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## Master of Physician Assistant Studies

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### Attendance and Participation Policy

- **Origin Date:** 2/16/17
- **Last Evaluated:** July 2020
- **Responsible Party:** Academic Director
- **Minimum Review Frequency:** Annually
- **Approving Body:** SAPC

#### Background and Purpose

As PA education is a prelude to a professional career as a health care provider, it is expected that students attend all assigned program activities. Consistent attendance, punctuality, and participation reflect a student's professionalism and are considered program standards. It is recognized that there may be extenuating circumstances that prohibit students from attending a required activity.

Teamwork, collaboration, integration of knowledge, and professionalism are all integrated into PA education and preparation for clinical practice. Attendance during physician assistant training is extremely important given the amount of material covered in a short time. Because attendance and participation is very important to your development as a physician assistant, the program requires that students adhere to the attendance policies outlined below.

#### Table of Contents

- [Didactic Phase Attendance Policy](#)
  - [Absences](#)
  - [Timeliness](#)
- [Clinical Phase Attendance Policy](#)
  - [General Overview](#)
  - [Absences](#)
- [Participation](#)
- [Student Observance of Religious Holidays](#)
- [Student Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism Evaluation](#)

- [Inclement Weather](#)

## Policy Statement

### Didactic Phase Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected for all program activities. In the event of an absence, students must notify the course director prior to the activity that will be missed. It is recommended that students refrain from making other commitments during the hours of 7:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday, unless the time slot in question is unequivocally specified as free time. Note: Unscheduled Program Time is not considered free time.

### Absences

1. Absences may be excused or unexcused.
  - a. Excused absences are approved at the discretion of the Academic Director. Examples of occurrences when an absence may be excused include:
    - Personal illness or injury/accident
    - Illness or injury/accident of an immediate family member
    - Death of an immediate family member
  - b. Absences for any other reasons are considered unexcused; this includes but is not limited to: travel plans, weddings, and birthdays. Unexcused absences may impact the student's course grades and/or lead to professional behaviors probation.
2. Students are expected to attend all exams and assessments as scheduled. When a student misses a scheduled course examination or assessment, only students with an excused absence are permitted to make up the work. Students with an unexcused absence are not permitted to make up the work and will receive a grade of (0) zero for that assessment (See Student Assessment Policy).
3. Students are required to notify the academic director or course director of the need for an excused absence PRIOR to the class or clinical experience. This notification can be given by e-mail or voicemail.
4. Class attendance is a program defined professionalism standard (See Student Professionalism Rubric). Students who demonstrate a pattern of absences fail to meet this professionalism standard. These students are required to consult with their program faculty advisor for counseling and may warrant referral to the Student Advancement and Professionalism Committee (SAPC) for further review and action (See Professional Standard Policy).
5. Students retain accountability for reviewing course material and meeting course requirements missed due to an absence. Students are cautioned that excessive absences may lead to unsuccessful completion of course requirements which may result in course failure and/or dismissal from the program.
6. Mandatory Attendance Days
  - a. Mandatory attendance days are days where you must be in attendance due to the nature of the activity (special lectures, physical examination training, BLS/ ACLS training, scheduled exams, etc.). Students will be notified of mandatory days by

either the weekly calendar or email. Missing a Mandatory attendance day may result in referral to the Student Advancement and Professionalism Committee.

- b. Any request to excuse an absence on a mandatory attendance day for any reason other than medical or personal emergencies will be denied.

## Timeliness

1. Students must arrive in a timely fashion and be prepared to engage in planned education activities for all scheduled courses and course activities as noted on course syllabi or as informed by course faculty.
2. Timeliness is a core element of professional behavior, and it is expected that students arrive to all educational activities (including clinical education and mentoring activities) sufficiently early so that unpacking computers, books, etc., changing into appropriate dress, and setting up for the learning activity does not interfere with the timely start of that activity.
3. Students who display habitual tardiness will be referred to the Student Advancement and Professionalism Committee.

## Clinical Phase Attendance Policy

### General Overview

1. Students normally report to rotations on the first Monday of each rotation block and work until noon of the last Thursday of the rotation block unless directed to do otherwise by the PA Program or preceptor.
2. The rotation preceptor controls the student's schedule, night call, days off, and daily routine. Students are expected to clarify all schedule issues with the preceptor on the first day of rotation.
3. The MPAS Program adheres to the ACGME 80-Hour Resident Work Rule and expects clinical sites to respect the rule, whereas, "Duty hours must be limited to 80 hours per week...inclusive of all in-house call activities..."
4. MPAS students are not to work more than 24 consecutive hours providing patient care. After 24 hours, they may continue to work for up to 6 hours for continuity of care or classroom experiences, but may not assume care for new patients during this time.
5. MPAS students must receive at least 1 day off per week during their rotation
6. Call schedules are to be followed as the service specifies. On-call experience should fulfill an educational function and not a site staffing need. It should not be excessive. If a problem exists, the PA Program should be notified for clarification.

