Preface
Welcome to University of the Cumberlands Physician Assistant Program. This Handbook is published to aid students who are beginning their first year of Physician Assistant training at University of the Cumberlands. The handbook should be used in conjunction with the following:

- University of the Cumberlands online catalog: www.ucumberlands.edu
- Internet posting of University of the Cumberlands: www.ucumberlands.edu
- PA Program Web Site: http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/pa

Each student needs to clearly understand both the college and program-specific policies. Please read these sources carefully and contact the PA faculty with any questions or concerns you may have with respect to these important documents and how they apply to you.

Occasionally, updates, corrections, additions or other changes to this handbook become necessary. The PA Program reserves the right to alter the contents of this handbook as needed and at any time. Any changes apply to all current and prospective students. The faculty reserves the right to alter the curriculum, schedule of required courses, exams and other regulations. Every effort will be made to keep students well informed with respect to any changes.

Validation of college registration implies the student’s acceptance of the published academic rules and regulations found in this and any other official program or college publication.
Letter from the Director

Putting together a comprehensive program has been a challenging undertaking, but in each step of the process the program has been laid out with future students such as you in mind. It has been the aim of the department that you will be provided with the extensive knowledge and skills required to prepare you as competent and successful physician assistant professionals.

With the ever growing demand for physician assistants, a decision to study for licensure is a well founded one. The job market can take you anywhere in the United States and to a growing number of other countries as well. It is a job for those who love problem solving and people. It requires a high level of work ethic and dedication, but in the end, the rewards for a job well done are both intrinsic and extrinsic as you will likely make life-long friends while earning a competitive salary.

Outlined in the pages to follow are description, objectives, and admission requirements of the program.

Eddie Perkins, DO, FACOOG
Program Director, Physician Assistant Program
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General Information about Physician Assistants

The Role of a Physician Assistant
A physician assistant is a health care professional licensed to practice medicine under the supervision of a physician. The physician assistant serves in a myriad of settings, allowing for career flexibility and the ability to specialize. The typical duties of a physician assistant include: Taking a patient medical history; performing physical examinations; ordering and interpreting laboratory tests; diagnosing and treating medical illnesses; assisting physicians in surgery; performing routine medical procedures; and prescribing medications. Physician assistant education prepares the physician assistant to be professionally competent and able to identify with physicians in terms of thought, patterns of action, and dedication to ethical and legal values and concerns.

Information about Physician Assistants

The Physician Assistant profession Origin
In the 1960s, physicians and educators recognized a shortage of primary care physicians. To expand the delivery of quality medical care, Dr. Eugene Stead of the Duke University Medical Center put together the first class of PAs in 1965. He selected Navy corpsmen who received considerable medical training during their military service. He based the curriculum of the PA program on his knowledge of the fast-track training of military physicians.

What does "PA-C" stand for?
It means that the PA has been certified after program graduation and testing by the NCCPA. To maintain certification, a physician assistant must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and take the recertification exam every six years.

Physician Assistant Education
PAs are educated in the medical model designed to complement physician training. Education consists of classroom and laboratory instruction in basic medical and behavioral sciences, followed by clinical rotations. PA programs must be accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) after meeting ARC-PA standards.

The physician and a physician assistant Working Relationship
The physician and PA practice as members of a medical team. The physician assistant is a representative of the physician, treating the patient in the style and manner developed and directed by the supervising physician. Referral or consultation between with the physician is done for unusual or hard to manage cases.

Reference: the above information was borrowed and adapted from: http://www.aapa.org/geninfo
**Physician Assistant Professional Oath**

All Physician Assistants make the pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

- Hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all human beings.
- Uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice.
- Recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- Treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- Hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- Assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my practice.
- Seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- Work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- Use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- Respect my professional relationship with the physician.
- Share and expand knowledge within the profession.

(Source: [http://saaapa.aapa.org/students/grad/oath.htm](http://saaapa.aapa.org/students/grad/oath.htm).)
Our Program

History: The faculty and administration of University of the Cumberlands initiated and began developing a Physician Assistant Program in 2008. This program was established to extend the institution’s historical service to the region and build upon the strengths of its current science programs. The MPAS program has been carefully researched, organized, and articulated so that it may be a worthwhile learning experience for degree candidates. The University has taken stock of its resources and determined that these will more than meet the needs of the new program. The PA program faculty who has been assembled look forward to this opportunity as they pursue fulfillment of the Physician Assistant Program mission in this region.

Mission: The mission of University of the Cumberlands Physician Assistant Program is to educate competent, compassionate and caring Physician Assistants to be an integral part of the modern professional health care team for underserved areas of Kentucky, the nation and on an international level.

Vision: University of the Cumberlands Physician Assistant program strives for professional excellence in an environment of compassion and team cooperation with the common goal of producing professionals who serve as a vital part of the health care team. It is our intent to prepare clinicians whose lifestyle reflects a commitment to lifelong learning, leadership and service to their community.

