



Master of Physician Assistant Studies

Clinical Site and Instructional Faculty Development for Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE) Policy

- **Origin Date:** 12/09/2016
- **Last Evaluated:** 6/14/2021
- **Responsible Party:** Clinical Director
- **Minimum Review Frequency:** Annually
- **Approving Body:** Clinical Affairs Committee
- **Associated Forms**
 - Preceptor Agreement
 - Preceptor Approval Checklist
 - Preceptor Orientation Checklist
 - Preceptor Orientation Handbook
 - FGCU Site Evaluation Form
 - FGCU Site Evaluation with Student Form
 - Site/Preceptor Information Form
 - Student's Mid-Rotation Self-Evaluation Form
 - Student's Mid-Rotation Self-Evaluation of Professionalism Form
 - Student's Evaluation of Clinical Site Form
 - Student's Evaluation of Preceptor Form
 - Student's Evaluation of Rotation Form

Background and Purpose

The SCPE portion of the PA curriculum is designed to provide meaningful direct patient care experiences working in a variety of clinical practice environments that allow students an opportunity to apply the extensive knowledge base developed during the didactic year. This will ensure an optimal clinical education experience for FGCU PA students, ultimately preparing them for certification and professional practice. The purpose of this policy is to define program expectations and processes for recruitment, approval, and orientation of Instructional Faculty for SCPEs (i.e., preceptors), as well as the ongoing evaluation of the same.

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Policy Statement

In compliance with the ARC-PA standards, the following is the Master of Physician Assistant Studies policy for evaluating, approving, and orientation of Instructional Faculty (Preceptors), as well as the ongoing evaluation of clinical sites and preceptors, for participation in supervised clinical education components.

Overview

1. With the support of Florida Gulf Coast University and the Marieb College of Health & Human Services, the Clinical Director (CD) of the MPAS Program is responsible for the recruitment, coordination and evaluation all clinical sites and preceptors for the program mandated SCPE component of the curriculum (clinical rotations), and ensuring that the sites and preceptors are in sufficient numbers for program-required clinical practice experiences.
2. The CD ensures that the clinical preceptors and sites provide sufficient patient exposure to allow each student to meet program expectations and acquire the competencies needed for entry into clinical PA practice, and that differences in clinical settings are not impeding the overall accomplishment of learning outcomes.
3. The CD ensures that each clinical site provides the student access to physical facilities, patient populations and supervision necessary to fulfill program expectations of the clinical experience.
4. The CD must initially, and at least annually thereafter, review, evaluate, and approve suitability of all clinical sites and preceptors.
5. A Preceptor is defined as “any instructional faculty member who provides student supervision during supervised clinical practice experiences.”

6. Preceptors for the MPAS program must primarily consist of practicing physicians and physician assistants. The CD will ensure that a majority of preceptors are physicians or PAs.
7. PA program students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Students may make suggestions to the faculty or CD regarding clinical sites or preceptors but are not required to do so.

Process for Initial Evaluation and Approval of Clinical Sites and Clinical Instructional Faculty

When a potential clinical site/preceptor is identified by the CD, the CD will evaluate the prospective clinical site/preceptor's suitability for use in supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE) prior to assigning students for SCPEs/rotations.

- The CD will meet with the prospective site and preceptor to discuss the MPAS program.
 - The prospective preceptor will be oriented to the learning objectives and outcomes pertinent to the rotation, as well as the MPAS program's learning outcomes and expectations of students and preceptors.
 - A copy of the Preceptor Orientation Handbook and the relevant clinical rotation syllabus/syllabi will be provided to the prospective site/preceptor.
- If the prospective site/preceptor is agreeable and willing to serve as a site/preceptor for the MPAS program:
 - A Clinical Site & Preceptor Evaluation Form must be filled out and reviewed by the CD for further consideration. This form will describe the demographics of the site and practice (e.g. the number of patients seen, common diagnoses encountered, number of exam rooms, other clinicians on site, etc).
 - A Preceptor Agreement Form must be reviewed and signed by the preceptor and submitted to the CD.
- If the clinical site (legal entity of the clinical practice of the preceptor) does not have a clinical affiliation agreement with the university, a fully executed agreement will be required prior to a student being assigned to the site.
- The CD will evaluate whether the clinical site/preceptor meets program expectations (as described below) and whether the clinical site/preceptor will be suitable for use by the MPAS program. If suitable a Clinical Rotation Preceptor Approval Form and Clinical Rotation Site Approval Form will be completed by the CD.

