

MASTER PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
PRECEPTOR HANDBOOK:

SAMUEL
MERRITT
UNIVERSITY

Welcome
Samuel Merritt University – Clinical Preceptors

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to our preceptors for their hard work and dedication to the Samuel Merritt University Physician Assistant Program and our physician assistant (PA) students. The clinical experiences the student will obtain in your practice are of critical importance to a successful learning experience in the program. The clinical setting *synthesizes* concepts and application of principles for quality health care delivery. You, as a clinical preceptor, are the key to successful learning experiences in the clinical setting. The PA student will work closely with you, learning from your advice and example. Through your supervision, the student will progressively develop the skills and clinical judgment necessary to become a practicing PA.

Thank you for your commitment to PA education.

Definition of the Preceptor Role

The preceptor is an integral part of the teaching program. Preceptors will serve as role models for the student and, through guidance and teaching, will help students perfect skills in history taking, physical examination, effective communication, physical diagnosis, succinct recording and reporting, problem assessment, and plan development including a logical approach to further studies and therapy.

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SMU PA Program Mission:

Standard B1.01

The Master Physician Assistant (MPA) Program at Samuel Merritt University strives to serve the University and the medical community by preparing graduates who are interdependent medical providers, demonstrate commitment to the community and the profession through active leadership, manifest critical and creative thinking, utilize effective communication skills, and who possess the educational foundation for continued growth and development in a changing world of diverse cultures.

SMU PA Program Goals:

Standard A3.14b

1. To admit qualified applicants who will enhance the diversity of our student body
2. To educate highly skilled, knowledgeable PAs through rigorous didactic and clinical education
3. To encourage service and leadership to communities at the local, national and global levels
4. To graduate PAs who gain employment and practice in a variety of clinical settings

PRECEPTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT TO EXPECT AS A MPA PRECEPTOR:

- Orient students at the onset of the rotation with the practice/site policies and procedures and review the expectations and objectives for the rotation
- Provide ongoing and timely feedback regarding student clinical performance, knowledge base, and critical thinking skills by submitting mid-rotation and end-of-rotation evaluations
- Demonstrate, teach, delegate, observe and supervise clinical activities in order to aid in the development of clinical skills and ensure proper patient care
- Delegate to the student increasing levels of responsibility for clinical assessment and management as appropriate to the student's experience and expertise
- Dialogue with faculty during scheduled clinical site visits to evaluate student progress and assist the learning process
- Audit and co-sign charts in order to evaluate the student's ability to write appropriate and complete progress notes, histories, physical examinations, assessments, and treatment plans
- Promptly notify the PA program of any circumstances that might interfere with the accomplishment of the above goals or diminish the overall training experience
- Maintain an ethical approach to the care of patients by serving as a role model for the student
- Demonstrate cultural competency through interactions with patients

LOGISTICS:

- Orient the student to the work environment including site safety and evacuation plans.
- Honor the student role by not utilizing the student to replace clinical or administrative staff during rotation.
- Inform patients that a PA student will participate in their care, and the patient's consent must be obtained. The students should be clearly identified as PA student(s) and must also verbally identify themselves as such. If the patient requests a physician and refuses the PA student's services, the request must be honored.
- Outline your expectations of the student during the rotation (daily schedule, dress, name badge, computer password, formulate mutual goals and expectations, EMR training, and site-specific HIPPA training, if needed).
- Facilitate opportunities for students to be supervised by designated licensed and credentialed providers that are a part of your practice or specialty group in your absence. In cases where supervision is not available, student may be given an assignment or may spend time with ancillary staff (x-ray, lab, physical therapy, etc.)
- Students are expected to work the same schedule as their preceptor. Should the student need to absent, for any reason, they must communicate the absent in advance and in writing with the Clinical Coordinator to obtain prior approval. The Clinical Coordinator will inform the preceptor of the absence.
- Notify the PA program of any questions or concerns regarding the student.