Goals: In accordance with its mission, the UCPAP strives to graduate clinicians fully prepared for employment as competent and caring physician assistants. In order to do this the program has outline several goals aligned with the ARC-PA competencies. It is thus the purpose of the program to:

1. Prepare physician assistants with a strong knowledge base in biomedical and clinical sciences supported by the ability to apply analytic thinking to clinical situations.
2. Instill students with the interpersonal communication skills necessary to develop effective information exchange with patients, their families, and professionals in the healthcare system.
3. Teach students to provide effective patient care necessary for treatment of health problems and the promotion of physical, psychological, and spiritual wellness.
4. Develop physician assistants knowledgeable in legal requirements and respectful of the diversity of the PA profession in order to graduate PAs possessing a high degree of professionalism, commitment to Christian ethics, and integrity.
5. Provide students with the opportunity to understand practice-based learning and improvement by engaging each student in critical analysis of their own experience and medical literature so that they continuously self-improve.
6. Expose students to clinical practice that encompasses the societal, organizational and economic systems that tie into healthcare delivery in order that they may be prepared to deliver optimal patient care.

Accreditation Statement: The Physician Assistant Program at University of the Cumberlands received Provisional Accreditation through the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for
the Physician Assistant (ARCPA) in September 2009. Provisional Accreditation is the status of accreditation granted for a limited, defined period of time to a new program that, at the time of the site visit, has demonstrated its preparedness to initiate a program in accordance with the Standards. Provisional Accreditation does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. All students who matriculate during Provisional Accreditation period are permitted to sit for the PANCE examination.

**Faculty and Staff:** The faculty coordinates, directs, and oversees the curriculum and each student’s academic progress. You will work closely with each of these individuals throughout the program. The faculty maintains an open-door policy to enhance accessibility, communication, and professional exchange. The faculty is a talented and diverse team with a considerable amount of educational and clinical experience. The brief biographies will note the many years of experience that contribute to the high quality education.

**Dr. Eddie Perkins DO, FACOOG:** Dr. Perkins graduated from Williamsburg City School and Cumberland College. Following employment with a major pharmaceutical company he graduated from the University of Health Sciences in Kansas City Missouri. He completed a transitional year in family medicine and then a four year residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology through Ohio University. He is a board certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist. Dr. Perkins has extensive laparoscopic surgical experience.

**Jennifer Harrington- PA-C, M.H.S.:** Jennifer was trained for her PA degree at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania after graduating with a B.S. in biology from Grove City College in Pennsylvania. She has served as a PA in family practice in the local area for 10 years. Past experiences include medical missions in Malaysia and Papua New Guinea. Jennifer has a keen interest in critical thinking and medical ethics. She is the mother of three young children and enjoys outdoor family activities.

**Dr. Peter Geissler:** Dr. Geissler has a broad academic background. He earned two earned bachelor degrees, one in engineering and the other in physics. Thereafter, he earned two masters degrees and Ph.D. in physiology from Yale University. Dr. Geissler then lectured at the University of California and served as a medical research scientist. During this period, Peter earned a masters degree in biophysics from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master’s degree in engineering from the University of California. Thereafter, Dr. Geissler studied clinical human anatomy at Oxford University, and earned a masters degree in basic medical science. Thereafter, he served as Director of the Cambridge Overseas Medical Training Program in Africa, Acting Dean of Kigezi International School of Medicine in Uganda, and Chancellor of Saint Christopher’s College Medicine in Senegal.

**Joe Reed PA-C:** Graduated from the University of Kentucky Physician Assistant Program and later earned a Master’s degree from the University of Nebraska. Eight years of experience in Family Medicine with emphasis in Preventive Health Care. Passion for implementing technology into the health care field. Enjoys watching collegiate sports, especially the UC Patriots.

**Dr. David Williams, MD:** David Williams is a practicing board certified family physician. He has been in solo practice in Williamsburg for twenty years. He is a graduate of Jellico High School in Jellico, TN, Tennessee Technological University and the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. Dr. Williams serves on various boards in the community including the Whitley County Board of Health. He currently serves as medical director of the Williamsburg Nursing Home. Dr. Williams is a deacon at the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg. He enjoys hunting with his two teenage sons. He, his wife and sons reside in Williamsburg KY.

**Dr. Sonia Young, PT, DPT:** Dr. Young is a practicing physical therapist who attended Cumberland College and then transferred to the University of Louisville to complete a Bachelor of Health Science in Physical Therapy. She then continued her education at Shenandoah University completing a transitional Doctorate of Physical Therapy. She is now enrolled in a Doctor of Education program at the University of the Cumberlands. She has over 11 years experience as a physical therapist working with a variety of patient groups in multiple clinical settings. Her primary area of practice is in pediatrics. She enjoys spending time with her husband and three boys.
Program Details

Physician Assistant Program Degree Requirements

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Degree (MPAS) is earned through the continuous twenty-four-month program of studies consisting of 101 master’s level credit hours. These hours are divided into sixty-one credit hours of Didactics (classroom focused instruction) and forty credit hours of Clinical Rotations. A complete list of courses with course descriptions is located on the curriculum portion of the program’s web site: http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/graduate/pa/curriculum/

Physician Assistant Program Expenses

1. Tuition/Fees:
   a. First Year $29,500
   b. Second Year $29,500
   c. Total $59,000

2. Living, Transportation, and Conference Travel Expenses: Students are responsible for arranging their own housing accommodations, transportation, and any expenses associated with travel and relocations performed as a requirement of the Program. Students will also be required to attend one or two preselected Physician Assistant conferences. Students will be responsible for travel, conference registration fees, lodging, and meals during the conference.

