and physical exam, diagnostic studies, diagnosis, health maintenance, clinical intervention, clinical therapeutics, and scientific concepts, which reflect with the task categories in the EOC exam. Aligning the assessment tools in this manner will allow for a more well-rounded evaluation of student performance and attainment of competence. Students will also be evaluated on oral presentations of the case to a faculty member and writing a detailed SOAP note. The Summative OSLER will be graded as entrustable (pass) or pre-entrustable (fail). In the areas where a student is deemed not to be entrustable, they will be required to complete a remediation process for that competency or competencies. A reassessment will be



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conducted until the student is successfully deemed entrustable in all program competencies. To graduate, students will be required to be deemed entrustable in all program competencies as they relate to the Summative OSLE. By incorporating each program competency into the Summative OSLE, each student will be evaluated a minimum of two times on each programmatic domain of competence. This will allow for the program to feel confident in saying each student is entrustable and prepared to graduate, take the PANCE, and work as a Physician Assistant.

## Evaluation of Students

Each student will have a Summative Testing Assessment Tool (STAT) form. Each form will allow the program to track the achievement of each tagged competency through the various evaluation tools (EOC Exam, Competency Assessment Tasks, and Summative OSLE). A space for qualitative assessment beside each competency will also be included. As the student progresses through the Summative Evaluation, faculty will verify the competencies that are deemed entrustable. When a competency is deemed pre-entrustable, notes will be taken on strengths and opportunities for improvement to guide remediation. After the Summative Evaluation, faculty will meet to discuss the STAT score and create individualized remediation plans for each student deemed pre-entrustable on any program competency, based on areas of deficit. Upon completion of the remediation plan, each student with a pre-entrustable program competency will then undergo a focused reassessment as determined by faculty in a prescribed timeframe. Students will be given a copy of the STAT score report and be required to sign that they agree with it. It will then be uploaded into the student's secured electronic program file.

## Grading Policy

Physician Assistant students will be assessed in the course by examinations and/or other graded assignments such as quizzes, homework, lab practicums, simulated/clinical evaluations, and projects/assignments. The course director is responsible for developing an examination and/or assessment strategy that is consistent with the PA Program's academic policies.

Grading Scale:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79



F: 69 and below

Examinations will be evaluated by course instructors and the course director to assess the validity of each question prior to and following the examination. Once questions have been evaluated, examination grades will be posted in the online learning management system.

Acceptance of late or missing work for a course or supervised clinical will remain in the discretion of the assigning faculty member. Late or missing work may be subject to grade reductions or outright refusal of acceptance.

## **Academic Performance and Progression Policy Student Progression Committee (SPC)**

The SPC will meet at the end of every semester to recommend students for progression. If a student has not completed the remediation process the SPC will decide if progression to the next semester will be allowed. The SPC will receive a remediation report after every block and semester to identify and follow students requiring remediation. This will help track remediation throughout the program. In addition, depending upon the frequency, nature, and extent of the deficiency, a student may be required to repeat a course, decelerate, have a later graduation date, or be dismissed from the program.

### **Remediation and Reassessment**

Remediation may be recommended at any point in the program to a student who lacks knowledge or skills in any area – academic, professional, or otherwise. Specific to the didactic phase, certain key components of a course are pivotal for evaluation and are labeled as “progression items”. These may include but are not limited to examinations, laboratory evaluations, and practicals. Progression items will be clearly delineated at the beginning of the semester by the course director and will be specified within the assessment section of the course syllabus. When a student scores below 70% or otherwise fails any of these items, remediation is mandatory. A score below 60% or a failure in a pass/fail progression item will also require a reassessment action.

Students have the option to reassess any progression item they haven’t passed. If the reassessment is successful, their score will update to the new grade, up to a maximum of 69.0%, but not below the original grade. An unsuccessful reassessment will maintain the original grade. If remediation is not completed, the grade on the item will default to 0%. Of note,



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some items cannot be reassessed due to their unique, nonrepeatable nature; for these, grades are final.

It is the responsibility of the student to inform both the course instructor and their mentor in writing about their intention to undergo remediation or reassessment for any failed progression item. This communication should occur within 2 business days (excluding holidays) of the grade being posted. Failing to do so will result in a grade of 0% for that item.

If the student has an overall course grade of less than 70%, the entire course will need to be remediated. This process may require the student to be decelerated to the appropriate semester that the course is next offered again. The remediation of the course may also be accomplished by the student completing a remediation plan based upon areas of deficiencies within the course that led to failure of the course. This option would only be implemented after the recommendation of the SPC and along with the approval from the didactic director and appropriate course director. This may occur in the subsequent semester and could delay progression through the program ultimately delaying the student's graduation date.

Unsuccessful repetition of a course will result in dismissal from the program.

Specific to the clinical phase, remediation will be required if a preceptor evaluation is graded "entrustable" on less than 70% of learning outcomes, any professionalism grade of "pre-entrustable" (from the program or preceptor evaluation), a grade less than 70% on rotation specific assignment, and if an end of rotation exam is below a calculated score of 70%. During the clinical year, the student will not be allowed more than two-course remediations. For course remediation, a student will not earn more than a final course grade of 70%.

A student must complete the remediation process and be recommended for progression by the SPC to continue in the program. If a student does not successfully complete remediation, deceleration or dismissal may be recommended.

## Required Academic Standards

- A 2.75 cumulative GPA is required for the program. If a student falls below the 2.75 minimum, they will be required to have a detailed academic probation contract from the SPC, which will include a three-semester maximum time limit for raising their GPA to 2.75. A student will not be eligible for graduation without a final GPA of 2.75 or higher.
- Students who complete an academic semester with four courses with a grade of "C" or lower, or who fail more than one course, will be dismissed from the program.



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- Regarding the didactic phase, students who fail more than half of the progression items in a single course will fail the course regardless of their final grade.

## Professionalism

Professionalism is something that is required of every Physician Assistant student and is something that will be monitored throughout the program. Lapses in professionalism can result in a meeting with the SPC and a formal remediation plan. University course and instructor evaluations are required of the program aiding in self-assessment and accreditation. Physician assistant students who do not complete an evaluation may be considered to be lapsing in professionalism.

## Probation and Progression

Academic probation is an academic standing that may be assigned by the SPC based on certain triggers or criteria. Students on academic probation must enter a written agreement with their mentor and the SPC regarding the details of their progression and requirements moving forward of what is expected to progress through the phases of the program. Failure to adhere to this written agreement will result in dismissal from the program (see “Dismissal” below).

Professionalism probation is a conduct-based standing assigned by the SPC when a student violates program professional standards or demonstrates a pattern of concern. A student placed on professionalism probation must enter a written agreement with their mentor and the SPC that specifies required behaviors, deadlines, monitoring, and consequences. Probation remains in effect until all terms are satisfied. Any failure to meet the plan’s requirements, or any subsequent professionalism violation, will result in dismissal from the program (see “Dismissal” below).

Probation as a standing remains for the duration of the semester in which the student is assigned this status. The SPC will meet at the end of the semester to review grades and performance to decide if probation will transition to surveillance or if further disciplinary action is needed. After SPC review, the student will be assigned the standing of “Surveillance”. Students on surveillance who trigger probation again will be dismissed.

