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## Master of Physician Assistant Studies

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### Admission Policy

**Origin Date:** August 29, 2016

**Last Evaluated:** June 2021

**Responsible Party:** Chair, Admission Committee

**Minimum Review Frequency:** Annually

**Approving Body:** Admission Committee

### Background and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define policies and procedures in regards to publishing and disseminating admission information to prospective students and to clearly define the application, interview, and selection process for Florida Gulf Coast University Master of Physician Assistant Studies (FGCU MPAS) program applicants.

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## Policy Statement

### General Information:

1. FGCU MPAS defines and publishes information regarding admissions on its official website  
<https://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/healthsciences/physicianassistantstudies-mpas.aspx#AdmissionsInformation>
2. Information on this site includes details pertaining to the program's ARC-PA accreditation status, success of the program achieving its goals, first time PANCE rates for the five most recent graduating classes, all required curricular components, academic credit offered by the program, estimates of all costs related to the program, policies and procedures for refunds of tuition and fees, and policies about student employment while enrolled in the program.  
<https://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/healthsciences/physicianassistantstudies-mpas.aspx>
3. FGCU MPAS does not grant advanced placement under any circumstances. All students who matriculate into the Physician Assistant program must complete all program requirements. This information is published in the admissions and FAQ sections of its official website  
<https://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/healthsciences/physicianassistantstudies-mpas.aspx#AdmissionsInformation> and  
<https://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/healthsciences/physicianassistantstudies-mpas-faq.aspx>
4. The FGCU MPAS adheres to published fair admissions practice and addresses preferential admission, advanced placement, experiential learning, and transfer credit in our policy.
  - Preferential admission: The FGCU MPAS program does not favor any specified individuals or groups for program admission.
  - Academic Standards: All incoming students are required to meet all prerequisite requirements with the posted minimum GPA and within the posted time frame if indicated.
  - GPA calculations will follow the CASPA guidelines which can be found at: <https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspaHelpPages/frequently-asked-questions/processing-your-application/grade-point-average-gpa-calculations/index.html>
    - CASPA does not recognize individual school's forgiveness, academic renewal, or grade replacement policies in regards to repeated courses. All grades earned for repeated courses will factor into the CASPA GPA.
    - CASPA's numeric scale for letter grades may be different than the one used at a home institution. Please note that a grade of "WF" or "Withdrawn Failing" is calculated into the CASPA system as an "F."
    - CASPA calculates all GPAs in semester hours. If any courses were completed in quarter hours, CASPA converts these to semester hours on GPA charts. The conversion ratio is 1.0 quarter hour = 0.667 semester hours.

- CASPA breaks down the GPA by college level, not by college. Therefore, if multiple schools were attended with terms labeled as “freshman,” “sophomore, etc, CASPA will combine all of these classes into your freshman or sophomore GPA.
- Experiential Learning: The FGCU MPAS program does not give credit for prior student experience working in the field.
- Transfer Credit: The FGCU MPAS program does not accept transfer credit from other institutions.
- Technical Standards: Applicants for and students enrolled in Physician Assistant programs must have abilities and skills in the areas of observation, communication, motor, intellectual/critical thinking, interpersonal, and behavioral/social attributes. The MPAS Program has determined technical standards that are essential for successful progression and completion of all aspects of the curriculum, as well as entry into the profession. These technical standards are required for admission and must be maintained throughout the student’s enrollment in the program. In the event a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, the student will be subject to dismissal.

Candidates for and students of the program must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. Candidates’ and students’ diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell, and taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient external sense (touch, pain, and temperature), sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the section above. They must be able to consistently, quickly, and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data.

Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities will be considered on an individual basis. Students wishing to request accommodations for disabilities should contact the Office of Adaptive Services, at 239-590-7956 (voice), 239-7975 (fax), 239-243-9453 (video phone) or by email at [adaptive@fgcu.edu](mailto:adaptive@fgcu.edu).