3. Textbooks and Information Resources: Each student will be required to purchase textbooks. The approximate cost will be $1500. A subscription to an online evidence-based peer reviewed medical information resource is also required.

4. Personal Computer: Each student must have a laptop computer for use through the program. A list of specifications is provided and can be found at: http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/graduate/pa/students/new.html

5. Medical Equipment: Each student must purchase a high quality Stethoscope, a half length white lab coat, a set of tuning forks, and a reflex hammer. The total cost of these items may range from $150 to $200.

6. Name Tags: Students are required to purchase nametags which will be worn at certain times during the didactic year. The program may provide these nametags at a nominal fee.

7. Health Insurance: Students MUST carry and maintain health insurance throughout the Program. Proof of insurance must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions office prior to matriculation.

8. Worker’s Compensation Insurance: Many clinical practice sites require students to provide proof of compensation coverage in addition to personal health insurance coverage. If you are assigned a clinical rotation at a facility that mandates this added insurance, the cost of purchasing the required policy must be borne by the student.

9. Background Check: Each student must obtain and provide the Program with a copy of a cleared background check. This will need to be done once before matriculation and again before clinical rotations. The student is responsible for any costs associated with this background check. For further information about the process, please refer to the KY police webpage at: http://www.kentuckystatepolice.org/background_check_forms.htm
Refund Policy
Should circumstances necessitate that a student in the MPAS program withdraw from the University, the University’s standard policy on refunding tuition and fees will apply. This policy for traditional semester-length courses applies for both Pre-Professional candidates and for candidates enrolled in Didactics courses or in Clinical Rotations.

Student Health Services
Core faculty must not participate as health care providers for any student in the PA program. If a student approaches faculty for health care they will refer him/her to another available provider not associated with the program. The following list of local providers is given so students may select a physician to meet medical needs during their time at the University.

1. Cumberland River Clinic, 402 Cumberland Avenue, Williamsburg, KY
2. Durham Lee G, MD, 475 North Highway 25 West, Williamsburg, KY
4. DelMundo Cecile, MD, 821 North Highway 25 West, Williamsburg, KY

Student Security and Safety
University of the Cumberlands and its Physician Assistant Program strive to assure the security and safety of students in all locations in which instruction occurs throughout the curriculum. Students should assume responsibility for notifying the program and/or university when security or safety concerns arise.

Orientation
All students are required to attend the two day program orientation. During the orientation vital program information will be given and questions answered. Each student will have a copy of the handbook containing program policies and procedures, and will be given assistance in understanding the program policies and practices. At this time students will have the opportunity to meet the course instructors and get acquainted with program materials and expectations. There will also be a study skills workshop as well as training in the use of health-related internet databases and the University of the Cumberlands medical library.

Student Employment
Students are strongly discouraged from seeking or maintaining employment while enrolled in the Program. If a student does work and encounters academic and/or disciplinary problems, the student may be counseled to cease employment. Under no circumstances will employment be considered as a reason for excused absence from class or exams.

CPR
CPR certification will be required prior to clinical rotations. A copy of the CPR certification card must be supplied to the program and placed in the student’s file by the end of the didactic year.
**Program Policies and Procedures**

**Chain of Command**
The responsibility for the administration of the policies and procedures of the Physician Assistant Program resides with the Program Director with the assistance of the Academic Coordinator, Medical Director, and Clinical Coordinator. This administration is ultimately under the oversight of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Any appeals concerning program policies and procedures must be made in writing through this chain of administrative oversight.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all scheduled lectures, laboratories, case study activities, etc. It is their responsibility to arrive on time, to be prepared, and to remain for the entire class period. Please follow the outlined attendance policy below:

1. The student makes known any foreseeable absence to the course instructor and/or Program Director in writing at the earliest possible time (e-mail is acceptable).
2. The course instructor and/or director will inform the student if this will be considered an excused absence.
3. If an absence is excused, course work may be made up within 3 days.
4. If an absence is unexcused the course instructor may assign a failing grade to any missed assignments.
5. At the end of each module, each course instructor will supply the academic coordinator and/or program director with a list of dates and students who were absent, tardy or premature class departure without a known excuse.
6. Unexcused or excessive absence may lead to dismissal from the program.
7. Incomplete course work due to absence may result in a failing course grade.
8. Following any absence, a health care provider’s documentation of the reason for absence and fitness to return to full Program activity may be required by the Program Director. Failure to do so will be considered evidence of unprofessional behavior and will be grounds for evaluation of the individual’s fitness to continue in the Program.
9. If absenteeism hinders the student’s academic performance appropriate action will be taken.
10. Absences in excess of **16 hours per semester** are considered excessive and in violation of the Program’s professional behavior standards. The student may be subject to disciplinary action or program dismissal.