Triggers and criteria for the assignment of probation across the entire program are:

- Assignment of this standing by the SPC
- A letter grade of “C” obtained in 2 or more courses in a single semester.





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- Failure of two or more progression items in a single course. Please refer to the remediation/reassessment section above for more details regarding progression items.
- Reaching a total of five failed progression items in a single semester. Please refer to the remediation/reassessment section above for more details regarding progression items.
- Behaviors or attitudes deemed unprofessional by the SPC or university.

Requirements for progression in the program are as follows:

## DIDACTIC PHASE

- Follow all policies and procedures published by the MTSU PA Studies Program
- Achieve a grade of 70% or above in all didactic courses.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or above.
- Successfully complete all required didactic year projects.
- Successfully fulfill all required health requirements for the clinical year.
- Successfully achieved ACLS, BLS, PALS certification that is valid through graduation of the program.
- Comply with professional expectations published within the MTSU PA Studies Program.
- Receive recommendation from the SPC.

## CLINICAL PHASE

- Follow all policies and procedures published by the MTSU PA Studies Program.
- Receive a recommendation from the SPC for progression.
- Achieve a calculated grade of 70% or above on end of rotation examinations.
- Achieve a grade of entrustable for more than 70% of learning outcomes on the preceptor evaluations.
- Deemed entrustable on all professionalism benchmarks from the program and preceptor.
- Receive a grade of 70% or better on rotation specific assignments.
- Comply with professionalism expectations published within the MTSU PA Studies Program Student Handbook.



- Achieve a grade of 70% or above in all clinical courses.

## Completion

Requirements for completion of the program and graduation from the University are as follows:

- Successfully complete all requirements for the Didactic phase of the education.
- Successfully complete all requirements for the Clinical phase of the education.
- Comply with all professional expectations throughout the program as published within the MTSU PA Studies Program Student Handbook.
- Receive recommendation by the SPC for graduation.
- Be in good standing with the MTSU Registrar and Office of Business & Finance concerning all tuition, fees, fines, or requirements.
- Pass all components of the program Summative Evaluation and be deemed entrustable in all program competencies.
- Complete the entire PA program within 48 months of matriculation.
- Complete all College of Graduate Studies requirements including all applicable forms
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or above.

## Deceleration

Deceleration may be recommended at any time to a student who does not meet the requirements for progression in the program. A student may also decelerate because of an approved leave of absence granted by the Program Director. Refer to the Leave of Absence Policy for more information on this. The SPC will be responsible for making deceleration decisions.

## Withdrawal and Refund Policy

The MTSU Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program follows all University guidelines for student withdrawal, including transcript/grade reporting and refunds of tuition and fees. PA students must attend the PA program on a full-time basis; therefore, individual courses in the PA curriculum are not eligible for withdrawal or drop.

- **Refunds of Tuition and Fees**



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- The official MTSU refund policies, procedures, and refund schedules are published at:  
<https://www.mtsu.edu/tuition/refunds/>
- Additional information on the withdrawal process is available at:  
<https://mtsu.edu/withdraw/>
- **Withdrawal from the Program**
  - An enrolled PA student requesting withdrawal from the program must notify the Program Director in writing using the PA Student Withdrawal Form.
  - The admissions deposit is **non-refundable** if the student does not matriculate into the program.

For questions about specific deadlines, eligibility, and impacts on financial aid, students should consult the MTSU Office of Financial Aid or MT One Stop.

Any student who withdraws from the program after 60% of the program's completion and has met the criteria for dismissal eligibility will receive a grade of "F" for any incomplete courses.

## Dismissal

Grounds for dismissal in the program include but are not limited to:

- Any actions or grades that meet criteria for two separate probation triggers in a single semester
- Any actions or grades that meet criteria for a probation trigger in a semester the student has been assigned the status of "Surveillance"
- Failure to meet conditions established in an agreement as defined by the SPC
- Two or greater course failures
- Obtaining a final grade of C in three or more courses in a single semester
- Behaviors or activities deemed to be egregious by the SPC, including but not limited to illegal activity and academic integrity issues
- Failure to report any incident that may appear as a part of a criminal background check within 48 hours
- Noncompliance with university requirements

If a student has met the criteria for dismissal, they will receive a grade of “F” for any incomplete courses.

## Student Grievances and Appeals

If a student wishes to appeal their dismissal, they may appeal in writing to the SPC within two weekdays of the dismissal notification. The SPC will schedule a meeting with the student where they may present their appeal in person. Students should contact the SPC regarding their return to class in this interval.

If a student wishes to dispute the decisions of the SPC, they may appeal in writing to the Program Director within three days of the SPC decision. If the student wishes to appeal against the decision of the Program Director, they may follow the University guidelines listed for the corresponding category.

Middle Tennessee State University wants to ensure all students have a positive educational experience, are treated fairly and courteously by the University’s personnel, and are provided an outlet to address conditions and circumstances that concern them. Procedures for student complaints and grievances may be found at [www.mtsu.edu/information/student-complaints.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/information/student-complaints.php).

An “appeal” is a request by a student for a determination by a Grade Appeals Committee of an assigned grade where inequities or unethical or unprofessional actions are alleged. Please refer to the link found at 313 | Middle Tennessee State University (mtsu.edu) to review guidelines on grade appeals.

Graduate students have the right to appeal for cause any decision affecting their academic standing as graduate students. Cause excludes grade appeals, which are under the purview of the MTSU Grade Appeal Committee. The Graduate Council and the College of Graduate Studies have approved in principle the document Appeal Advisory Committee of the Graduate Council. This document may be viewed on the website at [www.mtsu.edu/graduate/pdf/StudentAppealsGradCouncil.pdf](http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/pdf/StudentAppealsGradCouncil.pdf).

This policy sets the conditions and procedures for appeals to and appearances before the Board of Trustees (Board). <https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/governance-and-compliance/060.php>

## Immunizations & Screening Policies

In accordance with the ARC-PA standards, the MTSU PA Studies Program requires Physician Assistant students to adhere to the PA Studies Program immunization and screening policies that are based on the current Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for healthcare workers:

- [Recommended Vaccines for Healthcare Workers](#)
- [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Screening and Testing of Health Care Personnel](#)

### Immunizations

All students are recommended to maintain immunizations as stated in the chart following. Proof of immunization, serologic evidence of immunity, or initiation of vaccination series will be recommended prior to matriculation. All vaccination series, as recommended by the CDC, should be completed and updated with boosters as necessary prior to entry into supervised clinical practice experiences. Also, MTSU has University requirements which are required prior to matriculation.