### Absences

1. Absences from clinical rotations will not be tolerated. Any student who has an unexcused absence may be brought before the Student Advancement and Professionalism Committee (SAPC). Any absence that occurs must be explained in writing (via e-mail) to the Director of Clinical Education prior to the absence occurring, unless there is an emergency. In the case of an emergent absence the MPAS Program and the preceptor must be notified immediately. A written explanation (via e-mail) must be made to the PA Program office within 24 hours of the absence. Failure to comply with this may result in a substantial reduction in the professionalism grade for the rotation.

2. Students who must have time off from a rotation must obtain approval from their preceptor first, and then the Clinical Director. Official approval is obtained by completing an Absence Request Form (available on the Clinical Year website in Canvas), having it signed by your preceptor, and submitting it to the Clinical Director for approval. The Clinical Director and the Program Director reserve the right to determine how many and what types of absences will be approved.
3. Absence from rotation because of acute illness requires students to call in to their preceptor and the Clinical Director. After returning to the clinical site, an Absence Request Form is completed and submitted as outlined above. Prolonged illnesses may result in repeating the rotation. Medical documentation of the illness by the student's personal physician may be required at the discretion of the Clinical Director.
4. Excessive absence from a clinical rotation may result in the student receiving an "incomplete" grade for the rotation, and thereafter being placed in additional clinical experiences, up to and including a repeat of the entire rotation. This is at the discretion of the Clinical Director, and is considered on a case-by-case basis, as every circumstance is unique. Decisions may be based on several factors including, but not limited to: the previous clinical exposures documented by the student in Typhon, characteristics of the relevant as well as future clinical rotations, and the academic performance of the student. It is possible that excessive absence may result in delayed graduation and/or a referral to the SAPC.
5. Conference leaves of absence - Clinical year students are encouraged to and thus may ask attend a FAPA and/or AAPA conference during their clinical training. The request must be submitted as far in advance as possible, at least 60 days prior to the conference. The Clinical Director will consider each request on an individual basis, taking into consideration the distance to travel, the academic strength of the student, the rotation, and the amount of time the student would miss. A student's request may be denied if he/she has excessive previous absences, if there are conflicts with scheduled PA Program activities, or if the clinical education outweighs the benefits of attending the conference.
6. End-of-Rotation Callback Day Attendance – Attendance at the monthly end-of- rotation exams and the educational activities is MANDATORY. Students should expect to be on campus from 8am-5pm on Callback Days. The student must plan his or her schedule accordingly. Requests to be excused from these activities will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Director of Clinical Education.

## Student Observance of Religious Holidays

All students at Florida Gulf Coast University have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices, and beliefs. Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances. Where practicable, major examinations, major assignments, and University ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major religious holy day. A student who is to be excused from class for a religious observance is not required to provide a second part certification of the reason for the absence.

## Participation

1. Multiple modalities are utilized by the program to ensure program learning outcomes are being met. To maximize learning, students must actively participate in all learning activities, including required pre-class reading and preparation, class discussions, assignments, problem-based learning, team-based learning, case studies, and laboratory skill sessions. Failure to actively participate in program requirements is considered unprofessional behavior and may result in referral to the Student Advancement and Professionalism Committee.
2. Students are required to participate as a patient model during laboratory sessions and skills assessments. Students are expected to willingly participate in a professional manner. On occasion, it will be requested that students wear appropriate clothing that will easily facilitate physical examination by fellow classmates. For females, this will consist of an appropriate sports bra or tank top and shorts and males will be requested to wear shorts. Students who require accommodation related to this policy should meet with the course director and provide reasonable justification for an alternative approach that allows the student to comply with the intent of the policy to the best of their ability.
3. Students on clinical rotations are required to participate in all activities assigned by their clinical preceptor (e.g. attend lectures, conferences, educational programs, etc.) unless illegal or unethical. If a student feels an assignment is inappropriate, he/she should discuss their concerns with the Director of Clinical Education.

## Student Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism Evaluation

To ensure that students meet the intent of this policy and are active participants in the program; students are evaluated utilizing the Class Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism Rubric in each didactic course. Students are provided a copy of this rubric at the beginning of each course. The rubric covers the following course criteria: attendance and tardiness, preparedness, participation, overall class conduct, and general professionalism. The score from this evaluation will make up 10% of the overall didactic course grade as also described in the individual course syllabi.

## Inclement Weather

1. The FGCU MPAS Program urges caution to students and instructional faculty in the event of inclement weather. These conditions include but are not limited to lightning, tornadic activity, hurricane, hail, and rising/moving flood waters. In the event such unsafe conditions present themselves, seek appropriate shelter immediately.
2. In the event inclement weather forces the closure of the University, MPAS students are not required to report to clinical rotations until such time as the University officially re-opens. Furthermore, MPAS students and Preceptors should exercise caution and engage in proper preparations for pending severe weather and any clinical education experience time postponed due to preparing for severe weather can be rescheduled following the inclement weather.

## ARC-PA Associated Standards

**A1.02g** “The sponsoring institution is responsible for documenting appropriate security and personal safety measures for PA students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs...”

**A3.15a** “The program must define, publish and make readily available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include any required academic standards

**Next Review Date:** 7/2021

**Last Modified:** 8/2020