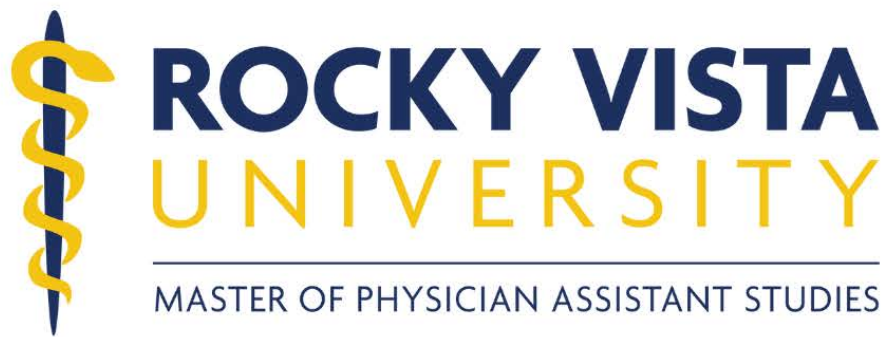
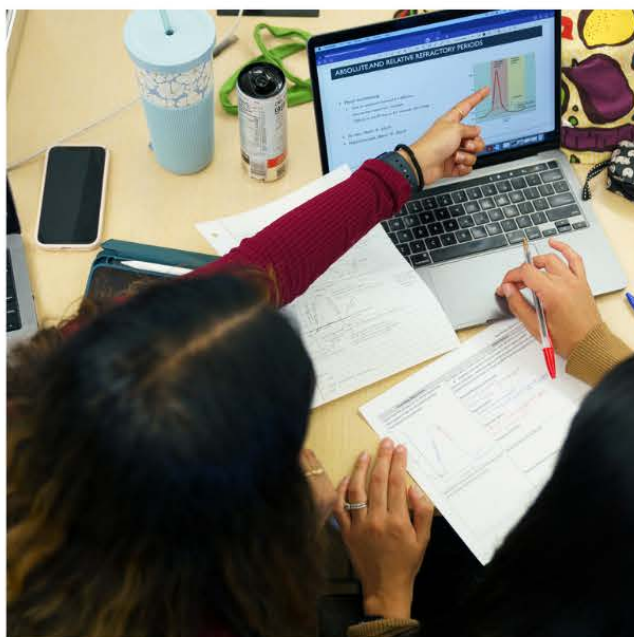




Student Handbook



Academic Year 2025-2026

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University Policies

The academic year for this catalog is Fall 2025 through August 21, 2026.

The policy and academic requirements information in this catalog are for the 2025-2026 Catalog/Handbook and are effective as of June 2, 2025. Students are governed by the catalog/handbook in effect at the time of their initial enrollment in their degree program, unless they elect to follow a subsequently published catalog/handbook.

This catalog/handbook is not a contract and is subject to change at any time by Rocky Vista University. The University reserves the right to modify policies, procedures, and requirements as necessary, with reasonable notice to affected students through official university communication channels. When individual program policies differ from University policies, the program-specific policies govern academic requirements for that program; for all other matters, University policies apply. Questions regarding policy applicability should be directed to the Registrar's Office.

Rocky Vista University has made every reasonable effort to ensure that all information in this catalog is accurate as of June 2, 2025. The University reserves the right to interpret all policies and procedures contained herein. In situations not specifically addressed, decisions will be made based on administrative discretion, applicable board policies, and state and federal law, consistent with the University's educational mission and student welfare.

Introduction

A Message from the President

This year's Rocky Vista University Student Handbook and Catalog is published as we celebrate many successes as an institution. This past year, Master of Physician Assistant Studies (PA) program received a 10-year accreditation from ARC-PA, their programmatic accreditor. Additionally, the Montana College of Osteopathic Medicine went from a dream to a reality. The Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences (MSBS) program continues to be the largest feeder program to RVUCOM. Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine achieved a record number of students (287) successfully entering residency programs. Finally, we added a new masters' program, the Master of Medical Science on our Montana campus. RVU students and faculty are helping us reach our vision of "Achieving New Heights in Medical Education"

By every measure, RVU faculty and students are delivering on the promises contained in our university Mission Statement: "Rocky Vista University provides quality healthcare education while inspiring students to serve with compassion, integrity, and excellence". RVU students are leaders in national organizations, and in student outcomes: whether it is acceptance into and performance in medical school by our MSBS students, Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam pass rate and job placement by our PA students, or COMLEX pass rate and residency match success, our students are leading the way.

The administration and faculty of RVU remains dedicated to the students and student experience. We know that healthcare education is challenging and at times overwhelming and we are committed to providing the support services that students need.



At Rocky Vista University we embrace core values of integrity, collegiality, compassion, diversity, equity, excellence, inclusivity, service, and innovation. You will find these values every day during your time at RVU. That are meant to be inspirational, aspirational, and living declarations of who we are.

Please take the time to carefully review the material presented in this *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog*, as it includes information every student is expected to be familiar with, in addition to being an excellent resource.

Wishing each of you a successful year ahead.

Sincerely,

Warm regards,
David Forstein, DO, FACOOG
President and CEO
Rocky Vista University

About

Mission, Vision Statement and Core Values

Mission

Rocky Vista University provides quality healthcare education while inspiring students to serve with compassion, integrity and excellence.

Vision Statement

Achieving New Heights in Medical Education.

Core Values

Collegiality

Mutual respect, collaboration, and the open exchange of ideas advance mutual goals and facilitate individual growth.

Compassion

The willingness to be engaged with the needs of others.

Diversity

The recognition, reflection, and representation of individual differences within a community including, but not limited to culture, race, age, ethnicity or national origin, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, spiritual practices, political beliefs, mental and physical ability, socioeconomic status, individual life experiences, or other ideologies.

Equity

The implementation of unbiased policies and practices to ensure everyone has access to opportunities along with needs-based distribution of resources to obtain positive outcomes so that all individuals and groups may attain their full potential and no one is deprived regardless of identity, abilities, background, or socially determined circumstances.

Excellence

The commitment to exceed expectations in education.

Inclusivity

The dynamic process of creating a welcoming environment that increases awareness, knowledge, and empathetic understanding to enable individuals with diverse backgrounds, abilities, insights, and experiences to interact in an open, fair, respectful, equitable, and collaborative fashion.

Innovation

Delivering new and creative ways to provide healthcare education while consistently demonstrating compassion, integrity, and excellence.

Integrity

The quality of living a unified life in which one's convictions are well-considered and match one's actions, demonstrating fairness, honesty, sincerity, professionalism, and a consistent commitment to our mission, vision, and values.

Service

Through active service, we support one another and seek to meet the needs of the larger community.

University Administration

David Forstein, DO, FACOOG

President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Kat Abernathy, MSOL, GPHR, PHR, CPA

Vice President of Human Resources

MSOL, Colorado State University Global

Heather Ferrill, DO, MS, MEdL

Vice President of Faculty Affairs and Dean of RVUCOM (Colorado and Utah)

DO, Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine

MEdL, University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine

David Irons, CPA, MBA

Vice President of Finance and Controller

CPA, State of Colorado

MBA, Colorado Technical University

Kyle LaValley, MBA

Vice President, Growth and Strategic Initiatives

MBA, Colorado State University, Pueblo

Kayla Manning, MBA

Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Management

MBA, University of Florida

Janna L. Oakes, PhD

Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness

PhD, University of Denver

Jesús Treviño, PhD

Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

PhD, University of California Los Angeles

Accreditations

Institutional Accreditation

Rocky Vista University (RVU) is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the United States. HLC is as an institutional accreditor, accrediting the institution as a whole. At its meeting on May 1, 2018, the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) of the Higher Learning Commission voted to continue the accreditation of Rocky Vista University with the next comprehensive evaluation to be scheduled for 23-24. HLC is an independent corporation that was founded in 1895 as one of six regional accreditors in the United States. For further information please contact the Higher Learning Commission at 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604; or (800) 621-7440.

State Authorizations

Rocky Vista University has full authorization from the state agencies listed below to operate its campuses in Colorado, Utah, and Montana.

Colorado Department of Higher Education

1560 Broadway, Suite 1600
Denver, CO 80202
303-862-3001

Montana University System

560 N. Park
Helena, MT 59620
406-449-9124

Utah Department of Commerce

160 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114
801-530-6601

Specialized Program & Center Accreditations

Specialized program accreditation agencies accredit specific academic programs within an institution of higher learning. These program accreditations ensure that individuals who successfully complete an RVU degree program are eligible to sit for relevant licensure examinations. Rocky Vista University's programs and centers hold the specialized program accreditations listed below. Completion of

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine



The Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program offered at RVU's Colorado, Utah, and Montana campuses have been granted Accreditation - Continued status by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) of the

American Osteopathic Association (AOA). For further information please contact COCA at 142 E. Ontario St., Chicago, IL 60611; or (800) 621-1773; email: predoc@osteopathic.org

Master of Physician Assistant Studies



The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Rocky Vista University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Rocky Vista University**. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **March 2033**. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the [ARC-PA website here](#).

Rocky Vista University Surgical Simulation Center



RVU has the distinction of being recognized as a [Comprehensive Accredited Education Institute \(AEI\) by the American College of Surgeons](#) and is the only osteopathic medical school to receive this prestigious accreditation. This consortium of high-quality programs around the world sets the standard for excellence and innovation in

simulation-based education. Our designation includes both Colorado and Utah campuses. For further information please click on the link below or contact the ACS at 633 N. Saint Clair Street, Chicago, IL 60611; or (312) 202-5000.

Self-Evaluation

As an institution committed to continuous quality improvement, RVU maintains active processes for assessment of student learning, student course evaluations, operational effectiveness evaluation, graduating student and alumni surveys, and engages actively with executive advisory councils comprised of external stakeholders in Colorado, Utah, and Montana.

Institution Ownership

RVU is owned by RVU Holdings, Inc., an indirect subsidiary of Medforth Global Healthcare Education Group, LP and Bear Holdings, LP.

Facilities

Colorado

Rocky Vista University is located in the City of Parker, Colorado, just 20 minutes from downtown Denver. Our Parker campus encompasses a state-of-the-art facility spanning 153,000 square feet. Our campus features three large auditoriums, a fully equipped simulation lab, a comprehensive medical library, a self-serve cafeteria, an anatomy lab, an OPP lab, and a primary care health clinic. The health clinic is available to both students and the community, providing essential services and hands-on training opportunities to our students.

Utah

The Utah campus is located in Southern Utah in a city named Ivins, Utah, overlooking the majestic Red Rock Mountains. The city of Ivins is in the southwest corner of the state, just outside of St. George. The two-story, 104,000 square foot building was designed to complement the natural scenery of the area. The facility includes two 200-seat lecture halls, three seminar rooms, 36 small-group study rooms, clinical skills and OPP lab, a full dissection gross anatomy lab, a multipurpose lab, a simulation center, standardized patient rooms, and a 9,000 square foot library. There is a 23,000 square foot medical office building across the street from the campus which house administrative offices, a mental health facility for students, a fitness center and a medical clinic that provides clinical training opportunities for students (as well as health services to RVU students, faculty and staff and the larger community).