Immunization/Vaccination	CDC Recommended-Healthcare Workers
<b>MMR *</b> Measles, Mumps, Rubella	1. Two dose vaccination given at least 28 days apart <b>OR</b> 2. Serologic evidence of immunity to <b>ALL</b> the individual components of the vaccine.
<b>Tdap</b> Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis	One time dose of Tdap <b>AND</b> Td Booster every 10 Years thereafter.
<b>Varicella *</b>	1. Two dose vaccination given at least 28 days apart <b>OR</b> 2. Serologic evidence of immunity
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	1. 2-dose ( <i>Heplisav-B</i> ) or 3-dose ( <i>Engerix-B</i> or <i>Recombivax-HB</i> ) Hep B vaccine regimen on a routine schedule <b>AND</b> 2. Anti-HBs a minimum of 1-2 months after series completion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If anti-HBs is negative, the student is recommended to receive additional 2-dose (<i>Heplisav-B</i>) or 3-dose (<i>Engerix-B</i> or <i>Recombivax-HB</i>) Hep B vaccine regimen on a routine schedule, followed by repeat anti-HBs testing.</li> <li>• If anti-HBs is negative after two complete series, student is considered a “non-responder” and should be tested for</li> </ul>

	HepB surface antigen (HBsAg) and counseled by primary care provider.
<b>Annual Influenza</b>	One dose of influenza vaccination by October 31 annually (not needed for May matriculation).
<b>COVID-19</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. J&amp;J (Janssen)-- single dose</li> <li>2. Moderna—Two doses: 2<sup>nd</sup> dose given four weeks (28 days) after 1<sup>st</sup> dose</li> <li>3. Pfizer-- Two doses: 2<sup>nd</sup> dose given three weeks (21 days) after 1<sup>st</sup> dose</li> </ol> <p>A booster will be recommended as guided by the CDC.</p> <p><a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html</a></p>
<b>Meningococcal**</b>	As per CDC guidelines

\*University specific requirements

\*\*University specific requirement (if meet criteria). Recommended for all healthcare workers per CDC.

## TB Screening & Testing

All students will be required to undergo comprehensive TB screening both at matriculation and prior to entry into supervised clinical practice experience as stated in the chart following. TB screening requirements will include risk assessments, symptoms evaluation, and TB testing as follows:

Screening Tool	MTSU Requirement
<b>TB Risk Assessment<sup>1</sup></b>	Submission of the completed TB Screening and Evaluation Form, signed by your medical provider.
<b>TB symptoms Evaluation<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>TB Testing<sup>1,3</sup></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Two-step Testing: Two separate Mantoux PPD skin test done 1-3 weeks apart <b>OR</b></li> <li>2. Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) TB blood test<sup>2</sup></li> </ol>



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<sup>1</sup> The TB screening and evaluation from and all related testing should be completed prior to, yet within one month, of matriculation.

<sup>2</sup> People born outside of the United States may have been vaccinated with Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine for TB. While people vaccinated with BCG may have a TB skin test, it may cause a false positive reaction. As such, any individuals with history of BCG vaccination should be screened with IGRA.

<sup>3</sup> If TB testing is positive, chest x-Ray and medical evaluation are required to determine latent vs. active TB infection. (*Chest x-ray is considered protected health information and will not be viewable to MTSU PA Faculty/Staff per ARC-PA Standard A3.19.*)

## Acceptable Documentation

Acceptable documentation for immunization requirements and TB screening/testing:

Recommendation	Acceptable Documentation
<b>Vaccination records</b>	Documentation from your health care providers office or community health department that clearly shows your name, name of vaccination and date(s) of administration.
<b>Serologic evidence of immunity</b>	Quantitative titer lab report that clearly shows your name, name of test and results.
<b>Tuberculosis Screening</b>	<p>1. TB SCREENING &amp; EVALUATION FORM</p> <p><b><u>AND</u></b></p> <p>2. TB Testing:</p> <p>a. <u>If TST</u> – Documentation from health care providers office that clearly shows your name, name of test, date of placement, date read (48-72 hours from placement) and test result (positive results should be reported in mm)</p> <p><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>b. <u>If IGRA</u> – Lab report that clearly shows your name, name of test, date of test and test result.</p>
<b>Influenza Vaccination</b>	Documentation from the providing clinic that clearly shows your name, name of vaccination for current year, date of administration and lot number.
<b>Other Accepted Documentation</b>	We will also accept a signed and attested letter from your clinician, on the original clinic letterhead verifying numbers and dates of vaccinations.

## Ancillary Immunizations

There are additional vaccinations that may be considered and recommended by the treating medical provider, if indicated, based on the presence of certain risk factors. Decisions to pursue these vaccinations remain the sole discretion of the student and their medical professional. As such, elective immunizations are not considered a program requirement.

## Immunizations & Pregnancy

Additional routine vaccinations given during pregnancy are not a program requirement. Additional vaccinations may be indicated and recommended by the student's obstetrician based on the presence of certain risk factors. Decisions to pursue these vaccinations remain the sole discretion of the student and their medical professional. For more information regarding immunizations and pregnancy, please refer to the CDC website: [Pregnancy and Vaccination](#)

## Exemptions

Exemptions from recommended vaccines may be allowed if there is a known medical or religious exemption. In such cases, students will be required to provide a signed waiver to the third-party vendor for immunization records. Further, the program requires a signed

**Immunization Policy Recognition** form which substantiates the refusal for recommended vaccinations.

- *Exemption Disclaimer:* The PA Studies Program at MTSU cannot guarantee clinical placement for supervised clinical practice experiences due to site specific requirements held by affiliating healthcare institutions. All required rotations must be completed to be eligible for graduation.

## Cost

All costs associated with background checks, urine drug screens, immunization, boosters, and laboratory testing remain the sole responsibility of the student.



## CDC Recommendations

Per ARC-PA Standard A3.07a, the MTSU PA Studies Program has a policy on immunizations and health screening that is based on the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for health professionals and any applicable state specific mandates. The immunization and health screening policies will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the current CDC recommendation.

## MTSU General Immunization Requirements

The immunization policies for the PA Studies Program meet or exceed the minimum requirements set forth by the university. Program specific immunization policy serves to reflect additional standards for healthcare workers as defined by the CDC. As such, physician assistant students must comply with the PA Studies Program recommendations as outlined herein in addition to the requirements set forth by the university.

For additional information regarding the general immunization requirements for MTSU, please visit the following webpage: [MTSU Immunization Requirements](#)

## Didactic Year Attendance

**BE THERE!** On-time attendance is part of demonstrating professional behavior and is mandatory for all classes, lectures, labs, and other designated program activities. Absences require timely notification to the program office and course director. Students must notify the program **by email** regarding the absence, early departure, or tardiness within **24 hours** of the event. Verbal explanations alone will not be acceptable. Course instructors are responsible for monitoring student attendance. All absences, early departures, and instances of tardiness are considered *unexcused* unless (1) acceptable written documentation is provided or (2) prior written permission is granted by the Student Progression Committee (SPC) or its designee. All tardiness, early departures, and absences also require completing the student absentee form and submission of the form to the PA Program office **within 72 business hours**. This form is housed in the PA front office in a designated folder. Please return the completed forms back to this folder once all appropriate signatures have been obtained. If a student misses two consecutive days, a healthcare provider note or other verifiable documentation, such as a court summons or other official record, is required on professionalism grounds; failure to provide this documentation will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused.





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Make-up of assignments and tests is the student's responsibility. The program cannot guarantee that all work missed due to an excused absence can be completed. Some activities due to their complex, time intensive, and/or cost intensive nature will not be able to be completed. Assignments and tests missed due to unexcused absences may not be made up.

If a student is absent (including tardiness and early departures) more than two times in any course during a single semester or if they fail to properly notify the program, they will be required to meet with the Student Progression Committee (SPC) for further discussion. Disciplinary action by the SPC may include, though not be limited to, reduction in course grades, course failure, or dismissal from the program.