THE SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Standard B3.02

Introduction to the Clinical Year

After successful completion of four didactic semesters, PA students complete nine clinical rotations during their clinical year; in addition, they are required to complete a 1-week SCPE in Behavioral and Mental Health:

PA680L	Family Medicine Clerkship
PA681L	Internal Medicine Clerkship
PA682L	General Surgery Clerkship
PA683L	Pediatrics Clerkship
PA684L	Geriatrics Clerkship
PA685L	Women's Health Clerkship
PA686L	Emergency Medicine Clerkship
PA687L	Elective Clerkship I
PA688L	Elective Clerkship II

Goals of the Clinical Year

- Apply didactic knowledge to supervised clinical practice
 - Develop and sharpen clinical problem-solving skills
 - Expand and develop the medical fund of knowledge
 - Perfect the art of history taking and physical examination skills
 - Sharpen and refine oral presentation and written documentation skills
 - Develop an understanding of the PA role in health care delivery
 - Prepare for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE)
 - Develop interpersonal skills and professionalism necessary to function as part of a medical team
1. Each rotation is a 5-week, full time (minimum 32 hours per week), but no more than 60 hours a week, including on-call hours of supervise clinical practice experience (SCPE). Please set the hours and schedule with the student as you feel is appropriate.
standard B3.02
 2. Students are expected to obtain SCPE with physicians, PAs teamed with physicians, or other licensed healthcare providers who are board certified in their area of instruction.
standard B3.06

3. Students are expected to encounter patients across the lifespan (pediatric, adolescent, adult, and geriatric) in various clinical settings including outpatient, inpatient, emergency department, operating room, and long-term care facilities. *Standard B3.03*
4. Students are expected to provide care for patients with preventive, acute, chronic, emergent, surgical, gynecologic, prenatal, behavioral and mental health conditions. *Standard B3.02*
5. Students are expected to log patient encounters regularly to document sufficient breadth and depth of clinical exposures.
6. Students are evaluated by mid-rotation preceptor evaluation of preparedness, final preceptor evaluation of performance, PAEA End of Rotation (EOR) Examination by discipline, and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).
7. Before being graduated from the PA Program, students must complete summative testing, which includes a written end of curriculum examination, Psychiatry EOR Exam, oral board examination, summative OSCE, clinical case presentation, and clinical research poster presentation.

Preceptor Evaluation of Student Performance

The evaluation is designed to promote communication between preceptor and student. Preceptors are encouraged to discuss strengths and weaknesses so as to encourage students about their strengths as well as provide opportunities to improve upon weaknesses. The evaluation should also reflect on student knowledge and skills as well as their improvement throughout the rotation, and assess progress in comparison to other students at the same level. The preceptor's evaluation of the student is tremendously important. On required rotations (i.e., core rotations required by the specific institution for all students prior to graduation), a passing final evaluation from the preceptor is mandatory. If deemed "not passing," the student may be requested to repeat the rotation or undergo procedures specified by the program. The final grade for a clinical rotation and the decision to pass or fail a student are ultimately made by the program faculty. Samuel Merritt University requests that a mid-term and final evaluation be submitted by the preceptor for each student. These will be sent out via email to the preceptor for completion. Please note that final evaluations must be received prior to the student receiving a final grade for the clerkship. Timely submission of the evaluation is greatly appreciated.

Preceptors should consider performing brief end-of-rotation evaluations privately with colleagues and staff to get additional insight into the student's professionalism and effectiveness as a team player with all members of the health care team. These comments are helpful contributions to student evaluations. Additionally, staff feedback may enhance the student experience from one rotation to another and can help to improve efficiency and flow while also maximizing educational opportunities.