Montana

RVU-MCOM is Montana's first 4-year medical school. Our 138,000 square foot campus sits on 12.8 acres in beautiful Billings, MT. The University strives to recruit and educate individuals committed to becoming highly competent physicians who will assist in meeting the needs of the wide diversity of patients they will encounter during their careers, and who will be equipped to adapt to the demands of a changing health care system.

Key features of the RVU-MCOM campus facility include:

- Modern architecture capitalizing on natural light
- Innovative technology
- Immersion room simulations
- High-fidelity mannequins

- Hand-held ultrasound
- Group-based active learning spaces,
- Expansive anatomy lab for both cadavers and virtual reality

Emphasis on physical and mental wellbeing flows throughout the campus and includes a yoga studio and full fitness center. A full-time mental health counselor is located on site for students to readily access mental health services. Indoor and outdoor spaces are designed to build community by giving students places to gather.

University Policies

Note: Individual program policies may differ from University policies. Please review policies listed under the specific programs.

Anatomy Laboratory Expectation for Participants

Cadaveric specimens that are used in Anatomy Labs are obtained from individuals who recognized the importance of human dissection in the training of future healthcare professionals. The donor bodies must always be treated with respect. Students are expected to follow all policies in the RVU Gross Anatomy Laboratory Policies and Procedures document. Students who break confidentiality of donor identity, disrespect donors, who purposefully destroy tissues in a manner inconsistent with the dissector, or who fail to maintain their donor by using wetting solution and maintenance procedures appropriately will lose their Gross Anatomy Laboratory privileges and may be referred to the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs for review and possible disciplinary action as indicated. If allowed to continue in the curriculum, these students may be required to complete the remainder of Gross Anatomy Laboratory coursework for the academic year using alternative but equivalent learning and assessment materials.

Colorado Campus

Rocky Vista does not currently operate its own body donation program. Those individuals interested in donating their bodies for the medical education of young doctors can donate through the [State Anatomical Board of Colorado](#).

State Anatomical Board

Phone: (8 am–4 pm): [303-724-2410](tel:303-724-2410)

[Website](#)

Montana Campus

Rocky Vista does not currently operate its own body donation program. Those individuals interested in donating their bodies for the medical education of young doctors can donate through the [State Anatomical Board of Colorado](#).

State Anatomical Board

Phone: (8 am–4 pm): [303-724-2410](tel:303-724-2410)

Utah Campus

Rocky Vista does not currently operate its own body donation program. Those individuals interested in donating their bodies for the medical education of young doctors on our campus can donate through the [University of Utah's Body Donor Program](#) and request that your donation is sent to our campus.

For questions about body donation through the University of Utah please call, email, or write to:

Kerry Peterson

Body Donor Program

520 Wakara Way, SLC, Utah 84112

Phone: (8 am–4 pm): 801-581-6728

Phone: (after hours, weekends, & holidays): 801-581-2121

Email: bodydonor@lists.utah.edu

[Website](#)

Attendance Records

Attendance records are kept by and are the responsibility of the individual Course Directors.

CLERY Act

Rocky Vista University shares many of the same interests and concerns as other colleges and communities, including a concern about crime. The University has been fortunate not to have experienced a significant number of crimes, but one should not be misled into thinking the campus is crime-free. There is always the possibility of a criminal act occurring against a member of the RVU community despite the best efforts of the Safety and Security Department and the administrative staff. A truly safe campus can only be achieved through the shared responsibility of all members of the RVU community.

The University is committed to maintaining a safe environment to support a healthy, learning-centered campus. This commitment includes making necessary physical improvements that promote safety and well-being; the revision and updating of policies, procedures, and rules; and an obligation to hold accountable those who choose to commit crimes or violate rules and regulations.

Every student, faculty, staff member, and visitor has an individual responsibility to be aware of their personal safety, to properly utilize college resources, to make positive choices, and to use common sense. Crimes, violations, hate crimes, suspicious persons or activity, and safety issues should be reported upon discovery through the appropriate channels as described in this Handbook. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the emergency procedures and the important information on the website. Updates, timely warnings, and important information regarding safety on campus will be communicated by emails, fliers, TV monitors, and other presentations.

For more information, view the [RVU Annual Security Report](#).

To obtain a copy of the Daily Crime Log, please visit the Security Office on any of the campuses.

Disabilities and Academic Accommodations

Disabilities and Academic Accommodations

Rocky Vista University recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students are required to meet the technical standards set forth by the college/program in which they are enrolled, with or without reasonable accommodations. RVU complies with federal and state law prohibiting discrimination against any applicant or enrolled student on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual preference, age, disability, or other protected status. In accordance with its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 5.04 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, RVU does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in admission or in access to programs and activities.

Students who may qualify for accommodations include those who have received accommodations previously or who have been diagnosed with a condition impacting one or more major life activities (such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, learning, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, and working, etc.). Although students with temporary illness or injury are not considered disabled by law, every reasonable effort to accommodate their needs will be exercised. If you feel you meet these criteria or would like to discuss your eligibility for accommodations, you are encouraged to complete our registration [form](#).

Requests for accommodations and services are evaluated on an individual, case-by-case basis and are dependent on a student's functional limitations within a given environment. Through an interactive dialog facilitated by Disability Services, all relevant factors, including the impact of the disability on the student's access to a course or a program, supporting clinical or diagnostic documentation, and the relevant learning outcomes of the given program, will be considered. Requests for accommodations that would result in an alteration of the fundamental nature or learning outcome of a course or a program are not reasonable and will not be approved.

Clinical documentation or other diagnostic information submitted to Disability Services is kept confidential and is released to a third party only with the student's written permission or as required by law. General information about a student's disability and accommodation request/s, however, may be shared with other RVU officials or, in limited circumstances, with third parties who have a legitimate educational need to know. The student's disabilities file is maintained by the RVU Disability Officer and is held separately from the student's official academic record.

Students requesting disability-related accommodations must follow the process outlined below.

Accommodations Request Process

Step 1: Complete the [Initial Accommodation Request Form](#)

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the process with Disability Services as soon as possible after committing to attend RVU, or after diagnosis, to ensure timely approval and implementation of approved accommodations. While requests may be submitted at any point throughout the year, students should consider that the interactive process, including documentation review and eligibility notification, typically requires two (2) weeks. Incomplete documentation may delay the review process.

Step 2: [Schedule an Appointment](#) with Disability Services

After submitting the Initial Accommodation Request Form, students must schedule a Welcome Meeting with [Disability Services](#).

Meetings can be held virtually for students on all three campuses or in-person for students on the Utah campus.

Disability Services' priority is initiating the interactive process with students; therefore, students should not delay submitting a request due to a lack of documentation concerns. The Disability Officer will discuss [acceptable types of documentation](#) during the Welcome Meeting, and can answer specific documentation-related questions at that time.

Step 3: Welcome Meeting

The Welcome Meeting is the beginning of an interactive process in which the Disability Officer will talk with students about disability-related barriers they may be experiencing, any history of accommodations they may have, as well as possible accommodations that may be reasonable and appropriate in the various RVU learning environments within the program. Students will also have the opportunity to ask questions, provide information and otherwise engage with the Disability Officer to understand how accommodations work within a medical education setting and what to expect relative to next steps in the process of establishing eligibility.

Step 4: Documentation Review and Notification of Eligibility Determination

Upon receipt of the Initial Contact Form-Request for Accommodations and other supporting documentation, the student's eligibility for accommodations will be reviewed and the student will receive a Notification of Eligibility Determination. The eligibility notification will specify the accommodations for which the student has been approved, and copies will be sent to the Office of Testing and appropriate RVU officials. Once approved for accommodations, the Testing Center will send out instructions regarding the administration and location of exams with accommodations.

In some cases, a student may be asked to provide additional supporting documentation/information if the submitted documentation is outdated or does not include sufficient relevant information to determine the impact of the disability. Last-minute submission of documentation may result in unavoidable delays in consideration of requested services.

Please note that accommodations granted by the University are not applicable retroactively and will not affect past administrative or academic actions, or past performance evaluations and examinations.

Additionally, students are encouraged to meet with the Disability Officer prior to entering the clinical rotation portion of their program, if applicable, or at any time an adjustment to currently approved accommodations may be necessary.

National Board Accommodations

Students seeking accommodations for licensure exams must directly petition the organization administering the exam to seek test accommodations. Please schedule a meeting with the Disability Officer to discuss this process in more detail and learn about additional support RVU may be able to provide.

ADA Accommodation Review Requests and Appeals

Disability Services is committed to ensuring that Rocky Vista University is inclusive and accessible to all students. Several options are available to students who would like to address disability-related concerns, complaints, or issues.

If a student has concerns about the support provided by the [Disability Officer](#), or if they believe that they have been denied reasonable accommodations as requested, we recommend initiating a conversation with the Disability Officer to discuss those concerns. If the matter remains unresolved or if the student disagrees with the determination reached by the Disability Officer, the student may appeal the decision to the [Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs](#) by submitting an [Accessibility Grievance Form](#). The student will be contacted within seven (7) days of submission and will be given an opportunity to share additional details regarding their specific situation and the reason for the appeal request.

If the student believes their complaint is a matter of discrimination, the student has the right to bypass the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs by submitting an EthicsPoint Complaint [online](#) or by calling (844) 936-2729.

If a satisfactory solution is still not offered, the student may choose to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, [Office of Civil Rights](#).

Diversity Statement

Rocky Vista University is committed to creating a diverse community: one that is inclusive and responsive, and is supportive of each and all of its faculty, students, and staff. The University seeks to promote diversity in its many manifestations. These include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and place of origin.

Rocky Vista University (RVU) recognizes that we live in an increasingly interconnected, globalized world, and that students benefit from learning in educational and social contexts in which there are participants from all manner of backgrounds. The goal is to encourage students to consider diverse experiences and perspectives throughout their lives. All members of the University community share a responsibility for creating, maintaining, and developing a learning environment in which difference is valued, equity is sought, and inclusiveness is practiced.

Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy

It is RVU's policy to prohibit discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, creed, sex, pregnancy, national or ethnic origin, non-disqualifying disability, age, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, unfavorable discharge from the military, veteran status, political beliefs or affiliations. Moreover, the University complies with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative-action laws and regulations, among these the Civil Rights Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

RVU's policy on non-discrimination can be found in its Student Handbook, in the [Policy Repository](#) as well as in its Employee Handbook and Faculty Manual. This policy applies not only to employment opportunities, but also to admissions, enrollment, scholarships, loan programs, participation in University activities, access to, participation in and treatment in all University centers, programs and activities.

RVU makes a concerted effort to recruit from diverse backgrounds for both enrollment and employment, not only in terms of ethnicity and gender, but also in terms of life experiences.

Dress Code

RVU Students must follow the following dress code requirements while on campus during business hours (typically 8am – 5 pm).

The RVU dress code reflects the dignity of the health care profession and respect for other students, faculty, administration, staff, and particularly special visitors.

The dress code reflects a general minimum standard for the campus community. Students should refer to the course syllabi and program handbooks for further specific dress requirements (e.g., labs, lectures, rotation sites). The University has the right to require specific dress for specific occasions (e.g., special guests on campus, “casual Fridays”) and students will be notified of any adjustments. Questions regarding appropriate attire may be directed to the Office of Student Affairs and setting-/program-specific leadership.]