## Transportation

Throughout the entire curriculum, certain educational activities may require travel off campus. Transportation to hospitals, clinics, and other community settings is the student's responsibility. Clinical year students are responsible for transportation to all clinical rotation sites and to the campus on end of rotation days.

## Didactic Dress Code

Professional standards for dress code include appropriate dress and proper attention to personal hygiene. Specific activities and settings require attire and appearance that are fitting for the activity. PA students, faculty, and staff must be aware of and adhere to these expectations and requirements.

All members of the MTSU PA Studies Program are expected to maintain standards of modesty and decency in dress consistent with professional employment expectations. For these reasons, PA students are expected to adhere to the broad guidelines listed in this section. Violations of these guidelines for PA students will be considered as a lapse of professionalism and may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC).

Occasions will arise during the didactic phase that will require the students to dress appropriately for a clinical or other formal type setting. Specific instructions for dress in these experiences will be given and students will be notified of these occasions ahead of time. Students must adhere to these stricter standards for these experiences. In addition, the

Program Director, in consultation with the faculty, staff, and PA students, may designate special “dress-up” or “dress-down” days for a specific event(s) or theme.

## Professional Standards

- Clothing must be neat, clean, free of wrinkles, and free of the tattered and worn look.
- Clothing must be modest in style and length to demonstrate professionalism.
- Clothing that is unusual or displays materials inconsistent with the mission and values of the PA Program are prohibited.
- For men, beards are to be neatly trimmed.
- MTSU PA Program scrubs are allowed in classroom settings on certain lab days. Scrubs are required for certain laboratory settings.
- Attention to hygiene must be given as to not disturb other students, faculty, clinical staff, or patients.
- Cologne and perfume should not be worn as to not disturb others or provoke allergic reactions.

## Prohibited Dress

- Midriff or off-the-shoulder blouses, sweaters, or dresses.
- Tight, sheer, or revealing clothing and garments designed as underwear or sleepwear should not be worn as outerwear.
- T-shirts with advertisements, sayings, or logos, except for PA Program approved University apparel.
- Spaghetti strap or strapless shirts or dresses.
- Denim jeans.
- Shorts or sports attire.
- Caps, hats, bandanas, and any other head coverings are not permitted in classes or labs, unless worn for medical conditions, safety purposes, or established religious or cultural customs.



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- Unusual hair styles or colors, large visible tattooing, or body/facial piercing may not reflect a professional image; therefore, any hairstyle, tattoo or piercing that draws unusual attention to the student, faculty, or staff member should be avoided.

## Social Media Policy

Use social media and networking sites legally and appropriately. Consider your personal obligation as a citizen of MTSU. Use proper conduct in your posts regarding the University, University faculty and staff, and fellow students. Potential employers, admissions committees, and scholarship committees often search social networking sites to screen candidates. Your profile is part of how others perceive you. Classroom and clinical site training commitments should be respected. Students should not engage in social networking during in-class and on-site clinical time. Do not post or message any confidential or sensitive information online. Examples of sensitive information include, but are not limited, to the following: photos of patients; partial photos of patients, such as a specific body area (even if the patient's face is not visible); photos of patient data, such as lab results or imaging; generic or specific descriptions of a patient's status, diagnosis, or any other information.

Disclosure of any protected personal health information, on social media or otherwise, is a direct violation of Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and may be subject to federal investigation and/or prosecution.

Pictures and information posted on the Internet via social media outlets are public information. Pictures or information that appear to document or describe behavior that violates University, College, or PA Program policy will be subject to further investigation. If the investigation documents any policy violations, these will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

PA students may not be friends or connections on any social media or networking sites with PA faculty members, staff, or clinical preceptors except for program approved professional networking sites such as LinkedIn or AAPA Huddle.

## Identification of Physician Assistant Students Policy White Coats

All physician assistant students must wear the approved Middle Tennessee State University Physician Assistant Studies long-sleeved white lab coat in the clinical setting unless prohibited by a certain facility or setting (operating room, etc.). The lab coat must have the official Program-



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issued MTSU Physician Assistant Program patch affixed to the left sleeve as well as the student's full name and the credentials PA-S embroidered on the coat. Coats must be buttoned, clean, pressed, and maintained at all times.

## Picture ID badges

All physician assistant students must always carry their MTSU picture ID while in the program. While in the clinical setting, physician assistant students must be easily identifiable to distinguish them from physicians, medical students, other health profession students, and graduates. The student's picture ID must be attached to their white coat or on their clothes and must always be clearly visible. Additionally, students may be required to use site specific identification such as picture IDs or name badges and they must comply with these requirements.

## Verbal Identification

All physician assistant students must always identify themselves as "physician assistant student" to avoid confusion. They must never identify themselves as a graduate physician assistant, physician, medical student, resident, or any other type of medical professional. While in the MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program they must not use any previously earned titles such as PhD, RN, EMT, or any other to avoid confusion. In addition, if someone mistakes a PA student for another medical professional the PA student must correct them immediately.

## Student Employment Policy

The demands of the MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program curriculum consume the entire efforts of students. Therefore, upon acceptance to the program of study, students are expected to devote their energies to the academic program. The MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program actively discourages employment during the entire length of the program. The program cannot take outside employment or activities into account when scheduling classes, examinations, reviews, field trips, clinical rotations, individual course functions, or special projects. These program related activities will not be postponed, changed, or missed due to a student's work schedule. Program experiences may include evening and weekend work and are scheduled without regard to other activities.



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MTSU PA students working in a health care setting must never identify themselves as a Physician Assistant. They must never proclaim to be an official representative from Middle Tennessee State University or the PA program while working. MTSU PA Studies Program scrubs, uniforms, white coats, patches, or name tags may never be worn outside of school-related activities. These items can never be worn or utilized during any outside employment. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary actions up to and including possible immediate dismissal from the program. No warnings will be issued prior to immediate disciplinary actions.

Additionally, in accordance with the ARC-PA standards, MTSU PA students will not be required to work for the PA Program in any capacity. PA students will not substitute for or function as instructional faculty, clinical staff, or administrative staff while enrolled in the PA Program. This is inclusive of all aspects of the program including both the didactic and clinical phases.

## Leave of Absence Policy

A leave of absence may be granted when a PA student needs to separate from the MTSU PA Studies Program for an extended period rendering the student unable to complete didactic or clinical work in a timely manner. A leave of absence may be granted on a case-by-case basis and may include medical necessity, personal issues, or family issues that cannot be resolved successfully within the academic year.

A PA student seeking a leave of absence must complete a leave of absence form and meet with the Program Director. A leave of absence will not be extended beyond one year. Depending on the length of the leave of absence, the student may be asked to repeat coursework, competencies, or orientation activities to ensure academic success. Depending on the length of the absence, a deceleration may be required. The Program Director will consult with the Student Progression Committee (SPC) and then recommend a plan of action. The student and Chair of SPC will sign the action plan. In any plan, efforts may be made to keep the PA student on pace to graduate on the original planned date; however, due to the nature of the coursework, this may not always be possible.