**Accommodations/Disabilities Policy**
University of the Cumberlands is committed to providing courses, programs, services, and facilities that are accessible to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for identifying themselves, providing appropriate documentation, and requesting reasonable accommodations. In order to ensure provision of needed accommodations and support services, students with disabilities are to contact the University of the Cumberlands graduate department immediately after accepting a position in the Program. Necessary documentation will be made and a decision will be made if and how the program will establish an accommodations.
Drug and Alcohol Policy
Physician Assistant students must follow the University of the Cumberlands policies on drug and alcohol abuse. These policies are found in the University of the Cumberlands Catalog. The procedure below should be followed and documented in the student’s file.
   1. The program director should be notified in writing upon any suspicion of drug or alcohol abuse by a student.
   2. The program director is responsible for meeting with that student and making a referral, if appropriate, to student services.
   3. Student services may refer that student for evaluation and treatment by a licensed substance abuse counselor.
   4. If a student refuses treatment for behaviors that are hindering academic and professional performance, he or she may be dismissed from the program at the discretion of the program director and Dean of Student Affairs.

Personal Counseling Policy
Students experiencing a personal problem, whether it is interfering with academic performance or not, are encouraged to follow the protocol outlined below:
   1. Student should report the issue to their instructor/advisor.
   2. Instructor/advisor notifies the program director who files a student encounter form.
   3. The program director refers the problem to Academic Affairs.
   4. Academic Affairs will refer students to the Director of Counseling and Career Services.
   5. The Director of Counseling and Career Services will determine if the student needs to be referred to for further personal counseling. (Confidentiality waivers are signed and records filed with the agency to which the student is referred.)

Nondiscrimination Policy
It is our policy to afford equal opportunity in employment and admissions to all individuals. No person, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation or handicap shall be excluded or denied benefits or otherwise discriminated against in employment or admission or participation in education programs or activities. Discrimination shall not be tolerated in any service or operation including, but not limited to, recruiting, testing, counseling, awarding financial aid, research, etching, assignment of work-study and assistantships, granting of degrees, or participation in student activities.

Sexual Harassment Policy
It is the policy of the College to provide a working, learning, and teaching environment free from unlawful harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of any student, on or off campus, is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against a person who reports or complains about harassment, or who participates in the investigation of a harassment complaint, is also prohibited. Employees and students will be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these policies.
**Evaluation of Professional Behavior**

Formal evaluation of professional behavior will be performed by the course instructors at the end of each semester using the *Professional Development Assessment Tool* as a guideline. If a student receives an unsatisfactory rating on any professionalism evaluation he/she will be placed on Academic Probation which will continue until the next regularly scheduled evaluation. Any subsequent unsatisfactory professionalism evaluation will result in immediate dismissal from the Program.

Professional behavior includes: demonstrating respect for everyone, holding oneself to ethical and moral standards of behaviors, and developing the knowledge and skills that enable provision of competent and compassionate care for their patients. At a minimum, University of the Cumberlands Physician Assistant students are required to abide by the profession’s Code of Ethics. Faculty who believe a student is in direct breach of the code of ethics will make this aware to the Program Director. Contact and discussion with the student will take place and a course of action will be taken to remediate the problem. Unwillingness to resolve the dispute and continual failure to demonstrate the qualities defined in the AAPA Professional Code of Ethics will serve as grounds for dismissal.

**Retention Standards**

Earning an MPAS Degree is predicated on the faculty’s determination that a student is *suitable* for the practice of medicine in terms of his/her personal professionalism, personal conduct, and academic achievement. Grades alone are not sufficient to warrant promotion to the next semester, clinical phase, or graduation. The faculty reserves the right to dismiss any student when the student’s documented behavior is not in keeping with the standards of the medical profession or when the student’s presence in the PA Program is considered detrimental to the student in question, the other students in the college, or to society in general.

**Participation of Students as Human Subjects**

All students are required to participate in physical exam training in a professional and cooperative manner. They will be asked to wear clothing that will allow physical examination by another student. Students will be asked to drape patients properly to limit embarrassment. Students will never be asked to perform pelvic/rectal examination procedures on one another. Please follow the guidelines below to report concerns of unprofessionalism during physical diagnostics classes:

1. If an instructor has a concern regarding a student’s unprofessional behavior (including but not limited to inappropriate physical contact, unpreparedness, unwillingness to participate, inappropriate patient draping, or unsuitable verbal comments) he should provide, in writing, his concerns to the program director or academic coordinator and the student within 2 days of the incident.
2. If the unprofessional behavior continues, the program director will notify the student in writing and meet with the student within 7 days of the continued violation.
3. If the issue remains unresolved, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will be notified and appropriate action will be taken including but not limited to a failing grade for the course or dismissal from the program.
**Personal Attire**

It is the responsibility of the student and faculty to dress appropriately remaining clean, modestly, and professionally dressed and well-groomed at all times. Students may be requested to wear their University of the Cumberlands name tag during some lectures and should have them readily available.

1. The course instructor should warn a student in writing if he/she feels the student is in violation of professional dress and a copy of that documentation will be placed in the student’s file.
2. If the problem continues, the Program director will be notified and a meeting will be scheduled with the student within one week. Documentation of this meeting will be placed in the student file.
3. Recurring unprofessional behaviors may result in dismissal from the program; further violations of this policy should be made known to the Program Director who will consult with student services to determine appropriate disciplinary action. All documentations of these encounters will be placed in the student file.

**Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence from the Program may be granted by the Program Director for medical or personal reasons. Requests for leaves of absence must be made in writing to the Program Director and the Dean of Academic affairs. Decisions regarding the resumption of course work are dependent upon receipt of documentation that satisfactory resolution has occurred of the problem necessitating the leave of absence.

**Withdrawal**

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the MPAS program in accordance following the University’s general policies and procedures. Written notice of intent to withdraw must be provided to the Program Director prior to initiating the formal withdrawal process.

**Physical Examination**

All students accepted for admission to the Physician Assistant program are required to submit a completed *Health History Questionnaire* form prior to matriculation. This form will verify tuberculosis screening and current immunization or laboratory evidence of immunity for those infectious recommended by the CDC for Health Care Workers. This confidential form can be found at: [http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/graduate/pa/students/new.html](http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/graduate/pa/students/new.html)

**Name and Contact Information Changes**

It is every student’s responsibility to keep the Program Administrative Assistant informed of current contact information throughout their program and enrollment. Changes of name, address, telephone number, and e-mail must be reported within seven days of occurrence.

The Program will not be held responsible for consequences incurred as a result of our inability to contact students in a timely manner due to contact information changes that were not reported to the Program.
Program Evaluations
Students are required to complete all course/instructor evaluations. Student input is a vital and integral component of the program’s ongoing self-assessment and improvement process and is an absolute requirement for program accreditation. All evaluations will be completed in a confidential manner.

Academic Policies and Procedures

Academic Advisement
Students will be assigned an academic advisor from the Program’s core faculty. Students should maintain regular communication with their advisor, especially if academic, technical or professional difficulties are identified. Advisors will provide feedback about current academic standing and review the end-of-semester faculty evaluations of the students.

Probation
Being placed on probation is a warning to the student that academic performance is below the minimum requirements of the Program. During the probation period, a student has the opportunity to raise the GPA or correct other specifically identified problems. If these deficiencies are not remediated, a student may be dismissed from the Program. Probationary status is determined and monitored by the Program Director in consultation with the Academic Coordinator and the Registrar. The minimum length of probation is one semester.

Academic Integrity
Dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. In addition to the ethical issue of honesty, as a professional program, we hold all our students to the AAPA Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession. (http://www.aapa.org/policy/ethical-conduct.pdf) Additionally, honesty and scholarship require that a person exercise care to make proper acknowledgement when using another’s intellectual work. Disregard of this standard of morality and scholarship lays a person open to charges of plagiarism or cheating. Refer to the University of the Cumberlands Catalog for details on standards for academic integrity.

Grading Policy
Grades are calculated on a percentage basis. All final course grade percentages are rounded to the nearest integer. Final course grades are assigned according to the following standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>student has exceeded expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>student has met expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>student is below expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 70</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>student has failed expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An “I” may be temporarily awarded to individuals who fail to complete course requirements within the defined time. A final grade of “F” in any PA course is a non-passing grade and results in automatic and immediate dismissal from the PA Program.
Academic Assessment Tools

Student assessments of learning and academic achievement will take several forms during the Physician Assistant Program. Course instructors will follow syllabi for guidelines and use a variety of methods to assess students. These may include:

1. Written examinations - to be aligned with PA competencies
2. Clinical Skills Assessments - aligned with technical standards
3. Objective Standardized Clinical Evaluations (OSCE)
4. Written Reports on medical topics
5. Oral Reports.
6. Faculty Evaluations of professional performance.
7. Clinical correlation group assignments.
8. Research projects.

Academic Progress

Students are required to maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 and achieve a course letter grade of “C” or better in all courses to progress within the Program.

1. Any individual who does not meet the specified end-of-semester GPA requirements will be placed on Academic Probation for one semester.
2. A student placed upon probation must meet with the Program Director and Academic Coordinator to establish a Remediation Plan. The terms of this plan must be completed before probation is lifted.
3. The cumulative GPA must be raised to the minimum requirement during the probationary semester.
4. Probationary students who do not improve their academic status after one semester normally will not be allowed to continue in the program. Failure to meet the minimum GPA at the end of the probationary semester will result in immediate dismissal from the program.
5. Unless a Leave of Absence has been granted, students must complete all the requirements of the Program within three years of being admitted to the program.

Testing Format, Policies, and Procedures

The classes are set up in a modular format. One body system is covered simultaneously by each class. At the completion of each module a comprehensive exam will be given covering each of the courses.

1. End of Module Exams: An exam will be scheduled at the end of each module. A computerized or written test will be given encompassing questions from all seven courses. The students will then rotate through physical exam and clinical skills testing stations. There, they will be evaluated on diagnostic examination skills, ability to formulate a differential diagnosis, procedural proficiency, written and oral patient presentation, and professionalism. After the exam the scores will be appropriately divided to the associated class and the student will be assigned separate grades for each class. Students are expected to achieve a minimum grade of “C” or better on each sub score for the module.