The different learning and teaching environments at RVU may require different dress styles and what is appropriate for one setting may be inappropriate for other settings. (e.g., lab, lectures, lab, recreational activity). Regardless of the setting, all clothing should be neat, clean, and respectful of others. Everyone is expected to be well-groomed and wear clean clothing, free of holes, tears, or other signs of wear beyond normal functionality. Students are allowed to dress the full day for the learning experience that they are engaged in; for example, if they are in lab they may wear lab attire for the entire day. However, lab attire that consists of shorts, sports bra, or bare chest should be covered by appropriate outerwear or clinically-appropriate scrubs while not in lab. Students practicing OMM skills outside of lab, may be permitted to wear lab appropriate clothing while practicing.

Appropriate attire *does not* include clothing with rips, tears or frays; or any extreme style or fashion in dress, footwear, accessories, or fragrances. Inappropriate attire also includes clothing having language or images that can be construed, based on societal norms, to be offensive or contribute to a hostile learning and working environment. Hats and headwear are not permitted other than for religious or cultural purposes.

All students are permitted to wear the clothing of their choice regardless of traditional gender norm conformity. Students may dress in accordance with their gender identity and gender expression, provided that such clothing does not violate other aspects of the university dress code.

Students should be open to feedback regarding their attire from peers, faculty, and staff, as the attire of any student can impact others and the RVU community. Questions or concerns regarding dress or dress-related feedback can be brought to the Assistant/Associate Deans of Student Affairs whose decision will be final in the event of an issue. Generally, students will be expected to self-monitor their own attire. However, egregious or repeated dress violations will be considered unprofessional behavior and may result in a disciplinary sanction. Students may be asked to leave campus to change if they are inappropriately dressed depending on the specific situation and case.

When uncertain, students should default to business casual attire or professional scrubs with a white coat on top. Business casual is generally characterized as: slacks/trousers, jeans, dresses, and skirts with modest lengths; collared shirts, sweaters, and blouses; clothing that covers the chest, back, torso, stomach, and lower extremities from armpit to mid-thigh when the body is standing straight and when bending over or reaching the hands above the head; tops that have shoulder straps; bottoms that fully cover an individual’s buttock. Business Casual attire is not required after 5pm, but appropriate clothing is still expected.

Cultural and religious attire is welcomed as long as it is safe and appropriate for the specific learning environment. Students must wear their RVU ID at all times unless outlined differently in course or clinical syllabus.

When on location at clinical training sites, students must adhere to the training site’s dress code. Students are required to reach out to each of their training sites one week prior to the beginning of each clerkship rotation to learn the appropriate attire.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The HIPAA Privacy Rule (Public Law 104-191) regulates the use and disbursement of individually identifiable health information and gives individuals the right to determine and restrict access to their health information. It requires that reasonable and appropriate technical, physical, and administrative safeguards be taken with electronic, individually identifiable health information. Specifically, we must ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all electronic protected health information we create, receive, maintain, or transmit.

All students at Rocky Vista University must complete a training course over the privacy laws that apply to the Health Professions to meet requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Annual

refresher training is required as well. The HIPAA training is provided online, and information to access training will be provided at orientation. A score of 80% or better on the HIPAA training course is a requirement prior to entering RVU programs.

All RVU students are required to abide by all rules, regulations, and policies of HIPAA. RVU has a zero-tolerance policy for violation of patient privacy, and failure to adhere to the mandates of HIPAA is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

Students are further expressly prohibited from taking photographs or video of patients without proper preceptor and patient consent. Any and all photographs or videos properly obtained are to be used for educational purposes only and shall not be distributed in any fashion, including, but not limited to, email, hard copy, or social media. The improper acquisition, use, or dissemination of any patient photos or videos is considered a significant violation of both HIPAA and program policies and may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Non-Discrimination Statement

It is the policy of Rocky Vista University and all of its affiliated colleges and organizations not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion or creed, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, pregnancy, national or ethnic origin, non-disqualifying disability, age, ancestry, marital status, parental status, genetic information, sexual orientation, veteran status, political beliefs or affiliations, and to act in conformity with all applicable federal and state laws, orders and regulations, including the Civil Rights Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy on nondiscrimination applies to admissions, enrollment, scholarships, loan programs, participation in University activities, employment, and access to, participation in, and treatment in all University centers, programs, and activities.

Questions, comments, or complaints regarding discrimination or harassment may be directed to the Rocky Vista University Office of Compliance and/or the Title IX Coordinator (if discrimination is based on sex/gender-identity) at: compliance@rvu.edu or by calling 720-874-2481. Another option is to file a complaint through the [RVU EthicsPoint system](#).

Complaints may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, [Office for Civil Rights \(here\)](#) or calling their Customer Service Hotline at (800) 421-3481.

Needlestick and Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure

Students will potentially come into contact with, or be exposed to, blood and other infectious bodily fluids, whether by direct contact or respiration. Students are also at risk for clinical-related injuries, such as accidental needlesticks. Immediate attention and care of such exposures and injuries are vital to minimize any potential infection.

Upon matriculation and each year of program enrollment thereafter, all students are required to complete online training for prevention of exposures to infectious and environmental hazards. Additionally, prior to beginning clinical experiences, students are provided a quick-reference guide detailing appropriate procedures to follow in the event of an exposure or needlestick injury. Once a student has experienced an exposure or needlestick, the student shall seek immediate treatment in accordance with current and appropriate medical standards. The student shall immediately notify his/her preceptor and fill out any and all forms required by the clinical sites. Should an exposure incident occur, the student should contact RVU's Department of Human Resources, after following hospital or clinic protocol. Should students incur any costs related to evaluation and treatment of an exposure or needlestick injury, the student should submit all claims to the Human Resources Department for processing with Worker's Compensation.

The full policy on Needlesticks and Exposure Incidents can be found in the [RVU Institutional Repository](#).

OSHA - Biosafety, Universal Precautions, and Bloodborne Pathogens

All students must complete a basic training course in biosafety, as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Because patient contact and/or hands-on learning is a required part of the RVU curriculum, all RVU students must complete OSHA training annually. The avenue chosen for completion of this training is the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online program.

Instructions for registering and logging onto the CITI website, and specific instructions on which courses are required, are provided annually by the Compliance Office: compliance@rvu.edu

Pregnant and Parenting Students Policy

In accordance with the Pregnant and Parenting Student Civil Rights outlined by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), RVU must excuse a student's absence because of pregnancy or childbirth for as long as the student's physician deems the absences medically necessary. In addition, when a student returns to school, the student must be allowed to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before the medical leave began. Students enrolled in courses, fellowship, or clinical rotation during or after pregnancy may face unique challenges regarding attendance and the ability to be absent from the site. Pregnant and parenting students who are in the midst of courses, clinical rotation or fellowship should work with the Student Affairs Disability Officer to address challenges unique to the students' situation. Students on or entering clinical rotation should also contact their Program Director (PA) or the Associate Dean of Clinical Education (COM), as schedules can be rearranged.

For the full policy and how to make requests for accommodations, please go to the [RVU Policy Repository](#) or contact your campus Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs or the Title IX Coordinator.

Professional Liability and Workers' Compensation Insurance

Students are covered by RVU's professional liability and workers' compensation insurance for all RVU-sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities, including rotations, shadowing, health fairs, medical mission trips, etc. Any student who is injured while on clinical rotation must notify the Associate Dean of Clinical Education for the College of Medicine or the Director of Clinical Education for the PA program and must contact **Human Resources** immediately for direction about workers' compensation. Students are not covered for non-RVU activities.

Reservation of Power

The *RVU Student Handbooks and Catalogs* are reference guides to provide students with important information about policies, procedures, requirements, and services. The Handbook is available online at studenthandbook.rvu.edu. This Handbook is not intended to be a contract nor part of a contractual agreement between the University and the student. Each edition of the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* supersedes all previous handbooks. Failure to read the Handbook and to be familiar with the rules, policies, and procedures contained in it does not excuse the student from being required to comply with the stated provisions.

Rocky Vista University reserves the rights to amend, modify, add to, or delete information contained within the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* at any time without notice. Such changes may include, but are not limited to, changes in tuition and/or fees, academic requirements, curriculum, policies, and responsibilities of the student.

Please note: at times, specific program policies will be more stringent than University policies. Students are required to follow program policies first. In the event the issue can't be resolved at the program level, it will be addressed at the University level by the Provost, whose decision is final.

Disclaimer

This Handbook may not contain all policies applicable to RVU students. If you are searching for a policy that is not found in this Handbook, please contact the Compliance Office or Student Affairs for assistance or visit the [RVU Policy Repository](#) for a list of policies by category.

Sexual Misconduct and NonDiscrimination Policy

Rocky Vista University (the “University”) is committed to the principles of academic and professional excellence and to fostering a positive learning and working environment for its students and employees. Accordingly, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the administration of or in connection with its educational and admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or employment practices, and it is required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 to not discriminate in such a manner.

It is the intent of the University to provide its employees and students with an environment free of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence (collectively “sexual misconduct”), and to respond appropriately to reports of sexual misconduct. The civil and respectful treatment of one another is a foundation of our principles, and the University will not tolerate any form of sexual misconduct. Persons found responsible for sexual misconduct are subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal or termination, consistent with this Sexual Misconduct Policy and Investigation Procedures (“Policy”) and any other applicable disciplinary procedures.

Compliance with this Policy is a term and condition of student enrollment and employment at the University. Questions about this policy or Title IX can be directed to Associate Dean of Students in Montana (406) 901-2708, or to the Title IX coordinator (720) 874-2481.

RVU’s Sexual Misconduct and NonDiscrimination Policy and Procedures document is a working document that invites participation and input from the entire RVU community. Revisions will be made on an ongoing basis that reflect community feedback and participation in Title IX educational and prevention activities.

Sexual Misconduct and NonDiscrimination Reporting, Investigating, and Hearing Procedures

Any individual who believes that an employee or student of the University, including themselves, has been subjected to sexual misconduct is encouraged to immediately follow the applicable reporting and investigation procedures and may also pursue criminal, civil, and/or administrative remedies provided by federal and state law. The University encourages all individuals to report possible sexual misconduct that they suffer or observe, and requires responsible employees of the University to do so.

For a full account of the University’s reporting, investigation, and hearing procedures, please review the information on the RVU website at: <https://www.rvu.edu/about/title-ix/>. Questions about this policy or Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator at (720) 874-2481 or compliance@rvu.edu

Student Complaints

It is RVU campus policy that all students at all times have the right to lodge a complaint or grievance or appeal that they deem important without fear of retaliation of any sort or any other adverse consequence as a result of doing so.

RVU provides the opportunity for students to resolve conflicts and/or related complaints using two levels, informal or formal, or both. Students may elect the avenue that serves their specific needs most appropriately, although some matters may not be available via the informal process. The recommended general strategy is to first contact the specific individuals or units most directly connected with the issue at hand unless there are good reasons for not doing so, such as issues related to alleged sexual misconduct. The Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs can provide guidance on complaint protocol and potential resolution.

The **informal** resolution process is designed to resolve problems for students having difficulty with other students, staff, or campus procedures short of written complaints, investigation, and disciplinary action. This process may involve mediation or discussion with the respondent and does not involve a written, formal complaint. This process should not be used for complaints involving academic, disability, discrimination, and/or racial or sexual harassment issues.