Specific requirements in regards to these technical standards is located on our program website

<https://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/healthsciences/physicianassistantstudies-mpas.aspx#Accordion1>

## Application Process

### Online Application

Applications will be submitted to CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician Assistants). <https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspaHelpPages/about-caspaoverview/index.html>

### Screening

All CASPA-verified applicants will undergo initial screening to determine if they meet minimum requirements for admission to the program. Minimum requirements are published and made readily available to all prospective applicants on the website and on the CASPA FGCU MPAS home page. This screening is performed by member(s) of the admissions committee, program faculty and/or admissions administrative assistant.

### Scoring

All qualified applications will proceed through a scoring process as follows:

**Step 1:** Academic Strength Scoring: A scoring point table is included in CASPA and calculates a score based on the Upper Division 60 GPA (UD 60) **OR** Graduate Degree GPA and the Biology/Chemistry/Physics GPA (B/C/P). Additionally, members of the program faculty and program admissions committee use a predefined rubric to score each component of the GRE. The UD60 OR Graduate Degree GPA and B/C/P GPA's and GRE score make up the academic strength component of the scoring. Academic strength accounts for 45% of the total score.

**Step 2:** Non-Academic Strength Scoring: Members of the program faculty and program admissions committee use a predefined rubric to independently score the non-academic components of the application that include direct patient care experience, community service, personal statement, letters of recommendation, PA shadowing, and propensity to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the program. Non-academic strength accounts for 55% of the total score.

**Step 3:** Scoring results from steps 2 calculated and then added to the score from step 1 to determine a final score. One PA faculty will score each qualified applicant. The faculty member will recommend the following classifications: Strongly Recommend Interview, Recommend Interview, Do Not Recommend Interview, Recommend 2<sup>nd</sup> Faculty Review. Applicants will be invited for interviews based upon their overall standing in the overall scoring.

### In-Progress Prerequisites

**Prerequisite coursework:** The FGCU MPAS will allow for completion of the prerequisite courses to be completed by the end of the fall term preceding fall matriculation for the incoming cohort. The GPA reported on the CASPA application will be used to score an applicant and pending prerequisite coursework will not be calculated in the GPA. All prerequisites must be completed with a grade "B" or higher. Official

transcripts will be required to confirm completion of the prerequisites prior to matriculation into the program.

## Interview Process

Interviews will be conducted by FGCU MPAS faculty, FGCU Faculty, and community health practitioners. Candidates will be assessed using a written essay at the time of the interview on a topic selected by the interview team. Each candidate will also sit for two individual interviews. Each interview session will be conducted by at least one FGCU faculty member. Once an individual interview is complete, each interviewer will use a predefined scoring rubric to assign a score for the interview.

Interviews are conducted during the fall and spring semester. Upon the completion of each interview session, the Admissions Committee will meet to review each candidate, their interview score, interview comments, complete application, and any additional information provided. Candidates will receive a cumulative score for their interview and be placed in a ranked order. At the discretion of the Committee, up to 10 offers of admission may be made throughout the interview period. A minimum of 10 seats will remain open throughout the interview process with final admission offers to occur after the last interview.

Interview candidates will participate in a department and campus tour, will be provided financial aid information, and will participate in a question and answer session with program faculty.

## Selection Process

Once each session of interviews is complete, the admissions committee will meet and candidates will be ranked. At the committee's discretion, a select number of applicants may be offered admission throughout the interview process while maintaining a minimum of 10 open seats prior to the last interview session. Once all interviews are complete, open seats will be filled from the remaining pool of interviewed candidates based on committee ranking.

Candidates that are offered admission will be given 14 days to respond and to pay a seat deposit. Candidates will be provided an Acceptance of Admission Form and a Statement of Understanding Form to fill out and return with the seat deposit.

Once all admission offers are made the remaining candidates will be placed on a waitlist. These candidates will be formally notified of their status by email within 14 days of final interview session.

If a candidate declines admission, or forfeits their seat in the class after accepting admission, candidates on the waitlist will be offered admission based on their ranking on the waitlist.