Students should submit a Stop Out form to the College of Graduate Studies and will need to fill out a readmission application form (without being required to submit any additional materials) before enrolling for the next term/semester. This will ensure that the College of Graduate Studies has all current student information and will trigger the process required for re-enrollment.



## Personal Issues Policy

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to meeting the needs of students, whether intellectual, social, psychological, or physical. The MTSU PA Studies Program provides timely access and/or referral of students to services addressing personal issues which may impact their progress in the PA Program. The PA students will have equal access to counseling services offered to all MTSU students.

In emergency situations that the PA Studies Program is aware of, mobile crisis will be called. In all other circumstances where students may disclose personal issues that may impact their progress in the PA Studies Program, it is suggested to the students to seek out care from one of the low/no cost options on campus or to the entity of their choosing off campus.

If a student needs to temporarily step away from the program due to a personal issue, they may request a leave of absence by following the Leave of Absence Policy and filling out the appropriate paperwork.

## Counseling Services

The MTSU Counseling Center offers a variety of counseling services including group therapy, short-term counseling, crisis services, referral services, stress management, and psychiatric services. These services are provided by licensed professional counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Access to the full range of counseling services is available to currently enrolled students.

The Counseling Center adheres to extremely strict confidentiality standards. Any information provided is strictly confidential (exceptions required of all counseling professions include life-threatening situations and cases of suspected child or elderly abuse). The principal faculty, the PA program directors, and the Medical Director will not work in the Counseling Center and will not be able to access student records. Counseling records are not part of the student's educational record. For more information regarding the Counseling Center, please visit their website at [Counseling Services | Middle Tennessee State University \(mtsu.edu\)](https://www.mtsu.edu/counseling-services).

## Electronic Devices

### Email

Monitor your MTSU email regularly. Students are responsible for all email sent via the University email system to and from their assigned student email account. Any other email accounts (personal, prior institution, etc.) are not considered primary contact points for official communication from the program. Students must communicate with PA faculty members and staff using their university assigned student email account, except during the clinical year when communication may be indicated through experiential learning management software.

## Requirements

All PA students will be required to have a laptop computer or tablet running either Windows or MacOS with wireless networking capability and software in class that meets a minimum set of specifications established by the PA Program. Additionally, PA students are required to have access to a smartphone, laptop, or tablet for in-class polling and audience response purposes. PA students will be required to routinely access D2L during class time to access course content, receive course announcements and notifications, successfully download lecture slides and handouts, and download and upload homework assignments. Digital devices will also be required to complete certain assessments, quizzes, and exams. PA students bear the responsibility for assuring that their device is properly charged in advance of electronic utilization. PA students are also responsible for complying with all logistical/procedural aspects of electronic utilization.

A removable privacy screen for your laptop or tablet is required for use during quizzes and exams. No brand is recommended - just ensure that it fits your screen properly and can be removed when not needed for assessment purposes.

## Software

Microsoft, Apple, Dell, and other companies offer special pricing for students.

## Testing Guidelines

The use of any digital or electronic device capable of information capture, storage, retrieval, or processing, including computerized eyewear (e.g., Google Glass, etc.), or other wearable



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devices (e.g., Apple Watch, etc.) is expressly prohibited during any examination or assessment (e.g., quizzes, in-class assignments) unless explicitly permitted by the course instructor (or course director). No audio device nor accessory (e.g., headphones, ear buds, etc.) can be used in the classroom unless explicitly permitted by the course instructor. No aspect of the preceding device policy supersedes guidance related to the American Disability Act (ADA).

## Courtesy

A general policy of respect for instructors and for fellow classmates should be followed regarding use of all electronic devices that may be a distraction to the individual PA student or to others in the classroom. Any electronic device which causes distraction may be temporarily confiscated at the discretion of the instructor in the classroom.

## Emergencies

Cell phones and other electronic devices registered with the MTSU system to receive text messaging and e-mail alerts may be left in the “on” position but temporarily configured into a silent or “non-distracting” mode. If there is a situation where a PA student needs to be notified during class, PA students should notify all interested parties to contact the PA program office. A staff member from the PA program will then go to the classroom and ask the PA student to step outside the classroom to communicate the message to the PA student in a confidential manner.

## Faculty Restricted As Health Providers

The principal faculty, instructional faculty, PA program directors, and Medical Director for the program will not participate as health care or mental health providers for students in the PA Program. The only exception to this policy would be in emergency situations.

## HIPAA Training

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) includes significant requirements for protecting individual privacy of health information. All students in the program must complete a HIPAA training course at the time of program admission and completion may be required again during the clinical year based on clinical site requirements.



## BLS/ACLS/PALS Training

Students are required to have Basic Life Support (BLS) certification on matriculation. Students will complete BLS recertification training as well as Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) training prior to the clinical phase.

## Infectious and Environmental Hazards Policy Methods of Prevention

- Prior to matriculation into the program, students must complete a program-approved e-learning module regarding OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens, OSHA Universal Precautions, CDC Standard Precautions, CDC Transmission-Based Precautions, and Other Potentially Infectious Material (OPIM).
- Students may be required to complete other infectious and environmental hazard trainings based on clinical site onboarding processes.
- Students will receive hands-on didactic training regarding the appropriate use and disposal of personal protective equipment required for clinical practice.

## Procedures for Care and Treatment After Exposure

- If you experienced a needlestick or sharps injury or were exposed to the blood or other body fluid of a patient during your training at Middle Tennessee State University, immediately follow these steps:
  1. Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water;
  2. Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water;
  3. Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile irrigants;
  4. Report the incident to your faculty or preceptor; and
  5. If indicated, immediately seek medical treatment with a licensed medical provider.

## Incident Reporting

Any student who has been exposed to blood and body fluids whether by splash, needle stick, or any other means must immediately report to the course instructor or preceptor and follow local institutional protocol, specifically regarding testing and prophylactic treatment. If no institutional protocol exists, then prompt medical evaluation with a licensed healthcare clinician is recommended.

The student is required to formally notify the MTSU PA Studies Program in writing within 24 hours. To notify the program, the student must complete MTSU PA Studies Program Incident Report form and submit it to the program office. The incident report form is located in the cohort Microsoft Team Folder.

Incident reports are not intended as advice or medical treatment. It serves solely to alert the program that an incident has occurred, and the student has sought medical guidance.

- For more information on exposure, please refer to the following resources: CDC website- [Bloodborne infectious Disease: Emergency Sharps Information](#)

If you have questions about appropriate medical treatment for occupational exposures, assistance is available from the Clinicians' Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Line at 1-888-448-4911 or the [PEP Quick Guide for Occupational Exposures](#).

## Financial Responsibility

- Students are personally responsible for all costs incurred due to post-exposure prophylaxis evaluation and management.

## OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Training

Each physician assistant student must receive training in OSHA regulations, including those involving bloodborne pathogens and needlestick safety. MTSU PA Studies Program provides physician assistant students with the necessary resources to complete this training and a certificate of completion is issued to each physician assistant student. Students may be required to complete OSHA training again in the clinical year based on site requirements.

## Medical Insurance

All physician assistant students must maintain current medical insurance which lists them as a covered entity. The policy must include hospitalization coverage. Proof of medical insurance must be kept in a secure file for program reference as needed.