Program Expectations of Clinical Sites and Preceptors

The CD will consider the following criteria, with regard to whether the site/preceptor will be approved for use by the program for SCPEs:

- The clinical site is a safe site for the student.
- Space at the site is adequate for accommodating student(s).
- Sufficient number of exam rooms to allow the student to see patients.
- The following are required for a clinician to be a preceptor for the MPAS program:
 - Knowledgeable of the PA profession and role in health care.

- At least two years of full-time experience in practice as a clinician or advanced training such as residency or fellowship.
- Licensure and in good standing with the Florida Board of Medicine, Nursing or other Board as appropriate.
- Willingness to be a mentor to and teach PA students, helping them achieve the learning outcomes of the rotation.
- Willingness to assess student performance.
- Willingness to be assessed by students, in the context of the MPAS Program's efforts to self-evaluate and improve the curriculum.
- Appreciation the importance of providing hands-on experiences and agree to provide them.
- Willingness to ensure that PA students will be adequately supervised (and will not be used as a substitute for paid staff).
- Clinical practice has an appropriate volume of patients and variety of diagnoses encountered. The clinical practice of the preceptor will provide the student exposure to the common diagnoses of the discipline of the rotation.
- The preceptor's anticipated schedule for the FGCU MPAS student should be similar to that which is expected of a full-time PA in that practice, and should afford the student exposure to an appropriate volume of patients and variety of diagnoses, to allow the student to meet the objectives of the clinical rotation.
- Willingness to be in contact with the program as needed.
- The CD will ensure that all preceptors have valid licenses, and will keep the expiration date of the preceptor's license on file.
- The CD will ensure that preceptor is knowledgeable in his or her area of expertise. The professional training and experience of the preceptor will be noted in the preceptor's file.
- The MPAS program will consider using a physician preceptor who is not board certified in his or her area of expertise for SCPEs if one of the following are true:
 - The preceptor has at least two years of full-time experience and/or postgraduate training in his or her area of expertise and the Clinical Affairs Committee approves the use of the preceptor, due to circumstances unique to the program, which may include but are not limited to:
 - The preceptor began practicing in his/her area of expertise before 1990 and maintenance of board certification is not mandated for the physician
 - The program has difficulty in recruiting willing clinicians in a given specialty
 - The physician is board-eligible and works closely with another physician in the same practice who is board certified in the same area of expertise
 - The preceptor is credentialed by an acute care hospital to practice in his/her area of expertise.

Decision to Approve/Deny Clinical Site/Preceptor

After consideration of the criteria in the previous section, the CD may approve or deny the prospective clinical site/preceptor for use by the MPAS Program. It is the duty of the CD to ensure that the totality of the clinical rotation experiences will allow each student to meet the expected learning outcomes by program completion. Only sites/preceptors that will allow each student to meet the expected learning outcomes by program completion may be approved for use by the MPAS Program.

If the site/preceptor is approved, a site visit will be performed in-person (if not already performed at the initial contact with the preceptor) prior to the assignment of the first student, evaluating criteria as outlined in the Site Visit Policy below.