\*Letters of acceptance are provisional and based upon completion of the Graduate Application, which includes receipt of final transcripts, residency documentation, and GRE score verification. Other items include immunization documentation sent to FGCU Student Health and a seat deposit submitted to the PA Program.

### Non-Refundable Deposit

Candidates who accept a seat are required to pay a seat deposit. This deposit must be made within 2 weeks of the offer. The deposit is non-refundable but will be applied toward the cost of tuition for the first semester of the program. Candidates that pay the seat deposit and then rescind their acceptance will not receive a refund.

### Post-Acceptance Requirements

All accepted students receive a list of post acceptance requirements, <http://www.fgcu.edu/mariebcollege/HS/MPAS/admissions.html> , which must be fulfilled no later than July 15 of the matriculation year. Post acceptance requirements may include but are not limited to:

- Immunization documentation submitted to Castle Branch <https://www.castlebranch.com/>
- Immunization documentation submitted to FGCU Student Health Services to include:
  - Two MMR vaccines or a positive Rubella/Rubeola titers (must submit laboratory results indicating immunity)
  - Hepatitis B series of 3 vaccinations
  - Meningococcal/MCV4 (booster needed if 1<sup>st</sup> dose given before age 16)

<http://www2.fgcu.edu/studenthealth/immunizations.html>

- Background check - Background check will be completed through Castle Branch. <https://www.castlebranch.com/>
- Final transcripts of all coursework completed
- Verification of baccalaureate degree
- Residency documentation <http://www.fgcu.edu/Graduate/Residency.html>

### Late Acceptance

Late acceptance is defined as notification of program acceptance within one month of the first day of orientation. Post-acceptance requirements will be detailed in the candidate's acceptance letter and supersede the deadlines otherwise stated in this policy.

### Admission Deferrals

A student offered admission to the MPAS Program is expected to attend the cohort (class) for which the student was accepted. The program does not guarantee admission beyond the original cohort that is offered. A student who is unable to start in the cohort for which they are accepted will need to notify the Program Director in writing. The student's request for deferral of

admission will be considered on a case by case basis and is not guaranteed. Applicants not granted deferral may reapply for the following year's class.

### Conflict of Interest

Professional integrity of staff and faculty involved in program admission is expected. Staff and faculty will excuse themselves from participating in scoring, interviewing, and admission decision-making for candidates that they have significant relationship outside of the PA program. This may include but is not limited to: family members, friends, professional partners, or acquaintances of individuals known well to both parties.

### ARC-PA STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THESE POLICIES:

- A3.11 The sponsoring institution and program's announcements and advertising *must accurately* reflect the program offered.
- A3.12 The program *must* define, publish and make *readily available* to enrolled and *prospective students* general program information to include:
- a) the program's ARC-PA accreditation status as provided to the program by the ARC-PA,
  - b) evidence of its *effectiveness* in meeting its *goals*,
  - c) the most current NCCPA PANCE Exam Performance Summary Report Last 5 Years provided by the NCCPA through its program portal, no later than April first each year
  - d) all required curricular components including required rotation disciplines,
  - e) academic credit offered by the program,
  - f) estimates of all costs (tuition, fees, etc.) related to the program,
  - g) program required *competencies* for entry level practice, consistent with the competencies as defined by the PA profession,
  - h) whether certain services are only available to students and faculty on the main campus when the program is offered at a geographically distant campus location, and
  - i) the most current annual student attrition information, on the table provided by the ARC-PA, no later than April first each year
- A3.13 The program *must* define, publish, consistently apply and make *readily available* to *prospective students*, policies and procedures to include:
- a) admission and enrollment practices that favor specified individuals or groups (if applicable),
  - b) admission requirements regarding prior education or work experience,
  - c) practices for awarding or granting *advanced placement*,
  - d) any required academic standards for enrollment,
  - e) any required *technical standards* for enrollment.
- A3.14 The program *must* make student admission decisions in accordance with clearly defined and *published* practices of the institution and program.

**Next Scheduled Review Date:** 6/2022

**Last Modified:** 2/19/19, 7/29/19, 8/2020, 6/2021