## Professional Liability Insurance

PA students are required to maintain liability insurance. This is offered through MTSU School Blanket Professional Liability Insurance offered by CNA through the Healthcare Providers Service Organization Purchasing Group.

## Professional Organizations

Participation in a professional organization as a PA student can lay the groundwork for career opportunities and giving back to the profession. Membership in the national and state PA academies is provided while in the MTSU PA studies program.

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) <https://www.aapa.org/>

Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA) <http://www.tnpa.com/>

- Attendance at TAPA Fall Fest is mandatory for all students. Conference registration fees will be paid by the program; lodging and food will be the students' responsibility.

## Clinical Phase

### Student Solicitation of Rotations Policy

No student will be required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors for the MTSU Physician Assistant Studies Program. The PA Studies Program will coordinate clinical sites and preceptors for program required rotations. Program coordination will include identifying, contacting, and evaluating sites and preceptors by clinical faculty. All supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs) must meet all program expectations and ARC-PA Standards.

However, students have the option to suggest to clinical faculty for a particular clinical site or preceptor. These suggestions are optional and not required for any student. Student suggested SCPEs (SSS) should include the following criteria:

- Must meet all program expectations and ARC-PA Standards,



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- Should be submitted to the clinical team at a minimum of 4 months before the SCPE; extenuating circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis; and
- Be approved under the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education (while considering other SCPE availability, timing of the SSS, physical location, etc.).



## Clinical Attendance Policy

Attendance during the clinical year is mandatory and vital to the success of the PA student. A student should average 36 hours per week with a maximum of 330 hours over the entirety of the rotation (and if the rotation allows the student to meet the learning outcomes). These hours can include evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays; duty periods must not exceed 24 hours in duration. A maximum of five days may be missed during the entire clinical year.

No student should miss a clinical day without alerting the clinical team or prior approval from the clinical instructor for the rotation and/or the Director of Clinical Education. These days will include incidents such as sickness, car issues, job interviews, etc. Students are also required to notify and plan with their clinical preceptor. If a student's absences exceed this policy or if they fail to properly notify the program and/or preceptor, they will be required to meet with the Student Progression Committee (SPC) for further evaluation. If these absences are deemed unexcused or unacceptable by the SPC consequences may include but not be limited to failure of the rotation or dismissal from the program.

In the event of required quarantine, the missed rotation days will not count as part of the five-day policy. If a student is unable to complete the learning outcomes for the rotation due to quarantine, the student will be able to complete contingency guidelines available for each rotation to ensure learning outcomes are met. The student is responsible for notifying both the clinical preceptor and the clinical team regarding the need/timeframe for quarantine and the possible need for contingency make-up work.

Bereavement for a primary relative will not count as part of the five-day policy. These instances will be discussed with the student's mentor and the Director of Clinical Education. Be aware these absences may necessitate documentation of the event.

Prolonged illnesses or injuries requiring more than one day of absence during a rotation will require approval from the program and an associated provider's note. If this illness/injury is an extensive leave (over one week or unable to meet the learning outcomes of the rotation), these students will need to discuss a leave of absence with the SPC.

Tardiness and early leave will not be tolerated unless it is outside of the student's control (wreck on the interstate, flat tire, etc.) Students must first notify the program and then their preceptor if they anticipate an early departure or tardiness for any reason. If the student is repeatedly late to



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the rotation and/or leaving early on more than two occasions during the rotation, without proper documentation/approval, the student will meet with the SPC.

All planned excused absences will need to be approved by the clinical preceptor and Director of Clinical Education 72 hours before the leave. Should a preceptor grant a student permission for absence from scheduled clinical experiences, the student is responsible for notifying the clinical team in writing before the missed time. Missed time is not approved until the clinical instructor of the rotation has agreed to the absence.

Please be aware “travel days” are not permitted to interfere with scheduled rotation days.

To successfully complete the professional curriculum on time, SCPEs must be started and completed as scheduled. Any absences must be brought to the attention of the clinical team as soon as possible.

## End of Rotation Attendance Policy

On-Campus End of Rotation (EOR) days are usually held on the Thursday and Friday of the last week of the rotation. Students should expect to be on campus for 8 hours each EOR day.

Students are notified of the dates in advance and are advised to schedule life events around an assumed 8 am-5 pm schedule on these days. Attendance at all EOR events is mandatory. An unexcused absence from any part of an EOR day may result in unsatisfactory performance on a rotation. Any student with an unexcused absence from an EOR day will be referred to the SPC.

## Clinical Year Inclement Weather Guidelines

Students should use caution during inclement weather and stay current on local road conditions. Students are encouraged to use their best judgment when traveling to clinical rotation sites.

Please be aware that campus class cancellation does not excuse a student from their clinical duties. Students need to alert both the clinical coordinating team and their preceptor if they are unable to attend a clinical rotation day due to weather conditions or if they expect to be late due to inclement weather. If a student misses a day due to an excused inclement weather absence, this will not count against the policy of missed rotation days. Excused absences will be at the discretion of the preceptor and Director of Clinical Education.



## Clinical Dress Code Policy

The following dress code guidelines should be followed unless their designated clinical preceptor or site states otherwise. Students must also follow the Identification of Students Policy at all times. These dress code guidelines will also be followed when students participate in clinical scenarios throughout the program.

Students who do not follow these guidelines will be directed to the Student Progression Committee and are at risk of a pre-entrustable grade in professionalism. Please be aware that if a student is dressed inappropriately while on clinical rotations, they can be asked to leave the site immediately.

Appropriate business attire and personal hygiene standards:

- Trousers or business-type slacks
- Collared shirt or blouse
- Closed-toe and closed-heeled shoes are required in all clinical settings. (Clean tennis shoes are acceptable at some sites.) Moderate and professional heel height
- No jeans, shorts, sleeveless tops with shoulders exposed, shirts with midriffs or undergarments exposed, or t-shirts are allowed.
- Dresses and skirts must be knee-length to a minimum.
- Belts must accompany dress slacks when applicable.
- Scrubs are acceptable in certain settings when specified by the clinical preceptor.
- Hats or head coverings are not allowed (with the exception of religious purposes)
- Jewelry limitations include long earrings; please limit jewelry whenever possible in clinical settings.
- Hair must be kept neat and clean. Long hair should be worn back in specific clinical settings where it can fall into a sterile field or could be a danger if a patient is aggressive
- No perfumes and colognes
- Natural nails should be kept trimmed, not surpassing the fingertip, and clean. If nail polish is worn, it cannot be chipped, cracked, or peeling. The wearing of artificial (acrylic) nails is not permitted.
- Students are expected to show good grooming habits and personal hygiene.

- Visible facial piercings are not permitted, and visible tattoos must be covered at all times during rotations.
- Chewing gum is not allowed.