Clinical Preceptor Responsibilities

1. Provide the student with an orientation to the clinical site, including reviewing rotation learning outcomes, work schedules, local policies, dress code, and introduction to other essential staff/personnel.
2. To assess and supervise the student's progress in achieving learning outcomes for the clinical rotation.
3. Provide clinical instruction, including hands-on clinical experience, in accordance with the rotation outcomes and the availability of patients and other clinical resources. This instruction may be delivered by the preceptor or designee, but the preceptor is ultimately responsible for the instruction provided.
4. Provide the PA student with frequent feedback on clinical and professional performance, and formally meet with them approximately halfway through their rotation to discuss this feedback, issue guidance, and collaborate with the student in completing the Student's Mid-Rotation Self-Evaluation Forms.
5. Meet with the student during the last week of rotation and complete a Preceptor Evaluation of Student for the rotation discipline. The end of rotation evaluations should be completed online in the Typhon Student Tracking System.
6. Notify the CD of any unexpected student absences, lapses in professionalism, or academic or any other concerns.
7. In an educational capacity, the student may perform tasks similar to paid staff. However, the preceptor is to ensure that the student is not used as a not substitute for clinical or administrative staff.

Process for Ongoing Evaluation of Clinical Sites and Clinical Instructional Faculty

It is the responsibility of the CD to continuously monitor the MPAS clinical sites and clinical instructional faculty to ensure that sites and preceptors meet program expectations for learning outcomes and performance evaluation measures.

This monitoring is accomplished through the following, and is outlined below:

- Site visits
- Reaffirmation of clinical site and preceptors meeting program expectations
- Students' assessment of rotations, preceptors, and clinical sites
- Logging of patient encounters and procedures in Typhon

- Assessment of student performance

This continuous monitoring will be used to determine if a clinical site/preceptor will continue to be used by the program.

Site visits

1. Site visits serve to ensure that the clinical site is safe, secure, and appropriate, and that the site provides the student access to physical facilities, patient populations and supervision necessary to fulfill program expectations of the clinical experience.
2. Will be performed at each clinical site prior to the placement of a student at the site, then at least once each year that a student is assigned at the site
3. May be conducted unannounced to the student.
4. Site visits may be requested by the student or preceptor at any time, and for any reason.
5. The site visit will evaluate, at a minimum:
 - a. Availability of internet access
 - b. Ability of the preceptor to appropriately supervise PA students
 - c. Access to physical facility and work station for students
 - d. Provision of orientation to new students
 - e. The safety at the clinical site
 - f. If a student is present at the site, the following may be discussed as a part of the site visit:
 - i. The preceptor's perception of the student's performance/progress
 - ii. The student's feedback regarding the site/preceptor and the student's perception of his/her preparedness to enter the rotation
 - iii. The preceptor's feedback and perception of the MPAS program in general
6. If a student is present at the site, the site visitor should then note the following, if possible:
 - a. Interactions between student and other individuals at the site, including preceptor and other staff
 - b. Ability of the facility to support a proper learning environment
 - c. Ability of the student to see an appropriate number of patients and allowed hands-on experiences with adequate oversight and supervision

Reaffirmation of Program Expectations of Clinical Sites and Preceptors

The criteria noted above in the Program Expectations of Clinical Sites and Preceptors will be reevaluated at least once annually by the CD for each preceptor/clinical site, to determine the continued suitability of the site/preceptor. Sites/preceptors that do not meet program expectations may be dismissed by the program.

Students' assessment of rotations, preceptors, and clinical sites

1. After the completion of each rotation, the student will be required to evaluate the preceptor, the clinical site, and the rotation using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

agree) Likert scale. They will be evaluated in part for their effectiveness and ability to allow the student to achieve the stated learning outcomes for the rotations, as well as the perception of the effectiveness of the preceptor's supervision. These data will be entered into Typhon and aggregated and analyzed by the CD at the end of each semester.

2. When student evaluations of a clinical site or preceptor identify a specific need for improvement, defined as a score of 2 (disagree) or less, the CD will meet with the individual preceptor to create an individualized faculty development plan to address that need.
 - a. A preceptor who consistently scores a 2 or less as described above despite meeting with the CD may be dismissed as a preceptor at the discretion of the CD and Program Director.
3. When student evaluations of rotation identify a pattern of specific need for improvement, defined as a score of 2 (disagree) or less, the Clinical Affairs Committee will meet discuss and address the need.