STUDENT OUTCOMES & COMPETENCIES

Standards: B1.09, B1.10 and B3.02

At the completion of clinical rotations, the student is expected to be able to demonstrate clinical competency, patient care, critical thinking and professionalism. Students are expected to pass the final preceptor evaluation, objective PAEA EOR exam, and formative OSCE to demonstrate clinical competence in each of the defined categories, at a minimum. Competency may be defined as the ability to recognize the clinical presentation (including history and physical examination), differential diagnoses, diagnostic evaluation, and management of each topic. Refer to the rotation syllabus for a comprehensive definition of each competency (see Appendix).

The program expects students to demonstrate developing competence (score of 2) or competence (score of 3) on the final preceptor evaluation in the clinical competencies listed for each clerkship; a mark of Inadequate (score of 1) will require remediation by formative or summative OSCE or subsequent clinical rotation. The student must demonstrate competence in each area in order to be graduated, and may be assessed during summative evaluation.

Not all diseases or conditions may be encountered during this rotation, and students are expected to study and seek out opportunities to ensure exposure to the following competencies, at a minimum. The competencies listed are not exhaustive; they are meant to represent diagnoses or conditions that students can expect to encounter on a typical rotation, and are based on PAEA Content Blueprints and Level 3 diagnoses as noted by AAPA. The program recognizes that competencies may be met during multiple rotation experiences; preceptors may verify competence in diagnoses or skills demonstrated across the student Competency Passport regardless of rotation specialty, if applicable.

STUDENT ROLE IN THE CLINICAL SETTING

Standard C3.02

Students - Patient Notes/EMR

It is encouraged to train student on the EMR system and to allow them to enter information in the medical record as a supplement to preceptor notes. However all medical entries must be identified as “student” and include the student’s signature with the designation “PA-S.” The preceptor cannot bill for the services of a student however, students can participate and contribute to all billable services if student(s) are directly supervised by the preceptor under the following conditions: 1) the patient is examined by the preceptor, and 2) the preceptor participates in and supervises the assessment plan. Preceptors are required to document the services they provide; when students document in the medical record preceptors are required to review student documentation and edit, if needed, before signing/cosigning the chart. When editing student documentation please discuss modifications with the student as a learning opportunity. Although student documentation may be limited for reimbursement purposes, students’ notes are legal and are contributory to the medical record.

Students and Preceptor Relationship

Samuel Merritt University is committed to providing trainees with a positive learning environment and has a zero tolerance policy for acts of student mistreatment or discrimination.

To facilitate the education of physician assistant students in a positive learning environment, preceptors will:

- Provide a learning environment that is free from mistreatment, including, but not limited to: abusing the supervisor-learner relationship; intimidation; harassment (physical, emotional, sexual); embarrassment; and humiliation.
- Set a model example of professionalism and collegiality, and demonstrate the attributes becoming of a medical professional: Be knowledgeable, skillful, altruistic and dutiful.
- Encourage student(s) to contact the clinical coordinator or their ACC with problems or concerns in clinical rotations.

The preceptor should maintain a professional relationship with the PA student and at all times adhere to appropriate professional boundaries. Social activities and personal relationships outside of the professional learning environment should be appropriate and carefully selected so as not to put the student or preceptor in a compromising situation. Contact through web-based social networking sites should be avoided until the student fully matriculates through the educational program or completes the rotation where the supervision is occurring. If the preceptor and student have an existing personal relationship prior to the start of the rotation, a professional relationship must be maintained at all times in the clinical setting.

STUDENT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Before beginning clinical rotations, drug testing and/or a background check, or other requirements must be completed. Students are also required to be enrolled in the University's insurance plan, or other insurance plan that meets the University's requirements for waiver, through the duration of their enrollment at the University. Student must be up to date in their immunization and certifications as well.

Health Insurance

In compliance with clinical requirements and accrediting obligations, SMU requires all students to obtain and maintain continuous coverage in a domestic medical insurance plan that is compliant with the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The minimum level of coverage for waiving enrollment in the student health insurance plan includes an ACA-compliant level medical plan, urgent and non-urgent care, mental health benefits, and prescription coverage. Students who have their own qualified plan must submit an online waiver form; student who need coverage must enroll in the University plan(s) by submitting an online enrollment form. Any question regarding the University's responsibility for medical care should be directed to the SMU's Student Health & Counseling Center at (510) 879.9288.