2. Computerized testing: If a technologic failure should occur during a computerized exam the faculty will make every effort to be equitable in making decisions about how to adjust for these technical difficulties.
3. **Testing Regulations**: If a test proctor determines that a student is in violation of any of the following policies during an exam, the program director will be notified and immediate action will be taken. Based on the offense, the student may be asked to correct the problem, leave the testing site without finishing the exam, or be assigned a failing grade for the exam. If a student has violated a policy he may not be permitted to retake the exam.
   a. No personal materials, notes, books, cell phones, food or drinks, calculators, PDAs, etc. may be present during testing.
   b. Baseball caps, visors or other eye-shading headwear is not permitted during the exam.
   c. All computer programs must be closed before logging in to the test site. The student must not attempt to access any other software programs during testing.
   d. No questions may be asked of the testing proctor while the test is being administered.
   e. Once a student completes a test he/she must leave the testing area.

4. **Test Absence**: Students are expected to take examinations at the designated time. In the event of an illness, the student must contact the University of the Cumberlands Academic Dean *BEFORE* the test to inform her/him of the anticipated absence. A student who has missed an examination due to excused illness or personal crisis will have NO MORE than 48 hours in which to complete that examination or the first day back in classes, whichever occurs first. Students with a prolonged illness or personal crisis will be reviewed individually by the School’s Academic Dean and arrangements made accordingly. Student absences from scheduled examinations and laboratory sessions will be excused only under extraordinary circumstances. Examinations will not be administered prior to the scheduled examination time without the approval of the Academic Dean and the Program Director.

5. **Post-test Reviews and exam grading policy**:
   - The program will make every effort to schedule a test review session on the same day as the exam. At this time there will be opportunity to ask questions and gain insight into the student’s personal performance. Please view this time as an educational experience.
   - After the exam day, the scores will be appropriately divided out among the seven courses and the student will be assigned separate grades for each course. Students are expected to achieve a minimum grade of “C” or better on each sub score for the module. Dividing out the scores and grading the exam is expected to take about a week. Exam grades will be posted as soon as they become available. Students are asked to be patient through this process and to understand that it is strict program policy to give no individual grades before all grades are ready to be posted.
   - The group exam will be graded differently than the regular exam. It will not be divided into sub scores for the particular courses but will rather be graded once as a whole. If a group gets greater than a 95% on the group exam each individual will have 3 percentage points added to the individual exams for each course that module. If a group gets greater than a 90% on the exam each individual will have 2 percentage points added to the individual exams for each course that module.
   - The group testing and point awarding policy was created to provide a learning experience for students. In this experience peers will have an opportunity to gain insight from one another, work problems out as a team, and teach others in their group when they have more knowledge in a particular area. This is viewed as an important part of the learning process of a Physician Assistant student.

6. **Exam question challenges policy**
After each modular exam, students will have the opportunity to clarify their knowledge about particular exam questions. If a student has a just reason to believe one of the questions was written poorly he may submit a challenge to a particular question. All question challenges should be submitted to the academic coordinator within 24 hours of exam day in order to be considered for removal. Additionally, each student may only challenge one question per modular exam. The actual question must be written down as well as the question number. A student must also submit clear and just reasoning why he or she is challenging that particular question. Examples of reasoning include notes, research articles, or text selections that indicate the question was inaccurate. A question will not be considered for removal unless >50% of the class has answered it wrong. After carefully reviewing the challenges, the academic coordinator will notify students of the decision rendered for each exam. This challenge process will be used to improve future exams for future PA classes and, if reasonable justification is made, a test question may be thrown out for that particular exam and the student grades on that exam will be adjusted accordingly.

7. Modular Test day schedule system:
An exam will be scheduled at the end of each module. A computerized or written multiple choice test similar to the PANCE exam will be given encompassing questions from all seven courses. Students will take this test individually, and in some modules will then have the opportunity to take the same exam in pre-assigned small groups for additional credit points. Students will also rotate through physical exam and clinical skills testing stations. There, they will be evaluated on diagnostic examination skills, ability to formulate a differential diagnosis, procedural proficiency, written and oral patient presentation, and professionalism. An example of a modular test day schedule:
1. 1-2 hours for written exam
2. 30 minute break
3. 1-2 hours class will be split into two groups one group will receive Physical Diagnosis and Surgical- Emergency practical exams and the other half will take small group exams.
4. 1 hour lunch break
5. 1-2 hours class will be split into two groups one group will receive Physical Diagnosis and Surgical- Emergency practical exams and the other half will take small group exams.
6. 30 minute break
7. 1 hour class will reconvene to go over the exam with the course professors.

Because the exam day may staggered, we expect that students will not communicate with others regarding practical exam contents or other test questions. Any student breaching this is considered to be cheating and will be dealt with accordingly. This may involve receiving a 0 for the exam at stake. The students will be notified of the exam schedule in advance. Due to the nature of modular exams you may be required to come earlier and stay longer than on other class days. Each student is expected to comply with these schedules. There are some modules which will not have the group or practical exams. We will make every effort to make the students aware of these cases well in advance.
Remediation Policy

Remediation is required when a faculty member identifies a deficiency in a student’s knowledge, skills, abilities, or professionalism. Remediation is also initiated when a failing grade is earned on a formal examination. Remediation does not ensure that the student will successfully attain the required level of performance, but it serves to support the student in their attempt at skill mastery. The remediation procedure is outlined below:

1. The instructor notifies the student and the academic coordinator, in writing, of the problem and the need to schedule a meeting.
2. The student will be asked to meet with the corresponding course instructor within two school days of written notification to assess the student’s program status and identify external influences that may have contributed to their unsatisfactory progress. If a specific need for assistance is identified, the advisor will refer the student to UC student services or the Academic Support Specialist, Susan Weaver, for counseling.
3. The student may be placed on probation if academic performance is below the minimum requirements of the Program. (see probation)
4. All correspondence stating course of action will be placed in the student’s file.
5. The instructor will assist the student in formulating a self directed remediation plan to overcome the identified deficiencies. The process is as follows.
   a. After reviewing the failed exam or assignment the student is to self analyze and determine the areas of weakness.
   b. The academic advisor or course director will look at the students self assessment in order to determine the specific topics of self initiated PANCE review study notes. (The format in which these notes are to be completed is outlined and described below) Anywhere from 2-5 topics may be assigned dependant on the student’s needs.
   c. The study notes assigned are to be completed within one week of this meeting and submitted in electronic form to the advisor or course instructor.
   d. The advisor or course instructor will evaluate those notes and provide feedback.
   e. The student may keep those notes as a valuable study tool for PANCE preparation.
6. Failure to successfully complete the required study notes by the deadline given by the instructor will be looked at as a lack of desire to move forward academically and therefore will result in the assignment of a failing grade (F) for the entire course in which the remediation was required.
7. Successful completion of each course is a requirement for continuation within the program. If remediation is not successful, the student may be dismissed or withdrawn from the program at that time. Counseling with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student services will be initiated.
8. Any student who must leave the program due to course failure may return the following year at the discretion of the program director.
9. A student is given three years in which he may complete the program before being required to reinitiate the application process.
**Professional Classroom Behavior and Appropriate use of digital devices policy:**
Professional behavior is viewed as an important part of the academic growth of a PA student. Classroom behavior is one way professionalism will be assessed and graded in each PA program course. This will be graded along with attendance using the professionalism evaluation tool. Students will be expected to silence cell phones and put away I-Pods and all other electronic devices before the beginning of class. Use of cell phones, for calls or texting, use of e-mail, social networking sites or other web sites during class, and use of other electronic devices not required for that lecture will all be considered unprofessional behavior. Additionally, students who do not participate attentively and actively, act in a disruptive way during lecture, or leave class early will be considered unprofessional. It is not adequate just to attend class, but while attending, the student should exhibit preparedness, professionalism and participation. The professionalism grading forms will be completed by the course instructors and each student will have a meeting with their faculty advisor every semester to discuss how well the student is performing in this area.

**PANCE Review Study Notes**

This study method is a very effective vehicle for students to prepare for the PANCE exam. By participating in the PANCE review study notes system, the student will be using multiple learning methods; such as, reading, writing, kinesthetic, and connecting the knowledge with in-class clinical discussions. Students will write an average of one page of notes for each topic assigned using the template outlined below. Students can use all reading resources. The textbooks utilized will depend on the topic assigned.

**Recommended Template for PANCE Notes:**

Pre-prep notes should include the following template approach:
1. Definition
2. Etiology
3. Basic Anatomy involved with the disease process
4. Pathogenesis
5. Clinical symptoms
6. Physical Examination (Description of the exams to be done, what tools are necessary, and what the practitioner is looking for during the exam)
7. Differential Diagnoses (at least 3)
8. Evaluation with a diagnostic approach
   i.e. history, PE, laboratory studies, X-ray, CT, MRI, etc.
9. Treatment including specific pharmacologic measures and appropriate surgical measures if necessary

**Student Grievances and Academic Appeals**
Students are encouraged to pursue informal resolutions to conflicts in a professional manner. Grievances of a non-academic nature, if formally pursued, must follow the policies and procedures described in the University of the Cumberlands Catalog (available on-line).
1. **Grade Grievances:** When a grade concern arises, it is the student’s responsibility to resolve the issue with the course instructor who was responsible for assigning the grade. If the matter cannot be resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student should contact his/her advisor for assistance. If still unresolved, a written appeal to the Program Director may be made within 5 days of the grade assignment. The Program Director will independently evaluate the situation and render a final decision.

2. **Academic Appeals:** The Program recognizes the rights of a student to appeal decisions affecting student progress. Appeals must be based upon the Program’s failure to follow established policies or procedures. Students must present evidence that supports their appeal of a program decision according to the appeal process as defined herein:
   a. All appeals must be submitted to the Program Director, in writing, within 5 working days of the occurrence that is the subject of the grievance.
   b. Appeals will be reviewed during a meeting of the Program core faculty and a decision will be rendered to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Students will be invited to attend the faculty meeting at which the appeal is considered to present their case and respond to any questions the faculty may have. This meeting is a purely an academic proceeding, no legal counsel will be allowed to attend or participate. The appellant student may, however, request participation by other students or non-program faculty with approval of the Program Director. Proceedings may not be recorded in any manner (audio, video, digital, etc.)
   c. Students who wish to challenge the Program’s decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to the Office of the Academic Vice President in writing within 10 working days of the Program’s appeal decision.
   d. All academic appeal decisions rendered by the Academic Vice President are final.