Logging of patient encounters and procedures in Typhon

1. Student log their clinical exposures using Typhon. Typhon data is continuously monitored by the CD.
2. The aggregate of the logs is analyzed by the CD at the second week of each rotation, to ensure that the student is receiving exposure to a variety of patient populations.
3. Data analyzed, with respect to student clinical exposure, as appropriate for the discipline of the clinical rotation, may include but is not limited to:
 - Patient diagnoses
 - Clinical procedures observed
 - Clinical procedures assisted
 - Clinical procedures performed
 - Preventive care encounters
 - Emergent care encounters
 - Acute care encounters
 - Chronic care encounters
 - Inpatient care encounters
 - Surgical management, including pre, intra, and post-operative
 - Infant care cases (Less than 2 y/o)
 - Care of children (2-10 y/o)
 - Adolescent care (11-17 y/o)
 - Care of adults (18-64 y/o)
 - Care of the elderly (aged 65 and older)

- The extent to which the student was involved in the case
4. Students are required to be exposed to patient populations as outlined in the Program-Defined Expectations for SCPE Policy

Assessment of student performance

The determination that the students are being exposed to sufficient patient populations necessary to fulfill program expectations of the clinical experience shall be made based on:

1. The students' exposure to all criteria noted in the Program Expectations for SCPE Policy
2. The students' performance in the variety of assessments administered by the MPAS program, as outlined in the Program Expectations in SCPE Policy. These assessments are given by different individuals and administered frequently during the clinical year, whose aggregate data are analyzed by the CD on a monthly basis.
3. Student performance on assessments during the clinical year will be continuously evaluated (at least monthly) by the CD.
 - a. At least quarterly, the CD will correlate student performance with the clinical sites/preceptors.
 - i. If a site/preceptor is found to have a correlation with consistently poor student performance (defined as assessment scores < 80% or equivalent), the CD will suspend student assignments to the site, pending a meeting with the site/preceptor to discuss student performance, learning outcomes, and program expectations with the site/preceptor.
 - ii. Further assignment of students to the site/preceptor will depend on the discretion of the CD.

Dismissal of clinical sites and/or preceptors

Clinical sites/preceptors may be dismissed from the MPAS program at the discretion of the CD if any of the following are true of the clinical site and/or preceptor:

1. Found to have consistently poor evaluations by students (defined as less than 3 on a 1 to 5 Likert Scale) despite meeting with the CD to discuss program expectations and undergoing an individualized faculty development plan.
2. Found to not be appropriately supervising students, as noted during a site visit or through student evaluation of the preceptor and clinical site, and persisting despite meeting with the CD to discuss program expectations.
3. Found to be an unsafe environment for students
4. Associated with consistently poor student performance on clinical year assessments (defined as assessment scores < 80% or equivalent) and persisting despite meeting with the CD to discuss program expectations and undergoing an individualized faculty development plan.
5. The CD evaluates the criteria as described in the Program Expectations for Clinical Sites and Preceptors and finds that the site/preceptor is no longer suitable for use by the MPAS Program. Examples may include but are not limited to:
 - a. A negative response to any of the criteria
 - b. Ineffective or absent supervision of the PA student

- c. Student schedule that is less than what would be expected of a full time PA employed in the practice, as per the clinical site
- d. The use of students as a substitute for paid staff
- e. Clinical site does not provide sufficient patient exposure to allow each student to meet program expectations and acquire the competencies needed for entry into clinical PA practice.
- f. Clinical site does not provide the student access to physical facilities, patient populations and supervision necessary to fulfill program expectations of the clinical experience.
- g. FOUND TO HAVE COMMITTED ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, AS DEFINED BY FGCU POLICY 1.006 NON-DISCRIMINATION, ANTI-HARASSMENT, AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT.

Process for Orienting Clinical Instructional Faculty

1. The CD will discuss the MPAS program philosophy and curriculum with the potential preceptor and shall provide the preceptor with:
 - a. A current copy of the Preceptor Handbook.
 - b. A copy of all learning outcomes associated with the discipline to which the clinical rotation pertains.
2. The CD will ensure that all preceptors understand the learning outcomes that are required of MPAS program students prior to having a student assigned to the preceptor, and will verify that the preceptor has continued understanding of the learning outcomes at least annually.