## Grading for Clinical Year

Clinical year students are evaluated in multiple ways, including multiple-choice PAEA EOR exams, preceptor evaluations, written documentation assignments, oral presentations, OSCEs, professionalism, a clinical year PACKRAT, and the summative exam. Some of these evaluation tools will be graded, while others will be utilized for self-assessment. Please note that if a student fails the same rotation twice this will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

### Grading Rubric for Core Clinical Rotation:

Activity	Grade
<b>End of Rotation Examinations</b> - PAEA EOR Rotation Specific Exams	60%
<b>Preceptor Evaluation</b> Percentage of entrustable learning outcomes/total number of learning outcomes (Excluding PB learning outcomes)	20%
<b>Clinical and Technical Skills Assignment(s)</b> - OSCE, Oral presentation, SOAP note, etc.	20%
<b>Total Score</b> (Students must obtain 70% or greater on <u>all</u> items above)	100%

### Entrustable (Pass)/Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

Clinical Rotation Professional Behavior	
<b>Clinical Rotation</b> - Validate patient's concerns with diagnosis during the visit. - Create professional relationships with all members of the healthcare team. - Prove self-directed learning as an active member of the health care team. - Prioritize punctual attendance while completing all required tasks.	Entrustable (Pass)/ Pre-Entrustable (Fail)



- Value acknowledging professional limitations at the current level of education.	
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## Entrustable (Pass)/Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

MTSU Program Professional Behavior	
<b>PA Program</b> - On time patient encounter logging - On time submission of assignments/ evaluations - Rotation Requirements (drug screens, background checks, immunizations, etc.) - Behavior/ Communication with program personnel	Entrustable (Pass)/ Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

## Grading Scale

A = 90 – 100 percent

B = 80 – 89 percent

C = 70 – 79 percent

F = 69 percent or below

To progress in the clinical year, students must adhere to EACH of the following conjunctive assessments:

- Obtain 70% or greater on the EOR examination,
- Obtain 70% or greater on the rotation specific assignment, and
- Deemed “entrustable” on 70% of the learning outcomes (excluding PB learning outcomes) on the final preceptor evaluation.
- Deemed “entrustable” on ALL Professional Behavior learning outcomes.
- Deemed “entrustable” on ALL requirements for the program documented on the Professional Behaviors form.

## End of Rotation (EOR) Examinations

End of Rotation examinations will occur after each core clinical rotation. These EOR examinations are written and administered by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). The exams will be computer-based, multiple-choice, and timed. Students should prepare for EOR exam questions with self-directed readings used during the didactic year

and/or covering topics in the PAEA exam-specific blueprint. PAEA provides statistics and exam maintenance for all their exams, then provides students with a list of topics for review. These exams are challenging, and students should prepare accordingly.

## EOR Scoring

Following EOR exams, PAEA will release a scale score for each student, along with the national mean and standard deviation for each EOR exam. This scale score will then be transformed into a Z-score and converted into a numerical grade based on the chart below. Each student must receive a calculated score at or above the passing benchmark (greater than or equal to 70%) to pass the EOR Exam.

PAEA EOR Score for Grading	
Student performance (scale score) against national mean:	Grade recorded
2+ standard deviations above the mean	95
Between 1-2 standard deviations above the mean	90
Within 1 standard deviation of the mean	85
Between 1 (inclusive) and 1.5 (exclusive) standard deviations below the mean	80
Between 1.5-2 standard deviation below the mean	70
More than two standard deviations below the mean ( <i>Remediation</i> )	55

## EOR Examination Remediation

If a student does not receive a score at or above the passing benchmark on the first attempt, the student will be required to remediate the EOR Exam. The student will receive email notification of remediation with the reassessment date and provided the PAEA student report for direction on areas of improvement. The student will then be required to retake the EOR Exam on the third Monday of the next rotation. The student's score on the second exam will be calculated using the z-score method and will have the same passing benchmark. If the student is successful at this reassessment attempt, the student will receive a grade of 70% (C) for the EOR. If a student's score on the reassessed exam does not meet the passing benchmark a second time,



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the student will receive a grade of incomplete (i) and repeat the rotation. If the student has yet to complete their elective rotation, the core rotation may be repeated during the elective block if the student provides a plan for success to the DCE. If the elective rotation has already occurred or no plan is submitted, then the student will have a delay in graduation to repeat the rotation at the end of the clinical year.

Students can remediate any PAEA EOR exam; however, this is limited to a maximum of two reassessments total in the clinical year for the EOR examination. If a student requires more than two reassessments of the EOR examination in the clinical year, then they will not be able to reassess the unsuccessful examination moving forward thus resulting in a failed rotation.

Please note, each rotation is considered a course; therefore, any student who has two or more course failures within the duration of the Program is eligible for dismissal.

## End of Rotation Assignment

Students will have a rotation specific assignment (OSCE, oral presentation, SOAP note, etc.) to complete on every rotation. OSCEs, technical skills, and oral presentations will happen after the EOR exam. These assignments will be graded by the clinical team and account for 20% of the student's rotation grade. Remediation and reassessment will be decided by the clinical team and will be student specific. If the remediation and reassessment of the End of Rotation assignment is unsuccessful the student will receive a grade of incomplete (i) and be required to repeat the rotation.

## Preceptor Evaluation of the Student

Final preceptor evaluations are to be submitted before starting the subsequent clinical rotation. The preceptor will directly evaluate the student based on the programmatic learning outcomes specific to the rotation. The preceptor of record will receive a form electronically through a link provided to them by the clinical team, *or* they can complete a paper evaluation provided by the student for submission. The student should always *ask* the preceptor if they prefer electronic or paper and have a paper evaluation form ready. If submitted on paper, students should submit the final preceptor evaluation *in a sealed envelope with the preceptor's signature over the envelope flap*. Any alterations in the envelope will result in a perception of academic integrity.



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DO NOT assume the preceptor will complete the evaluation without being prompted. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure evaluations are submitted. Do NOT assume the clinical team will request the evaluation from a preceptor on your behalf.

## Reviewing Evaluations

The final preceptor paper evaluations will be opened by the clinical team, reviewed, and placed in the student file where students may come to the department to read and/or copy evaluations. For digital evaluations, once all student evaluations are received, the survey will open, and the student will review responses about themselves and sign the evaluation. If the evaluation is completed online (through the link provided by the clinical team), then no paper copy is necessary. If the student has submitted a paper evaluation, the student will need to sign the evaluation prior to the preceptor sealing the envelope. The program will allow for preceptors to give confidential qualitative feedback about the student at the end of the evaluation.

## Grading of Evaluation

Each evaluation will be graded according to the following:

Number of “entrustable” learning outcome/ total number of learning outcomes= Grade assigned

Pass: percentage 70% or greater

Fail: percentage less than 69%

## Submission of evaluations

Students are required to submit all evaluations in a timely fashion. Students must follow through with their preceptor to make sure to meet all deadlines for completion of evaluations. Deadlines for specific evaluations are as follows:

- Mid-Rotation Evaluation: Monday of Week 4 by 9AM
- Final Preceptor Evaluation: Friday of EOR by 5PM
- Student Evaluation of Rotation: Friday of EOR by 5PM

These deadlines are non-negotiable unless discussed *in advance* with the clinical team and/or the Director of Clinical Education.

## Remediation Based on Preceptor Evaluation

If a student fails the final evaluation by the preceptor (69% or less of responses are entrustable) at the end of the rotation, the student will meet with the clinical team to discuss a remediation contract that can include any of the following: focused remediation of poor performance areas, unachieved learning outcomes, repeating the rotation, or deceleration/dismissal from the program. Further, the Director of Clinical Education will also personally contact the preceptor to discuss student performance and areas of improvement while on the rotation.