Malpractice Coverage

Samuel Merritt University provides professional liability coverage for students while providing care in approved clinical setting. Samuel Merritt University is self-insured for \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and \$3,000,000 in the aggregate.

As a part of the clinical portion of the PA Program, students work at clinical sites with approved preceptors. An approved preceptor is an agent of an institution with an Affiliation Agreement with Samuel Merritt University.

Background Check

Incoming students must complete a background check before they are eligible to enroll at the University. Continuing students who return from any type of Leave of Absence or who are re-admitted to the University must complete a new background check prior to enrolling. Continuing student may need to complete additional background checks in order to meet the requirements of the clinical agency to which the student is assigned for a clinical experience.

Drug Screen

Incoming and continuing students are required to complete a drug screen. Students have the right to dispute the findings of the drug screen report under Section 61s of the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) free of charge. All student drug screen reports are confidential.

Trainings

HIPAA Compliance Training

SMU students are required to complete HIPPA security compliance

Blood Borne Pathogen Training

SMU students are required to complete blood borne pathogen trainings

Basic Life Support (BLS) and (ALS) Training

SMU students are required to complete BLS and ALS trainings.

Sexual Harassment Training

SMU students are required to complete sexual harassment training

SMU PRECEPTOR WEBPAGE LINKS

1. Clerkship syllabi, including learning objectives and competencies
2. PAEA End of Rotation Examination Content Blueprints
3. PAEA End of Rotation Examination Topic Lists
4. Clinical Site Visit form
5. Preceptor Intake form
6. Clinical Rotation Manual
7. Evaluation forms
8. Technical Standards

PRECEPTOR DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA): Preceptor Handbook

This valuable resource is available as an electronic handbook, free to PAEA affiliate programs. If you would like to learn more or to obtain a copy of the handbook, please contact the Clinical Coordinator. <https://paeasonline.org/publications/preceptor-handbook/>

The PAEA Committee on Clinical Education has created a set of “**One-Pagers for Preceptors**” to help streamline and enhance this essential experience (available at the website listed above). The one-pagers combine some of the committee’s own resources as well as some of the best precepting practices that are outlined in the literature. These handy one-pagers offer time-tested methods for making the precepting experience as efficient and rewarding as possible.

- [Incorporating Students into Patient Care/Workflow](#)
- [The One-Minute Preceptor](#)
- [Ask-Tell-Ask Feedback Model](#)
- [SNAPPS: A Six-Step Learner-Centered Approach to Clinical Education](#)
- [Introducing/Orienting a PA Student to Your Practice](#)
- [Tailoring Clinical Teaching to an Individual Student](#)

The University of Virginia has a free online preceptor training course for those interested in learning more about how to be an effective clinical preceptor.

<https://www.med-ed.virginia.edu/courses/fm/precept/index.htm>

Feedback and Reflection: Teaching Methods for Clinical Settings

This article describes how to use these two clinical teaching methods effectively.

<http://www.uthscsa.edu/gme/documents/FeedbackandReflection.pdf>

Characteristics of Effective Clinical Teachers

This study looks at what residents and faculty consider to be the most effective characteristics of clinical preceptors.

<http://stfm.org/fmhub/fm2005/january/tamara30.pdf>

Getting Beyond “Good Job”: How to Give Effective Feedback

This article outlines why feedback is important, barriers to feedback, and how to give constructive feedback.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/127/2/205>

Feedback in Clinical Medical Education

This article provides effective guidelines for giving feedback.

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/250/6/777.full.pdf+html>

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- Nova Southeastern Physician Assistant Program
- Pace University Physician Assistant Program
- University of Utah Physician Assistant Program
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