Policy for Supervision of MPAS Students during SCPE

1. There must be a member of the MPAS Instructional Faculty (i.e. preceptor) to assess and supervise the student's progress in achieving learning outcomes.
2. The preceptor or his/her designee is responsible to offer the student feedback in the student's progress during the rotation, and to submit to the MPAS program an End-of-Rotation Preceptor Evaluation of Student Form.
3. No student may be at a clinical site without a designated preceptor to whom the student is assigned and who is supervising that student.
4. "Supervision" as used herein refers to the ability of the preceptor to responsibly exercise control and provide direction over the actions of the PA student.
5. In providing supervision, the preceptor shall frequently review and discuss the student's performance, and provide teaching.
6. Supervision requires the easy availability or physical presence of the preceptor to the student.
7. In determining whether supervision is adequate, the following factors may be considered by the CD:
 - a. The complexity of the tasks assigned to the student;
 - b. The risk to the patient;

- c. The background, training and skill of the student;
 - d. The adequacy of the direction in terms of its form;
 - e. The setting in which the tasks are performed;
 - f. The availability of the preceptor;
 - g. The necessity for immediate attention; and
 - h. The number of other persons that the preceptor must supervise.
8. Procedures performed by PA students must be done with the physical presence of the preceptor on the premises so that the preceptor is immediately available to the PA student when needed.

Associated ARC-PA Standards 5th Edition

1. **A1.01** When more than one institution is involved in the provision of academic and/or clinical education, responsibilities of the respective institutions for instruction and supervision of students must be clearly described and documented in a manner signifying agreement by the involved institutions. Signed affiliation agreement(s) must define the responsibilities of each party related to the educational program for students, must specify whose policies govern, and must document student access to educational resources and clinical experiences. While one agreement between the sponsoring institution and each clinical entity to cover multiple professional disciplines is acceptable, these agreements are expected to include specific notations acknowledging the terms of participation between the PA program and each clinical entity. Agreements are expected to be signed by an authorized individual(s) of each participating entity.
2. **A1.10** The sponsoring institution must support the program in:
 - a) securing clinical sites and preceptors sufficient in number to allow all students to meet the program's learning outcomes for supervised clinical practice experiences and
 - b) ensuring all required rotations are located within the United States
3. **A2.16** The program must:
 - a) verify and document that all instructional faculty actively serving as supervised clinical practice experience preceptors hold a valid license that allows them to practice at the clinical site,
 - b) verify and document all instructional faculty actively serving as supervised clinical practice experience preceptors hold valid certification that allows them to practice in the area of instruction, and
 - c) orient all instructional faculty to the specific learning outcomes it requires of students
4. **A2.17** In each location to which a student is assigned for didactic instruction or supervised clinical practice experiences, the program must inform the student which principal or instructional faculty member is designated by the program to assess and

supervise the student's progress in achieving the learning outcomes it requires of students and how to contact this faculty member.

5. **A3.03** The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply a policy for prospective and enrolled students that they must not be required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors.
6. **A3.05** The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply a policy that PA students must not substitute for or function as:
 - a) instructional faculty and
 - b) clinical or administrative staff.
7. **B3.05** Instructional faculty for the supervised clinical practice portion of the educational program must consist primarily of practicing physicians and PAs
8. **B3.06** Supervised clinical practice experiences should occur with: a) physicians who are specialty board certified in their area of instruction, b) NCCPA certified PAs, or c) other licensed health care providers qualified in their area of instruction.
9. **C2.01** The program must define and maintain effective processes and document the initial and ongoing evaluation of all sites and preceptors used for supervised clinical practice experiences, to ensure students are able to fulfill program learning outcomes with access to: a) physical facilities, b) patient populations, and c) supervision.

Next Review: 5/2022

Results of Modifications:

6/2021 Updated to ARC Standards