The **formal** complaint procedure is designed to resolve problems for students who are having difficulty with other students, faculty, staff, or processes **that cannot be resolved through the informal resolution process**, or for students who choose to have an investigation and adjudication in a formal setting. This procedure entails a complaint filing through EthicsPoint online via the web at rvu.ethicspoint.com or by calling 844-936-2729. Complaints may be filed anonymously, but remaining anonymous may impair a resolution if your identity is needed to resolve a complaint.

Please note: If you have a complaint that qualifies under Title IX (Sexual Misconduct), it should be sent to the Title IX Coordinator at: compliance@rvu.edu

Details on the Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures, as well as the complaint form, are available on the website and the student portal (MyVista). Assistance is also available from the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Student Complaints to Accrediting Bodies

Students may file a complaint with the University's accrediting bodies by contacting the following agencies:

Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

230 S. LaSalle Street; Suite 7-500; Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (800) 621-7440

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies

1560 Broadway, Suite 110, Denver, CO 80202
Phone: (800) 886-7675

Utah Department of Commerce, Division of Consumer Protection

P.O. Box 146704, Salt Lake City, UT 84114
Phone: (801) 530-6601

Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation of the American Osteopathic Association

142 East Ontario Street, Chicago, IL 60611-2864
Phone: (312) 202-8048
predoc@osteopathic.org

ARC-PA

3325 Paddocks Parkway, Suite 345
Suwanee, Georgia 30024
Phone: 770.476.1224
Fax: 470.253.8271

U.S. Department of Education

Office for Civil Rights

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

Student Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

In compliance with the COCA, HLC, ARC-PA, and DNAP COA relevant accreditation regulations, RVU is committed to ensuring the prevention of potential conflicts of interest for student academic advancement and the protection of student confidentiality in the clinical setting. Students seeking healthcare will not be placed in a position in which they could potentially be treated by any faculty or staff that have authority over their educational pursuits. Authority over a student's educational pursuits at RVU is defined by those RVU personnel who, including but not limited to, determine grades, ongoing status of academic standing, and academic advancement within the Program, College, or University, such as Deans, Program Directors, Department Directors, Course Directors or any other faculty who may have grading authority. Medical providers in any of the aforementioned roles will be precluded from providing medical care for a student unless specifically requested by the student. Neither the principal faculty of the COM, MSBS, DNAP, or PA program, the PA or MSBS program directors, nor the COM, DNAP, or PA program medical

directors will serve as healthcare providers for students. In all cases of emergency, care is provided by another faculty member or medical personnel. Further, RVU students participating in clinical training will not be involved in the medical care of other students, unless expressed permission is individually obtained from the student patient. Patient confidentiality will be guaranteed for all RVU students in all clinical settings.

Tardiness Definition

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Students who are not in class for 50% or more of the class period will be counted absent.

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their education records. (An “eligible student” under FERPA is a student who is 18 years of age or older or who attends a postsecondary institution.) The policy in its entirety can be found within the university's [Policy Repository](#).

Title IX Policy

All RVU employees and students are trained about Title IX Sexual Misconduct Laws on an annual basis. Students and employees are made aware of, and updated on, the Federal Title IX Act and RVU's policies throughout each year.

RVU's Title IX Coordinator manages the University's response to complaints of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, stalking, sexual assault, relationship violence, and other forms of sexual misconduct, as well as retaliation.

If you believe you or someone you know has been the victim of sexual misconduct or are aware of sexual misconduct and would like to find out about how the University can help you, contact the Title IX Coordinator at (720) 874-2481 or compliance@rvu.edu.

You may also want to make an appointment to talk with one of RVU's Sexual Assault Advocate and Mental Health counselors. The counselor on the Colorado campus can be reached at (720) 875-2896, the counselor on the Utah campus can be reached at (435) 222-1270, and the counselor on the Montana campus can be reached at (406) 901-2752. Your conversation will remain confidential and will not be shared with the Title IX Coordinator, unless you waive your right to confidentiality.

You may seek the assistance of a trusted faculty member; if you do so, please keep in mind that all University employees (other than medical or counseling professionals) are mandatory reporters and must report all information to the Title IX Coordinator.

For direct access to the current Title IX policy, visit the website at: <https://www.rvu.edu/about/title-ix/>.

Student Financial Services

Tuition Refund Policy

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to make clear what circumstances may warrant a tuition refund.

Tuition and applicable fees vary according to the degree program in which the student is enrolled. Please refer to the section for each individual degree program for more information.

Policy Statement

Students will be billed for tuition and fees approximately 30 days prior to the beginning of each semester. Tuition and fees must be paid in full by the first day of class. Late tuition payments or failure to make arrangements to pay tuition will result in the student being removed from class and/or clinical externships.

Students who withdraw (either voluntarily or involuntarily) before the first day of class of a semester for which they have already paid their tuition and fees will receive a 100% refund for that semester, with the exception of any non-refundable deposits, which will be retained by the University. Students who matriculate into the University, begin classes or externships, and withdraw (including leave of absence) within the first 30 calendar days of a semester will be refunded according to the following schedule: 1st week: 90%; 2nd week: 75%; 3rd week: 50%; 4th week: 25%; After 4th week: 0%.

There are occasions when a recommendation and decision for Dismissal or Leave of Absence from a program's Student Assessment or Performance Committee, or from an administrative entity, may occur within the first four weeks of a semester based on professionalism, performance, or other issues that occurred in the previous semester. These students are eligible for a 100% tuition refund for the current semester.

Exceptions to this policy due to extenuating circumstances must be first approved by the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs on the student's primary campus, via the Tuition Refund Form located on the iNet. If approved, the exception form will be forwarded to the Senior Director of Student Financial Services for review. If approved, the student's Dean or Program Director will review. If approved, the form will be forwarded to the Provost for final review and approval. If seeking an exception to this policy, complete the online "Tuition Refund Form" (located on the iNet), and provide a detailed explanation.

Roles & Responsibilities

VP of Finance	Oversight of this policy
Campus Student Affairs Deans Officers	Works with the student for initial review and possible first level approval/rejection of the tuition exception request.
Deans, Program Directors	Receives approved forms from Student Financial Services and, review and 3rd level approval/rejection of the tuition exception form
Provost	Receives approved forms from the Dean or Program Director and provides, review and final approval/rejection of the tuition exception form.. The decision of the Provost is final and not appealable.

For Iowa Residents Only: The State of Iowa For-profit Tuition Refund Policy can be found at <https://iowacollegeaid.gov/ForProfitRefundPolicy>.*

***For Iowa Residents Only:** The State of Iowa For-profit Tuition Refund Policy can be found at <https://catalog.rvu.edu/iowa-0>

*Updated 1.28.25

Student Financial Responsibility Policy

Financial responsibility is essential for students to maintain good standing, access University services, and to meet professional standards. Students with an outstanding balance greater than \$500 for more than 30 days after the payment due date will not be considered in good financial standing which could result in a Registration Hold or other academic restriction. Please review the [Student Financial Responsibility Policy](#) which outlines the University's expectations and processes pertaining to student financial obligations, including late payments and outstanding balances.

Voter Registration

Colorado Voter Registration

RVU is required by the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) to distribute voter registration forms to its students. You will find all the information you need to register to vote or make any changes to your registration information (address, name change, etc.) at the Colorado Secretary of State website.

- Colorado: <https://www.sos.state.co.us/voter/pages/pub/home.xhtml>

Montana Voter Registration

To vote in Montana, you must

- Be registered to vote as required by law
- Be 18 years or older by the next election
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Have lived in Montana for 30 days

For more info, [How to Register to Vote - Montana Secretary of State - Christi Jacobsen \(sosmt.gov\)](http://sosmt.gov)

Utah Voter Registration

RVU is required by the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) to distribute voter registration forms to its students. You will find all the information you need to register to vote or make any changes to your registration information (address, name change, etc.) at the Utah Voter Registration website.

- Utah: <https://secure.utah.gov/voterreg/index.html>

Enhancing Your RVU Learning Experience By Successfully Interacting Across Cultural Differences

The curriculum at RVU is intended to expose students to cross-cultural and intergroup dynamics in the successful treatment of diverse patients or work contexts with people from many backgrounds. And while it is the responsibility of the faculty (not the students) to present material related to student's preparation for delivering services in diverse settings, the diversity present in the student body can also be a great source for acquiring cross-cultural information and learning about different groups.

Learning about your fellow Rocky Vista University (RVU) students who represent different group or social identities can add significantly and positively to your healthcare education experience. RVU is no different than many other educational institutions in that students encounter people from diverse backgrounds, including (but not limited to) race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, veteran-status, nationality, religion, age, citizenship, and socio-economic status. Interacting with individuals who represent different cultural/social identity groups can be educationally beneficial, yet also challenging. That is, language, culture, worldviews, perspectives, customs, and traditions can be an asset in creating diverse learning environments and forming positive intercultural relationships, but can also become barriers that prevent students from creating conflict-free and productive learning and workplace climates.

The following are suggestions for enhancing your RVU intergroup learning experience via successfully interacting across cultural differences, easing the process of interacting across student individual and group differences, and maximizing the creation of positive and welcoming learning environments:

1. Go out of your way to interact with as many students as you can, in particular with those who are different than you. RVU presents a tremendous opportunity to accomplish this goal. These interactions and dialogues will expand your knowledge about different individuals, identity groups, cultures, and backgrounds.
2. Communication across diverse groups and individuals is a learned skill that will be helpful in your work as healthcare practitioners. Learning to effectively communicate in culturally diverse environments can be both extremely challenging and rewarding.
3. Attempt to avoid microaggressions and try to use micro-affirmations instead when communicating with individuals. Microaggressions are defined as everyday verbal or behavioral insults directed unintentionally or intentionally against people from diverse backgrounds. Examples of insensitive microaggressions are saying “That’s so gay”, or “You are so Ghetto”. These also include behaviors such as “cat calls” directed at women or mocking Native Americans using the stereotypical “War Whooping”. Micro-affirmations, on the other hand are subtle validating, uplifting positive comments or clear acknowledgements about a person’s value and success. Examples include saying “Good morning”, referring positively to the work of a person, showing genuine interest in someone’s culture, or correctly remembering and pronouncing someone’s name

Thus, when interacting:

1. Be patient with other students and ask that they be patient with you as you try to learn about each other’s backgrounds.
2. In talking to someone who comes from a different background, try to ask questions in a respectful manner and at an appropriate time. Instead of asking, “Why don’t all Latinos speak Spanish?” try “I don’t know if you can answer a question for me. I’m not assuming that you can, but I was wondering if you could educate me a little bit on one aspect of Latino culture about which I have always been curious: Why do some Latinos speak Spanish and others do not?”
3. No matter how curious you are about someone’s physical characteristics or personal appearance, such as hair texture, color of skin, jewelry, or clothing, do not touch any of those personal items or characteristics unless you are given permission.
4. Allow each other to make mistakes as you develop your cross-cultural communication skills. Grant each other “redos” and use mistakes and unintentional insensitivities as learning moments. If you make a mistake, apologize for the error and commit to learning from your mistake in order to avoid the faux pas in the future.
5. If you are the person being asked about your cultural background, be patient with the people who are doing the asking. In many cases, the other person does not know how or what to ask and is simply trying to learn.
6. Keep your assumptions and stereotypes in check. Don’t assume. Ask questions. Often, these assumptions are based on damaging stereotypes and can inhibit people from forming trusting, effective, and authentic relationships. Practice using social justice education communication techniques, such as calling-in (i.e., respectfully correcting the person) vs calling-out (i.e., attacking and embarrassing the person), active listening, cognitive empathy (i.e., perspective-taking), non-personalizing of issues, and other techniques that support the learning process during difficult conversations.
7. It is also important to keep intersectionality in mind when interacting with fellow students. From the perspective of intersectionality, we are all both members of ingroups and outgroups, depending on which social identities are being discussed. Thus, the old maxim of “treat others the way you want to be treated” is appropriate when interacting across differences.
8. Do not rely on your fellow students as the single source of all your diversity questions and education. Take responsibility for your own education by reading, researching, and talking to experts in the field.