## Professionalism for Clinical Year

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. It involves placing the interest of the patient above one's own interest. During the clinical year, a student will receive professionalism evaluations from both clinical preceptors and the program. During clinical year professionalism in the MTSU PA Program is of great importance, this specifically means the ability to:

- Utilize professional communications with the clinical team and PA department staff, sites, preceptors, and others encountered in the clinical year, at all times.
- Complete credentialing and grading requirements promptly.
- Ensure timely communication with the Clinical Coordinating team regarding EOR testing.
- Generate and complete/submission of assigned rotation coursework, including final patient encounter logs.
- Complete the evaluations by the due dates required.

Excessive and unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departure from clinical rotations are considered professionalism issues and will be dealt with appropriately with the Clinical Coordinating Team and/or the Director of Clinical Education. Please see the absences policy above as it also applies to the clinical year.

Each rotation has consistent Professional Behavior (PB) learning outcomes, these learning outcomes will reflect the student's professionalism while on rotation. They are found on all clinical year syllabi for each clinical rotation. All PB learning outcomes need to be graded entrustable by the preceptor on the final preceptor evaluation to progress in the clinical year. If a student is graded pre-entrustable on any of the PB learning outcomes, then a specific professionalism remediation plan will be assigned.

## Professional Behavior Learning Outcomes

Validate patient's concerns with diagnosis during the visit.
Create professional relationships with all members of the healthcare team.
Prove self-directed learning an active member of the health care team.
Prioritize punctual attendance-while completing all required tasks.
Value acknowledging professional limitations at the current level of education.

As noted in the above learning outcomes, excessive and unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departure from clinical rotations are considered professionalism issues and will be dealt with appropriately with the clinical team and/or the Director of Clinical Education. Please see the absences policy above as it also applies to the clinical year.

## Professionalism Remediation

Professional Behavior learning outcomes will not be included in the assigned percentage grade from the preceptor evaluation. All pre-entrustable professionalism items from either the preceptor or the program will need to be remediated. If a student is graded pre-entrustable on Professional Behavior learning outcomes by the preceptor, a specific remedial process will occur based on the feedback from the preceptor of record. If a student is graded pre-entrustable by the program a remedial process will be created by the clinical coordinating team.

## Encounter logging

Students are expected to be thorough and honest when tracking their patient encounters and procedures. Students are asked to keep their logs updated. Daily entry is encouraged. The clinical team will do random checks throughout the rotation to ensure students comply. If validity

of patient logging is questioned, the clinical team will discuss the concern and possible referral to the SPC may be warranted.

## Rotation Specific Requirements

Several rotations may have supplemental requirements such as drug screens, background checks, physicals, immunizations, orientations, specific paperwork, etc. Students must comply with the specific requirements for each rotation by the designated deadline provided by the program or the site. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in a delay in starting rotation which can affect graduating on time and/or loss of elective rotation.

## Grading for Elective Rotation

The grading for the elective rotation will differ from a core rotation in that no EOR exam will be administered. Instead, upon completion of the elective rotation students will complete case research write-up, grand rounds presentation, a SOAP note, and submit the preceptor evaluation to determine their grade for the rotation. Below is the grading rubric for the elective rotation.

### Elective Rotation

Elective Grading	
<b>Grand Rounds Presentation</b>	40%
<b>Case Research Write up</b>	20%
<b>SOAP note assignment</b>	20%
<b>Preceptor Evaluation</b> Percentage of entrustable learning outcomes/total number of learning outcomes (Excluding PB learning outcomes)	20%
<b>Total Score</b> (Students must obtain 70% or greater on all items above)	100%

## Entrustable (Pass)/Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

Clinical Rotation Professional Behavior	
<b>Clinical Rotation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Validate patient's concerns with diagnosis during the visit.</li> <li>- Create professional relationships with all members of the healthcare team.</li> <li>- Prove self-directed learning as an active member of the health care team.</li> <li>- Prioritize punctual attendance while completing all required tasks.</li> <li>- Value acknowledging professional limitations at the current level of education.</li> </ul>	Entrustable (Pass)/ Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

## Entrustable (Pass)/Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

MTSU Program Professional Behavior	
<b>PA Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On time patient encounter logging</li> <li>- On time submission of assignments/ evaluations</li> <li>- Rotation Requirements (drug screens, background checks, immunizations, etc.)</li> <li>- Behavior/ Communication with program personnel</li> </ul>	Entrustable (Pass)/ Pre-Entrustable (Fail)

Preceptor Evaluation of the Student and Professionalism expectations are explained in detail above.

## Elective Rotation Remediation

If any of the required items of the elective rotation receive a grade of less than 70% the student will be required to remediate and reassess the item. If remediation is successful, the student will receive a 70% for the rotation. If the remediation is unsuccessful the student will receive a grade of incomplete (i) and will be required to repeat the rotation at the end of the clinical year.

## Clinical Year Student Supervision Policy

Physician Assistant students are always required to be properly supervised while on clinical rotations. It is vital to the health and safety of patients that students, at a minimum:





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- Always introduce yourself as a Physician Assistant Student.
- Do not write any pre-signed prescriptions, phone in, or electronically submit prescriptions.
- Discuss any clinical findings with the preceptor before discussing with the patient.
- Notify the preceptor immediately of any urgent patient problems observed while assessing the patient.
- Do not administer medication without the approval and supervision of the preceptor.
- Only see patients while an appropriately qualified preceptor is physically on the clinical site.
- Document appropriately via the guidelines provided by the program, preceptor, and site.
- Alert the program by contacting the clinical team if you are not being adequately supervised.
- Do not treat, discharge, or perform procedures on patients who have not been seen by the preceptor.
- Report on any potential liability situations to the Director of Clinical Education immediately.
- Do not use preceptor credentialing or log-in information for electronic medical records.

## Clinical Year Commuting and Housing Policy

Students should expect to travel for clinical rotations. Students will be required to have a reliable car and personal finance for fuel to commute to these clinical rotation locations. Students need to anticipate additional costs related to travel and plan accordingly. Students should be ready to travel by personal vehicle up to 1.5 hours one way from the MTSU campus for some clinical rotations. Clinical rotations will not be assigned by the closest radius to the student's home and/or any requested area. If the rotation is more than 1.5 hours away from MTSU main campus the student may wish to consider obtaining housing near the clinical site. Students will be responsible for any additional expenses incurred from travel or housing.



## Clinical Safety and Security Policy

The clinical team will evaluate each clinical site initially and be re-evaluated by the clinical team according to the Initial and Ongoing Clinical Rotation Evaluation process. The clinical team will address safety and security questions about policies and protocols during the evaluation period for each site. These questions will be asked directly to the facility and/or onsite clinical preceptors before the students arrive. If clinical sites or preceptors have site-specific safety and security measures, they will orient the student to the policies and procedures on the first day of the rotation. This orientation to safety and security onsite will also be communicated with the Preceptor Handbook stating expectations that a reasonable amount of security and safety is a requirement of the clinical preceptor. Students are to report to their clinical preceptor and/or the Director of Clinical Education immediately if they feel unsafe at their rotation site, in any capacity. The clinical team will document that safety protocols are available and subsequently reviewed with students.