**Competencies Mastery**

The NCCPA has developed a document entitled *Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession* available online at [http://www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net). This document serves as a foundation by which PA students can chart their individual course toward attaining the fundamental competencies essential to PA profession. Our Program has adopted this manuscript as a resource for defining the basic knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviors of enrolled individuals. A brief summary of these competencies is noted below.

1. **Medical knowledge** - Comprehend pathophysiology, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion and disease prevention.
2. **Interpersonal and communication skills** - Verbal, nonverbal, and written.
3. **Patient care** - Assessment, evaluation, and management of patients.
4. **Professionalism** - Express of positive values and ideals as care is delivered; Prioritize the interests of those being served above one’s own; Know your own professional and personal limitations; Practice without impairment from substance abuse, cognitive deficiency, or mental illness; Demonstrate responsibility, ethical practice, and sensitivity to patient diversity; Adhere to legal and regulatory requirements.
5. **Practice-based learning and improvement** - Engage in critical analysis of one’s own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self-improvement in order to assess, evaluate, and improve personal patient care practices.
6. **Systems-based practice** Understand the larger system of health care, encompassing the societal, organizational, and economic environments in which care is delivered.

**Demonstration of Knowledge:**
The NCCPA has created an exam content blueprint for entry-level physician assistant certification to illustrate the breadth of competency expected of those who are seeking entry into the PA profession. It is highly recommended that each student visit the NCCPA website and print off the exam content blueprint to use as a study guide throughout the program. This PANCE blueprint can be found at: [http://www.nccpa.net/EX_sample.aspx?r=panc](http://www.nccpa.net/EX_sample.aspx?r=panc)

**Technical Standards**
Technical standards refer to the physical, cognitive and behavioral abilities required of all Physician Assistants. Students admitted to the Program are required to sign a statement verifying that they have no disabilities which will prevent them from practicing as a Physician Assistant. If a student has difficulty with any of the items on the technical standards statement, the Program will determine if reasonable accommodations can be made to meet the needs of the student. Students will be evaluated as to their ability to perform the Technical Standards throughout their educational experience. Individuals who do not satisfactorily demonstrate the required skills will be placed on Academic Probation, provided remediation and academic counseling, and reassessed at the end of the semester. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress in future assessments will result in dismissal from the Program. The technical standards contract is located on the program website: [http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/graduate/pa/students/new.html](http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/graduate/pa/students/new.html)
Resources

Physician Assistant Program Facilities
The Physician Assistant Department is housed in the first floor the Correll Science Building and the facilities include two instructional classrooms, a procedures/skills laboratory, a physical assessment laboratory, faculty offices, anatomy laboratory, and student lounge. The labs are fully equipped with patient beds, examination tables, select diagnostic equipment, patient simulators, and anatomic mannequins to assist students in learning and practicing important physical assessment and therapeutic skills. The anatomy laboratory maintains a collection of anatomic models and preserved human organs which demonstrate a myriad of normal and pathologic conditions. These resources must NOT be removed from the classroom.

University Conference Rooms
Multiple conference rooms are available on campus for student and program use including two in the Correll Science Complex.

University Computer Laboratories
Several computer laboratories are located on campus. The two library computer labs have several desktop computers with printer access. Students are provided a University of the Cumberlands user profile during orientation to utilize the campus computers and printers.

University Library
In the upper level of the campus library students have access to medical resources. The librarians are specifically trained in the needs of PA students and thus are excellent sources of information on how to access medical literature.

University Internet Addresses
University of the Cumberlands:  http://www.ucumberlands.edu
Campus Mail:  http://email.ucumberlands.edu
Program Website:  http://www.ucumberlands.edu/academics/pa

Physician Assistant Organizations
Student Academy of the AAPA (SAAAPA):  http://saaapa.aapa.org/index.htm
Accreditation Review Commission on Physician Assistant Education:  http://www.arc-pa.org/
National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)”  http://www.nccpa.net/
Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA):http://www.paeaonline.org/
Appendix 1: Professional Development Assessment Tool

As a PA student you are expected to achieve the highest level of professionalism. This is an example of an assessment tool that may be used to determine if you have achieved professional competency. Questions from this tool will be utilized by course instructors to determine the portion of the grade assigned to professionalism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the student represent oneself or one’s role appropriately, whether oral or written?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student follow the dress code as regards to its identifying features, or writings?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student seek and follow supervisory input in the decisions for care and treatment of patients?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student exhibit emotional stability, maturity, empathy, physical and mental stamina?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student demonstrate the ability to learn and function in a wide variety of settings? This includes demonstrating cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses to provide the standard of care.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there evidence that the student could communicate effectively, both verbally and written, using appropriate grammar, spelling, and vocabulary?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student act calmly in stressful situations?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the student able to work cooperatively, preserving relationships with other members of the health care team?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student report any physical handicap or health issues that may affect their ability to provide medical care or put the patient in danger?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student uphold ethical standards for health care?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student extend a full measure of professional ability and dedication during all assignments and lab sessions?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student show respect for other students or faculty members?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the student prompt and on time for classes?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the student uphold the honor code and exhibit academic integrity?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>