For additional information on or help and support in practicing the guidelines above, contact the RVU Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at 720-875-2825

Student Educational Records

Academic Records

The Office of the Registrar is the steward of student academic records. Academic records are permanently stored electronically within the student information system and according to record retention guidelines set forth by AACRAO, AAMC, HLC, COCA, and the US Department of Education. Educational records include but are not

limited to, admission application, course registration in attempted and completed courses, grades, academic standing, enrollment and graduation verification requests, name and address changes, diplomas, transcripts, and residency/licensure paperwork.

Administrative Holds

A student who fails to meet obligations to the University may be placed on administrative hold, during which time he/she may not be allowed to register or receive a diploma. The student must settle financial accounts with the Office of Student Financial Services. For more information view the [Student Financial Responsibility Policy](#).

Background Check and Drug Screen

Upon acceptance of an offer of placement within any program within RVU, all RVU students are required to complete a criminal background check and a drug screen as outlined in their matriculation agreement. Information regarding this process is made available upon acceptance. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the revocation of acceptance.

Students enrolled in the DO program will be required to complete an additional background check and 10-panel drug screen before they enter their third year and again before they enter their fourth year. PA students are required to submit to a criminal background check and drug screen prior to the start of the clinical rotation year. All students may be subject to additional background checks, drug screens, and security measures per clinical site requirements. In addition, the University reserves the right to require random and for-cause drug screenings at any time during a student's enrollment.

Admitted students charged with an offense prior to matriculation must notify the Director of Admissions and individual Program Directors immediately. Currently enrolled PA students charged with an offense must notify the the Program Director and the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. Currently enrolled COM and MSBS students charged with an offense must notify the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Course Registration

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for managing all course registrations and open periods for enrollment. Students can view their course registrations via the MyVista Student Portal.

Degree Audits

The Degree Audit is an advising tool to assist students in determining their individual progress toward completing degree requirements. While it might include evaluative measures and achievement milestones, it is intended to be a resource but does not serve as a transcript.

Students can obtain information regarding their general program progress and requirements toward graduation, as follows:

- Pre-Clinical Students (OMS I and OMS II): see the campus Director of Pre-Clinical Education
- Clinical Students (OMS III and OMS IV): refer to New Innovations
- MMS, MSBS and PA Students: see faculty advisor of the program

Diplomas

Diplomas are issued to students once it has been determined the student has completed all program degree requirements and the degree has been conferred. The Office of the Registrar issues all diplomas and processes requests for replacement diplomas.

Grades

Grades are available on the student's portal and LMS. Final grades are posted on the student's portal.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Please refer to the specific degree program's section of this catalog for information related to GPA calculation.

Grade Reports

Students may view final course grades by logging into the MyVista Student Portal. Final grades are posted at the end of each semester.

Grade Change Policy

Grades submitted by faculty and/or course or program directors at the end of a course or semester are final and not subject to change by reason of revision of judgment on the part of these individuals. A new exam or additional work undertaken or completed after the grade report has been recorded or retaking the course will not pose a basis for changing a grade. Faculty members are under no obligation to accept late or additional work - except for accommodations made for pregnant and parenting students or those with disabilities (temporary or permanent) as approved by the Student Affairs Disability Officer.

The grade change process may only be used to correct a grade due to:

- Correction of an error in grading;
- Grade appeal (please see individual program policies for grade appeals processes);
- An "incomplete" previously recorded for the course;
- Remediation of a course.

Students will have five (5) business days following the posting of final course grades, exclusive of institution-recognized holidays or breaks, to appeal a grade.

Grade changes may be submitted by the appropriate faculty member to the Office of the Registrar via the Grade Change Request form, found on the iNet under the Staff/Faculty Forms section. All fields must be completed correctly and the form submitted within thirty (30) business days following the event which necessitates the grade change (error found, appeal decision, resolution of an incomplete, or completion of a remediation). Upon receipt, the Registrar will review the request, consult with the requesting faculty member for any clarifications, as needed, and confirm once the change is made.

This policy is separate from grade appeal policies that are held at the program level. Please refer to the appropriate program handbook for guidance regarding grade appeals.

Health Records and Immunizations

RVU follows the latest requirements set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice. Therefore, students must satisfy all requirements for immunizations at the time of admission and throughout their tenure, as compliance is required on a continuous basis.

Failure to provide all required documentation may prevent matriculation or, in the case of a matriculated student, lead to dismissal. In addition, non-compliant students will be immediately removed from clinical experience and direct patient care until compliance has been achieved. Students are responsible for the expenses of all tests and must meet the conditions listed below (note that some immunization requirements may vary by clinical sites):

- **Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, and Rubella (MMR):** Serologic proof of immunity by Surface Antibody IgG titers for Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, and Rubella. Quantitative lab report including numerical result values and numerical reference range required. Only quantitative (numerical) results accepted.

- **Hepatitis B:** Serologic proof of immunity by Surface Antibody IgG titers for Hepatitis B. Quantitative lab report including numerical result values and numerical reference range required. Only quantitative (numerical) results accepted.
 - **Varicella:** Serologic proof of immunity by Surface Antibody IgG titers for Varicella. Quantitative lab report including numerical result values and numerical reference range required. Only quantitative (numerical) results accepted.
 - **Tetanus Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap):** Tdap or TD booster required every ten years after initial Tdap on file.
 - **Two Separate Tuberculosis Skin Tests (PPD/Mantoux):** Upon entry into the program you must provide one of the following options:
 - Blood Draw: T-Spot or QuantiFERON TB Gold Blood draw that is negative and within 12 months.
 - Skin Tests: TB Two-step (Two TB skin tests within 21 days of each other and no more than 12 months old).
 - If a TB skin test is positive: a chest x-ray must be completed every 2 years.
- Annual update required.** If TB is updated prior to the past TB expiring only 1 TB is required. If the TB expires a full two-step or blood draw is required.

Additionally, in order to minimize the risk of an influenza outbreak on campus or in affiliated clinical facilities, all students are encouraged to receive the annual influenza vaccination (except when medically contraindicated) while enrolled at RVU.

Documents related to immunizations and screenings are maintained and monitored through the Office of the Registrar. For information regarding specific Health and Immunization Requirements, please visit the Office of the Registrar's webpage.

Requests for Exemptions

Any student who requests an exemption to any immunization, screening, and titer requirement due to a medical contraindication or religious mandate must contact the University in writing immediately upon acceptance into the program or immediately upon learning of a new medical contraindication. The request for exemption must include the reason(s) for the request and any applicable supporting documentation. If the request is prior to matriculation, PA students should contact the Chair of the PA Admissions Committee and the Director of Admissions. Incoming students of the COM or MSBS Programs should contact the Director of Admissions. If the request is after matriculation, the request should be directed to the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs or individual Program Directors (MSBS or PA).

If the request for exemption is approved, the student will be permitted to matriculate; however, the student may not be able to participate in all required educational activities, and the student will be required to acknowledge that not all educational activities or clinical sites may be available to them. Clinical sites maintain their own regulations and policies regarding immunizations, screenings, and titers, as well as any potential exemptions; therefore, students are expected to comply with the clinical site requirements. If a student is unable to maintain compliance with site requirements due to medical contraindications or religious reasons, the student is responsible for notifying both the clinical site and the program immediately.

Student Contact Information

Students must notify the Office of the Registrar of any changes in legal name, mailing address, phone number, or emergency contact via the Critical Student Information iNet form (accessible via the MyVista Student Portal). Students must complete this form upon matriculation and the start of each academic term throughout their career with RVU, as part of the process to be included in the roster count for each start of the term, as well as any time information has changed.

For the protection of the student's identity, the safekeeping of confidential records, and in case of emergencies, notification of change of information must be within thirty (30) days of the change. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

Student Enrollment Status Changes

For all changes in status (unless appealing the decision or otherwise directed by the Administration), the student is responsible to work with the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs to process the change and submit the

Change of Status form to the Registrar's Office within five (5) business days of receipt of the letter. Failure to do so may have negative impacts on the student's financial aid, enrollment status, course registrations and/or academic transcripts.

Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is an intentional separation between the student and the University to enable the student to have the fullest opportunity to remedy whatever circumstances resulted in the leave of absence. An LOA suspends all student activities associated with the University and may be voluntary or non-voluntary directed as described below. A leave of absence may not exceed one year either cumulatively or within a single leave during the student's enrollment, unless this requirement is waived by the Dean (DO program) or Program Director (MSBS and PA programs) and Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. If the student does not return within the timeframe approved, he/she will automatically be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn. The specific timeframe of the leave of absence is dependent on the ability of the student to return to classes within the curricular framework and to complete the required course work in the time and sequence dictated by the faculty and the curriculum.

Any student who is granted or placed on a leave of absence is responsible for his/her own financial obligations. Therefore, all students taking a leave of absence are required to contact the Office of Student Financial Services to determine their status, as they may not meet the federal requirements for a leave of absence for Title IV financial aid.

Students going on leave will be directed to return at a specific starting point but may not be allowed to return in the middle of a course or semester. While on a leave of absence, students are not eligible to make up incomplete class work, remediate any examinations, or take any portion of any licensing or certification examinations without express permission from the Dean (DO program) or Program Director (MSBS and PA programs) and Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Students on a leave of absence are not allowed to come to campus (unless for specific business related to their return) or participate in university-related activities and course work, such as research, student organizations, or university events. However, some resources can be accessed on a limited basis, including use of Media Site, the MyVista platform, online library services, student RVU email, and student RVU health insurance (provided the insurance was already paid-in-full). Full use of RVU mental health and wellness services will be available for students on LOA for up to six weeks past the student's change-of-status date.

Voluntary Leave of Absence

A voluntary leave of absence is one that is requested by a student to withdraw temporarily from classes for personal, financial, or medical reasons. The request for voluntary leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. If approved and if the student is in good academic standing, the student may be allowed to re-enter the program at the end of the leave without any need for reapplication, remediation, or reevaluation; however, the student may be required to meet specific requirements in order to be allowed to return.

If a student is granted a leave of absence while current coursework is still in progress, he/she will discontinue further course work. In all such cases, an appropriate designation for each course in progress will be entered on the transcript. In the case of a withdrawal from a course, students will be required to meet the course requirements in entirety before being permitted to progress into the next academic year.

If a leave of absence is granted while the student is not in good standing, is under review for a disciplinary action, or has a disciplinary action imposed on them, then the student may not be reinstated to the University without a review by the program's student performance and/or progression committee. Upon completion of its review, the respective committee shall make a recommendation to the Dean or Program Director. If the student is denied reinstatement, their status will be changed to a withdrawal. If the student is granted reinstatement, special disciplinary action requirements may be imposed as a condition of their reinstatement, where appropriate.

Students granted a leave of absence for a medical reason must have a licensed physician certify in writing that their physical and/or mental health is sufficient to permit them to continue in their education. The physician providing the certification must either be designated by or approved by the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs or by the appropriate Program Director (MSBS or PA) for the certification to be accepted.

Non-Voluntary Leave of Absence

A non-voluntary leave of absence is a mandatory, involuntary leave of absence imposed by the Dean (DO program) or Program Director (MSBS and PA programs) or Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs that is related to academic matters. Please refer to the Academic Policies section of the corresponding program for further information.

A non-academic, non-voluntary LOA is a mandatory, involuntary leave of absence imposed by the Dean (DO program) or Program Director (MSBS and PA programs) or Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs that is unrelated to academic matters. During the leave, the Dean (DO program) or Program Director (MSBS and PA programs) and Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs will provide the student with the opportunity to rectify or seek rehabilitation/treatment for the problem that precipitated the directed leave.

To be reinstated after a non-academic, non-voluntary leave of absence, the student must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Dean (DO program) or Program Director (MSBS and PA programs) and Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs that the pre-established requirements have been met and that he/she shows a reasonable likelihood that previous problems will not recur.

Sabbatical

A sabbatical is a one-year leave of absence to allow RVUCOM students to pursue extended full-time training or studies at another institution that will lead toward an additional certificate, degree, or scholarly publication. Students are not required to pay tuition or attend courses through RVUCOM during a sabbatical. Participating in this special program will delay graduation from RVUCOM by one year.

Withdrawal

An involuntary withdrawal/dismissal is a University-initiated process that can occur for both academic (such as multiple course failures) and non-academic reasons (unprofessional conduct, violation of University policies, and/or violation of the Student Code of Conduct). In addition, students who fail to complete any academically related activity for ten (10) consecutive days without notifying the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs shall be considered withdrawn.

A voluntary withdrawal is a student-initiated resignation under which he/she surrenders all rights and privileges as a student of the University. Students must notify the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs of their request for a voluntary withdrawal verbally or in writing. To return to the University, students must initiate a new application through the Office of Admissions.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the University are required to meet with or verbally notify their Dean or Program Director, the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and the Office of Student Financial Services.

Dismissal Policy and Right to Appeal

Dismissal is the permanent termination (involuntary withdrawal) of a student's academic enrollment. The Program Director, Associate/Assistant Deans of Student Affairs, and/or the Dean are responsible for imposing this action. A student who chooses to appeal a dismissal must do so in writing to the Provost within five (5) business days of the date of dismissal. While appealing a dismissal, a student may continue to attend classes and take all examinations pending the results of the appeal. The reasons for which a student may be dismissed from the University include but are not limited to the following:

- Circumstances of an illegal, behavioral, ethical, or academic nature that warrant such action;
- Failure to meet the Academic Standards; and/or
- Determination of factors that would interfere with or prevent the student from practicing and meeting the professional and ethical standards expected of a healthcare professional.

Readmission

If a student is dismissed or withdraws from any program within RVU, they may apply for readmission through each program's individual admissions process. In order to be considered for readmission, the student must provide adequate evidence that the conditions or factors that caused the prior dismissal or withdrawal have changed significantly, so that there is a reasonable expectation that the student can perform satisfactorily if readmitted. If the

student is readmitted, their prior academic record will remain part of their overall academic record and will be recorded on the permanent transcript.

Transcripts - Official and Unofficial

Official transcripts are housed in the Office of the Registrar and students may request a copy of their official transcript at any time, free of charge. Official transcripts issued directly to the student will bear the marking Issued to Student at the top of each page.

Rocky Vista University fully complies with the AAMC guidelines for medical school transcripts. This includes an unabridged academic history of the student's enrollment.

Unofficial transcripts are not printed on security paper and are labeled Unofficial. Students can access unofficial transcripts via the MyVista Student Portal at any time during the student's enrollment.

Transfer of Credit

Each degree program has specific requirements for the transfer of credit between another educational institution and the University. Please refer to the section on individual degree programs for more information.

Verification of Enrollment

Students may request their enrollment verification at Rocky Vista University by submitting a request via the [iNet form](#).

Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)

General Information

Program Director's Welcome

Welcome to Rocky Vista University's Physician Assistant Program at our beautiful Colorado campus! The PA Program is part of a dynamic institution whose mission, vision, and core values support quality healthcare education, innovation, and excellence.

I invite you to explore our website to learn more about our unique curriculum. Our student-centric approach emphasizes diverse teaching strategies, frequent formative feedback, and an assessment-for-learning model. Expectations of learners are clearly defined, and progression toward achieving competence is fostered by our experienced faculty and staff.

You are about to embark upon both a rewarding and challenging journey. You will have the honor and responsibility to serve with compassion and collaborate as a member of the healthcare team. We are excited to support your development as you prepare to join one of the fastest-growing professions in the country. We are pleased you chose the RVU PA Program.

Sincerely,

Cathy C. Ruff, MS, PA-C
Program Director and Chair
Physician Assistant Studies
Rocky Vista University



Introduction

The PA Program is a 27-month (122 credit hour) degree program designed to prepare students to competently enter the Physician Assistant profession. Graduates are eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE), and upon successfully passing this exam, are then eligible for state licensure.

The RVU/PA Program Graduates:

- Provide quality comprehensive patient care (Patient Care)
- Apply medical knowledge in the practice environment (Medical Knowledge)
- Incorporate evidence-based clinical reasoning into medical decisions. (Practice-Based Learning)
- Communicate effectively in clinical settings. (Interpersonal Communication Skills)
- Demonstrate professional behaviors in educational and practice environments. (Professionalism)
- Navigate evolving healthcare systems to provide optimal patient care (Systems-based Practice)
- Work collaboratively within an interprofessional team (Interprofessional Collaboration)
- Employ strategies that promote life-long personal and professional growth (Personal/Professional Development)

The PA program follows learner progression to competency across the continuum of the curriculum so graduates and the patients they will serve can be confident in their ability to provide safe, effective, patient care. The curriculum incorporates frequent assessment-for-learning strategies that allow learners to easily identify their own progression and areas of challenge. This ensures rapid identification of deficits in knowledge, skills, or attitudes, that faculty and

students can collaboratively address through setting individual student-learning improvement goals. The primary goal of the RVU PA program is for its graduates to be competent in providing clinical care, and ultimately resulting in improved health outcomes.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Rocky Vista University Physician Assistant Program is to prepare clinically competent, collaborative, and compassionate PAs through a rigorous, hands-on curriculum to serve the needs of diverse communities.

Vision

Revolutionizing PA Education: Inspiring skilled and compassionate PAs to lead the future of healthcare.

Goals and Strategic Priorities

Goals / Strategic Priorities

The Program strives to:

1. Equip graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate and manage common clinical presentations at a level of competence that allows for indirect supervision.
2. Prepare graduates to work collaboratively in interprofessional environments.
3. Train graduates to provide compassionate medical care to diverse communities.
4. Practice evidence-based decision-making in patient care.
5. Promote student success and program completion.

Current data regarding progression toward meeting these goals can be found on the RVU PA Program webpage.

RVU Physician Assistant Program Graduate Competencies

The RVU PA Program integrates competencies from recognized medical education organizations, including AAPA, ARC-PA, NCCPA, PAEA, AAMC, NBOME, and AACOM. Competencies are measured throughout training and aligned with relevant Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs), allowing for clear expectations and evaluation mechanisms.

The complete list of EPAs and their associated competencies can be found on the program website under the MPAS Program Curriculum and in Appendix II of this document.

The Graduate Competency Domains include:

- **Patient Care:** Provide compassionate, appropriate, and effective patient-centered care.
- **Medical Knowledge:** Demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological, and social-behavioral sciences, applying this knowledge to patient care.
- **Practice-Based Learning & Improvement:** Continuously improve patient care through self-evaluation and the appraisal of scientific evidence.
- **Interpersonal & Communication Skills:** Effectively exchange information and collaborate with patients, families, and health professionals.
- **Professionalism:** Uphold ethical principles and fulfill professional responsibilities.

- **Systems-Based Practice:** Understand and respond to the larger healthcare context, utilizing available resources for optimal patient care.
- **Interprofessional Collaboration:** Engage effectively in interprofessional teams to optimize patient and population-centered care.
- **Personal & Professional Development:** Foster qualities essential for lifelong personal and professional growth.

Program Administration

Cathy Ruff, MS, PA-C

Program Director for Physician Assistant Program
Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies
PA-C, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
MS, University of Denver

Ryan Spilman, DO

Medical Director (Clinical Curriculum), PA Program
DO, West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

Joseph Stasio, DO, FACOPF

Medical Director (Didactic Curriculum), PA Program
DO, Southeastern University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine

David Eckhardt, MS, PA-C

Director of Simulation
Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies
MS, University of Colorado

Sarah Neguse, MPAS, PA-C

Associate Program Director/Director of Physician Assistant Program Admissions
Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies
MPAS, University of Colorado

Darcy Solanyk, MS, PA-C

Director of Didactic Curriculum
Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies
PA-C, University of Colorado
MS, Colorado State University

Alison Covak, MSPAS, PA-C

Director of Clinical Education
Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies
PA-C, University of Colorado
MSPAS, AT Still University

Jennifer Hellier, PhD

Director of Basic Science and Research
Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies
PhD, Colorado State University

Academic Calendar

Academic Calendar - First Year PA Students

Fall 2025 Semester

- Orientation: August 26-28
- Semester Begins: September 2
- First Day of Classes: September 2
- Labor Day Holiday: September 1
- Thanksgiving Break: November 27-28
- Last Day of Classes: December 12
- Winter Break: December 15-January 2

Spring 2026 Semester

- Semester Begins: January 5
- First Day of Classes: January 5
- Martin Luther King Holiday: January 19
- President's Day Holiday: February 16
- Spring Break: March 9-13
- Last Day of Classes: May 1

Summer 2026 Semester

- Semester begins: May 4
- Introduction to Supervised Clinical Practice: May 4-29
- White Coat Ceremony: May 22 (pending)
- *Supervised Clinical Practice Experience I*
- Clinical Seminar I: June 1-August 21

Academic Calendar - Second Year PA Students

Fall 2025 Semester

- *Supervised Clinical Practice Experience II*
- Clinical Seminar II: August 25-December 26

Spring 2026 Semester

- *Supervised Clinical Practice Experience III*
- Clinical Seminar III: December 29, 2025-April 17, 2026

Summer 2026 Semester

- *Supervised Clinical Practice Experience IV*
- Clinical Seminar IV: April 20-August 7
- Research (Independent Work): June, July, or August (variable)

Academic Calendar - Third Year PA Students

Fall 2025 Semester

- Capstone: August 11-November 14
- RVU PA Graduation: November 14

**All dates are subject to change.*

Admissions Related Policies

Matriculation

Prior to matriculating into the program, accepted students must meet the following requirements:

- Successfully pass a completed drug screen;
- Successfully pass a criminal background check;
- Completion of a pre-matriculation examination;
- Submit documentation of current BLS (healthcare providers) certification;
- Provide evidence of compliance with CDC guidelines for healthcare workers regarding immunizations, screening, and freedom from communicable diseases.

Costs associated with the above-listed matriculation requirements are the responsibility of the student.

Deferment

RVU PA Program allows requests for deferment of acceptance into the program in the event of an unforeseen circumstance. The Admissions Committee may consider an applicant's request for deferment into the next cohort for the following reasons:

- Military deployment;
- Significant personal or family health issues.

Applicants requesting deferment must contact the PA Program Director of Admissions for additional information. Administrative fees associated with approved deferment are the responsibility of the student.

Reapplication

If reapplying to the Program, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the newest application meets the most current admissions criteria and reflects the applicant's most up-to-date transcripts, healthcare experience, and letters of reference.

General Information Sessions

The RVU PA Program offers information sessions for those interested in attending. Dates for these information sessions will be posted on the program website. Sessions are scheduled once per month during the admissions cycle and are conducted virtually. Attendance at these sessions is not required for admission.

Criminal Background Checks

As part of admission to the RVU PA Program, all students are required to complete and pass a criminal background check prior to matriculation and again before the start of clinical rotations per the Background Check Policy. A letter attesting to having passed this check is placed in the student's academic file and is sent to clinical experience sites when requested. A student who has passed a criminal background investigation after admissions and before matriculation in the RVU PA Program will not be re-investigated except under the following conditions:

- The student has not participated in the program for more than one (1) year.
- It is determined by the Program that another criminal background investigation is warranted.
- A clinical experience site requires an additional, more current criminal background check to be performed before the start of a clinical experience.

Students are responsible for any costs associated with additional background checks as required by individual rotation sites.

Current students are required to report any criminal charges to the RVU PA Program Director within thirty (30) days for any of the following types of offenses:

- Any felony charge.
- Charges for drug or alcohol use or distribution.
- Charges for serious or violent crimes.
- Charges related to moral turpitude.

Repeat criminal background investigations will require a new consent/release form signed by the student before conducting the background investigation, as well as the payment of the background check fee. Students who refuse to consent to additional criminal background investigations will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from the Program. The PA Program's Student Assessment and Promotions Committee will review results of the criminal background investigation. The student may be subject to probation or dismissal, pending the results of the review.

Student Financial Services

Financial Aid

The Office of Student Financial Services is available to assist students with finding the financial resources needed to achieve their educational goals. While the primary responsibility for meeting educational costs rests with the student, the Office of Student Financial Services can help students bridge the gap between the cost of their education and their own financial resources.

The Office of Student Financial Services at RVU is committed to the highest standards of professional conduct. Their goal is to provide information and advice, determined solely by the best interests of our students. A copy of the Financial Aid Code of Conduct can be found on the RVU website.

Current students finance their educational costs with a combination of federal and private loans, scholarships, and their own resources. The financial ability of applicants to complete their education at the University is important because of the limited number of seats available in each class. Applicants should have specific plans for financing each year of education, which include tuition; fees; living expenses; books; equipment; clinical rotation travel; and miscellaneous expenses.

Types of Aid Available

RVU students may apply for Title IV federal loans, private loans, or scholarships.

Federal loans available to graduate medical students include the Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan and the Direct Grad/PLUS Loan. Both loans have fixed interest rates and origination fees. The Grad/PLUS loan also requires that students have no adverse credit history. For more detailed information about federal loans, including the current interest rates, loan fees, and repayment terms, visit the Federal Student Aid website or contact the Office of Student Financial Services.

Private educational loans are also available to students. Private loans may have fixed or variable interest rates and may charge loan origination fees. All will require a credit check, and many may request a cosigner to get a lower interest rate. Students will normally apply for a private loan online at the lender's site. Most private loans will require the school to certify your student status and will send loan funds directly to the school to be applied toward your tuition and fee costs. Private loan applicants should understand that they may qualify for federal Title IV loans, which may have more favorable terms than the provisions of a private educational loan. Students are strongly encouraged to review the interest rates, fees, loan terms, and repayment options described in the promissory note before making a decision to select a private loan.

Students receiving loans for the first time must complete loan entrance counseling and a Master Promissory Note before any funds will be disbursed. In addition, all first-year borrowers must complete internal loan counseling during their first year. Furthermore, there is a second-year loan counseling requirement for all students. Enrolled students

are encouraged to meet annually with a financial aid counselor to discuss their cumulative debt and repayment options. All students who have received any type of educational loan must participate in loan exit counseling during their last semester as a requirement for graduation.

The University participates in several scholarships for incoming students, including the Military Health Profession Scholarship Program (HPSP), GI Bill® Benefits, National Health Services Corp, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) scholarships. Each scholarship is described on the RVU website. Other federal, state, and local loan forgiveness and scholarship programs may be available for qualified students.

Prior Credit Policy for GI Bill® Recipients: In accordance with Title 38 USC 3675, all GI Bill® recipients or eligible dependents who use GI Bill® Benefits for this training are required to bring in documentation of all previous training credit and education. GI Bill® recipients are required to submit all prior training transcripts, including military transcripts, to the institution for review. This institution will review all prior credit and maintain a record of such training in the students VA file. VA students' records must be kept for 3 years following the ending date of the last period certified to VA. Referenced law: Title 38 CFR 21.4209(f)

RVU and the RVU Alumni Association also award scholarships to each incoming class. Descriptions of the scholarship criteria and applications are posted annually, during the spring prior to matriculation, on the University website. Scholarship applicants must complete a separate application and supply all required supporting documentation for individual scholarships by the deadline. Award recipients will be announced in July. Please see the RVU website or contact the Office of Student Financial Services for more information.

VA Pending Payment Policy:

"In accordance with section 103, Public Law 115-407, Rocky Vista University will not penalize or limit the participation of students covered under the Chapter 33 Post-9/11 GI Bill® or Chapter 31 Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) while awaiting the payment of tuition and fees by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The University will not drop covered students for non-payment.

1. To be a covered individual, RVU will require students to self-identify and provide the following documentation:
 1. Certification of Eligibility; or
 2. VA Form 28-1905; and
 3. Request for Extension of Tuition and Fees Deadline Form.
2. If a student fails to send, at a minimum their Certificate of Eligibility, they will not be certified for VA Educational Benefits and will be subject to the standard charges associated with the program they are attending.

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

How to Apply for Financial Aid

Students who wish to apply for a loan must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. Students should complete the online FAFSA and use the RVU school code 042189. RVU students are strongly encouraged to complete their FAFSA prior to April 1st.

The Office of Student Financial Services will determine the financial aid eligibility for each student annually. RVU will receive FAFSA information directly from the Department of Education. In some cases, additional documentation may be required, based upon edits in the FAFSA system or information in the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). We may also request other information from students in order to ensure we award financial aid in compliance with federal rules and regulations.

The maximum amount of financial aid any student may receive is the Cost of Attendance (COA). The COA is an estimate of the cost of attending RVU and maintaining a modest but adequate standard living. The COA varies by year in school and is updated annually. Students are strongly encouraged to complete a personal budget and to only borrow the minimum amount needed to cover their actual costs. Many RVU students are able to live on less than the COA by budgeting carefully and reducing their expenses for room, board, personal, and transportation costs. The COA is posted on the RVU website and the MyVista Student Portal.

Students may request an adjustment to their COA for required dependent-care expenses. Please contact the Office of Student Financial Services for more information.

The Office of Student Financial Services will communicate financial aid information and awards to individual students by electronic means. Any student who wishes to receive paper copies of award letters or other financial aid correspondence may opt out of electronic communications by providing a written request to the Office of Student Financial Services.

Students should be aware that RVU will submit loan information to the NSLDS and this information will be available to guaranty agencies, lenders, and schools who are authorized users of the data system.

How Aid is Disbursed

Most financial aid awards are equally split between the fall and spring semesters. Financial aid funds are usually sent to RVU near the beginning of each term and will be applied to the student's account. Institutional charges such as tuition, fees, and health insurance will be paid first. If a credit balance remains after payment of the outstanding balance, a refund will be issued to the student within fourteen days of the creation of the credit balance. Refunds are normally disbursed through the RVU e-Refund process and are direct deposited into the student's personal bank account.

Return of Title IV Policy

This policy shall apply to all students enrolled at Rocky Vista University (RVU) who are eligible to receive financial aid from Title IV funds and who totally withdraw, are dismissed, take an approved leave of absence, drop out or stop attending all classes in the semester.

Students who stop attending class (for any of the reasons listed above) before completing more than 60% of a semester will have their Title IV aid recalculated based on the percent of the term they completed. For example, a student who withdraws completing only 20% of the term will have "earned" only 20% of any Title IV aid that was disbursed or could have been disbursed. The remaining 80% must be returned. If the student withdraws after completing 60% of the semester the student would earn 100% of the Title IV aid. In determining the percentage of the semester completed for a student who withdraws, the school includes in the denominator the total number of calendar days in the semester excluding any scheduled breaks of at least five consecutive days. The school includes in the numerator the total number of days up to the date of withdrawal excluding any scheduled breaks of at least five consecutive days.

If the amount of Title IV aid disbursed to the student is less than the amount the student earned, and for which the student is otherwise eligible, the student may be eligible to receive a Post-Withdrawal Disbursement of the earned aid that was not received. If the unearned amount includes loans, the school must obtain permission from the student before making a post-withdrawal disbursement. The student will have 14 days (about 2 weeks) from the date of the notice to accept or decline some or all of the loan amount.

If the amount of Title IV aid disbursed to the student exceeds the amount of loan the student earned, the school must return a portion of the excess equal to the lesser of:

- The institutional charges multiplied by the unearned percentage of the Title IV aid; or
- The entire amount of excess Title IV aid.

If the school is not required to return all of the excess Title IV funds, the student must return the remaining amount. In the case of loans, the student must return the loan amount in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Master Promissory Note. Unearned Title IV funds shall be returned in the following order:

1. Direct Unsubsidized Loan
2. Direct Grad-Plus Loan

"Title IV Funds" refers to the Federal financial aid programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended) and includes: Direct Unsubsidized Loans and Direct Grad-Plus Loans.

A student is not considered withdrawn for Return to Title IV (R2T4) purposes only, if:

- The institution obtains written confirmation that the student will attend a later module in the same payment period of period of enrollment;
- The student completes the requirements for graduation;

- [The student successfully completes one or more modules that, together, comprise at least 49% of the days in the payment period](#); or
- The student successfully completes coursework equal to or greater than the coursework required for half-time enrollment.

When there is an official withdraw, a student's withdrawal date is:

- The date the student began the institution's withdrawal process or officially notified the institution of intent to withdraw; or
- The official date of an approved leave of absence, withdrawal or dismissal from the University as documented by Student Services.

When there is an unofficial withdraw, a student's withdrawal date is:

- The last documented date of an academically related activity recorded by the college or, if no date is available, the midpoint of the student's term of enrollment.

Any student intending to officially withdraw or requesting an academic leave of absence must notify the Program Director, either verbally or in writing. All requests for an academic leave of absence will be approved or denied by the Program Director, Dean, or Provost. Link to RVU's academic leave of absence policy: <https://catalog.rvu.edu/university-policies/student-enrollment-status-changes>. . RVU does not have a financial aid leave of absence; students placed on an academic leave of absence will be withdrawn for Title IV aid.

Refunds on all institutional charges (tuition and fees) will be calculated according to the RVU refund schedule. Please refer to RVU's Tuition Refund Policy for more information.

When a student has withdrawn, any credit balance refund must be put on hold until R2T4 is calculated. Title IV credit balances will be refunded within 14 days of the date the R2T4 calculation is completed.

Students are responsible for any part of institutional charges outstanding after Title IV funds are returned.

Deadlines:

- Within 45 days from the date RVU determined that the student withdrew, the college will return unearned funds.
- Within 30 days from the date RVU determined that the student withdrew, the college will offer a post withdrawal disbursement, if applicable. Students will have 14 days from the date of the notice to respond.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards for Financial Aid Eligibility

Federal regulations require that Rocky Vista University (RVU) establish, publish and apply standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) which students enrolled in the PA program must meet. This document represents the satisfactory academic progress policy standards adopted by RVU for financial aid eligibility. This policy applies to all PA students including those applying for or currently receiving Federal, State, or institutional financial assistance.

Academic progress requires both quantitative and qualitative measurement. Academic records will be reviewed at the end of each term to determine if the student is making satisfactory progress towards their degree.

Time Frame for Completion (Quantitative Measures of Academic Progress):

Maximum Timeframe: Students must complete their degree within a maximum number of attempted credits not to exceed 150% of the published program length. If at any point in time it is determined that a student cannot complete their program of study within 150% of the program length, the student will become ineligible for aid and will need to submit an appeal.

Pace of Progression: Students must complete at least 67% of their total attempted credit hours. To calculate the pace at which a student is progressing, divide the total number of hours the student has successfully completed by the total number they have attempted.

Grade Point Average (Qualitative Measures of Academic Progress):

The PA program is based on a pass/fail system. No letter grades are given. Grades of Pass/Fail are not included in a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation. Grades of Pass/Fail will be factored into the quantitative measurement. For purposes of measuring satisfactory academic progress for financial aid, and financial aid purposes only, a grade of Pass is considered the equivalent of receiving a grade of "C" or better in that class. To meet the qualitative measurement requirement, a grade of Pass or Pass with Remediation must be earned in all courses. A grade of Fail will count toward hours attempted but not earned for maximum timeframe and pace of progression.

Leaves of Absence: Periods of approved Leaves of Absence will not count toward the maximum time frame. A student may not receive financial assistance during a Leave of Absence.

Repeated Coursework: Once a course has been successfully passed, the course may not be repeated unless recommended by the Program Director and/or Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC). The original grade received in a course will not count toward the student's qualitative assessment but will be included in the quantitative assessment. Students who repeat coursework must still complete their degree within the maximum timeframe.

Withdrawal/Incomplete/In Progress: Courses in which a student earned a grade of Incomplete (IN), Work In Progress (WIP), In Progress (IP) or Withdrawal (W), or the equivalent, will count toward hours attempted but not earned for maximum timeframe and pace of progression but will not be included in the qualitative measure.

Grade Changes: Once an official grade is received for an Incomplete (IN), Work In Progress (WIP), or In Progress (IP) course, the student should notify the Office of Student Financial Services so SAP status can be reevaluated.

Noncredit Remedial Courses: RVU does not offer noncredit remedial courses.

Transfer Students: The PA Program does not accept transfer credits from other programs.

Change in Program or Pursuit of a Second Degree: If a student changes program of study or chooses to pursue a second degree, credits and grades that do not count toward the new program will not be included in the SAP determination.

Summer Terms: Academic records will be reviewed at the end of each term, including summer if student is enrolled, to determine if the student is making satisfactory progress towards their degree.

Financial Aid Warning:

Rocky Vista University will use the standardized definition of Financial Aid Warning which is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as follows:

Financial Aid Warning is a "status a school assigns to a student who is failing to make satisfactory academic progress. The school reinstates eligibility for aid for one payment period and may do so without a student appeal."

Financial Aid Probation:

Rocky Vista University will use the standardized definition of Financial Aid Probation which is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as follows:

Financial Aid Probation is a "status a school assigns to a student who is failing to make satisfactory academic progress and who successfully appeals. Eligibility for aid may be reinstated for one payment period."

Note that the University may have a different definition of "academic probation." Refer to the Student Handbook and Catalog for more information on academic probation.

Procedure:

The Office of Student Financial Services will review the academic progress (qualitative and quantitative) of each financial aid recipient at the end of each term, prior to the disbursement of financial aid for the subsequent term. A

student's entire academic record will be reviewed, which will include any periods of enrollment that the student did not receive financial aid assistance. SAP review is not complete until both the qualitative and quantitative measures have been reviewed.

Any student who fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by this policy will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one term. During that term, the student will continue to be eligible for aid. At the end of a term during which a student is on Financial Aid Warning, if the student still fails to meet any of the requirements, the student will become ineligible for aid and may submit an appeal to the Office of Student Financial Services. The Office of Student Financial Services will send a written notice to students who have not made satisfactory academic progress.

Reestablishing Eligibility:

Appeals: A student may submit a written appeal documenting mitigating circumstances (e.g., serious illness of student or family member, death of a relative), within seven (7) calendar days of the determination of their unsatisfactory academic progress.

Appeals should be sent to the Office of Student Financial Services and will be reviewed by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the appeal. The student will receive written notification of the committee's decision within seven (7) calendar days. Decisions of the Financial Aid Appeals Committee may be appealed to the Rocky Vista University Provost.

Appeals should be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Services and must include:

1. A written statement from student which documents:
 - The reason(s) for failure to meet the standards of academic progress for financial aid eligibility.
 - What has changed in the student's situation that would allow the student to bring their academic progress up to required standards.
2. A letter or academic plan from the SPC and/or the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs. The academic plan must ensure that the student is able to meet SAP standards by a specific point in time.

If the appeal is granted, and it is determined that the student should be able to meet SAP standards by the end of the subsequent payment period, they may be placed on financial aid probation without an academic plan. A student's progress must be reviewed at the end of their probationary period. If the student is meeting the SAP requirements, they will go back into good standing. If the student does not meet the SAP requirements, they will again become ineligible for financial aid with the opportunity to re-appeal.

If the appeal is granted, and it is determined that the student will require more than one payment period to meet SAP standards, they may be placed on probation with an academic plan in place. A student's progress will be reviewed at the end of each payment period as is required of a student on probation status. If the student is meeting the requirements of their academic plan, the student is eligible to receive financial aid funds if the student continues to meet those requirements. Students must appeal to change their plan. If the student does not meet their academic plan requirements, they will again become ineligible for financial aid with the chance to re-appeal.

Without Approved Appeal: Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress, who do not submit an appeal or have their appeal request denied, may regain eligibility only by taking action that brings them into compliance with RVU's satisfactory progress standards.

Any exceptions to this policy will be made on an individual basis and in compliance with federal, state and local regulations governing financial aid.

Student Health Insurance

All students are required to obtain health insurance prior to matriculation and to maintain health insurance throughout their time of enrollment at the University. Students must participate in the University-sponsored health insurance program or submit an approved waiver with documentation of alternative equivalent coverage. If a student's insurance expires during the academic year, they must obtain a new waiver form with proof of new insurance at least 30 days before their old insurance expires. The current cost of the Student Health Insurance program may be obtained from the Office of Student Financial Services. Any student who has a lapse of health insurance coverage will be summarily removed from classes and/or clerkships and may be subject to dismissal.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition for PA for 2025-2026 is as follows:

- Year 1: \$60,860(Fall, Spring, Summer)
- Year 2: \$35,784(Fall, Spring, Summer)
- Year 3: \$9,924 (Fall only)

The following annual fees will also apply to all PA students:

- Student Health Insurance* (PA1): \$4,846
- Student Health Insurance* (PA 2): \$5,310
- Student Health Insurance* (PA 3): \$1,776

**All students are required to have health insurance. Students will be automatically enrolled in and billed for the RVU Student Health Insurance Plan unless they provide evidence of equivalent coverage before the waiver deadline date. Please contact the Office of Student Financial Services for more information.*

General Program Policies

Applicability of Program Policies

All program policies apply to all Physician Assistant students, principal faculty, and the Program Director, regardless of location, except where clinical site policies conflict with Program policies, in which event students, principal faculty, and the Program Director will be expected to comply with the clinical site's policies; however, despite any given clinical site's mandates on dress code or identification, students must always wear their school-issued student identification badge. The identification badge requirement is in addition to any clinical site requirements regarding site-specific identification.

Disclaimer

All Physician Assistant students will be required to adhere to Rocky Vista University policies as stated in the RVU Student Handbook and [Academic Catalog](#). The *RVU Student Handbook and Academic Catalog*, which includes the Rocky Vista University Physician Assistant Program ("Program") policies applicable to PA students, does not constitute a contract with the Program, either express or implied. The Program reserves the right at any time to change, delete, or add to any of the program-specific provisions at its sole discretion. The Program is responsible for ensuring that all program policies, procedures, and expectations are timely and effectively communicated to all students. The Program will inform students of policies, procedures, and expectations via the *RVU Student Handbook and Academic Catalog*, the program website, orientation sessions, and student meetings or class sessions, when appropriate. Any change or update to an existing policy, procedure, or expectation shall immediately be published in the appropriate place. Students shall immediately be notified of the change and where the change can be found and reviewed.

Furthermore, the provisions of this document are designed by the Program to serve as firm guidelines rather than absolute rules, and exceptions may be made based on extenuating circumstances.

General Information for Academic Policies

The Rocky Vista University Physician Assistant Program aims to provide clear information to Physician Assistant students and faculty. The RVU PA Academic Policies apply to all RVU PA students. The requirements for promotion and graduation are outlined in this document.

Personal Safety and Security

Rocky Vista University, together with the clinical site and the student, share the responsibility for ensuring that adequate policies and procedures are in place regarding the safety and security of the students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs. This includes sites where clinical rotations occur, as well as off-site training locations for University-sponsored events.

The Physician Assistant Program will provide information on best practices for personal safety and security during the student's initial orientation and again prior to the beginning of clinical rotations. Students will be encouraged to become familiar with all safety and security policies in effect at all sites and off-campus events. Finally, all Preceptors will be expected to communicate their site-specific policies and safety considerations with students and faculty involved at their location.

RVU as an educational institute falls under the jurisdiction of the [Clery Act](#). *The annual security report can be found by taking the Clery Act hyperlink.*

Conflict of Interest

RVU has a Conflict-of-Interest policy that is reviewed with students during the didactic phase. Students must review this policy prior to (and during) clinical rotations to remind themselves of expectations regarding this policy.

Professional Liability and Workers' Compensation Insurance

Students are covered by RVU's professional liability and workers' compensation insurance for all RVU-sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities, including rotations, shadowing, health fairs, medical mission trips, etc. Any student who is injured while on clinical rotation must notify the Associate Dean of Clinical Education for the College of Medicine or the Director of Clinical Education for the PA program and must contact **Human**

Resources immediately for direction about workers' compensation. Students are not covered for non-RVU activities.

Dress Code

The PA Program dress code is designed to ensure that students maintain a professional appearance, which instills confidence in colleagues and patients while adhering to health and safety standards. Students are expected to dress appropriately when representing RVU and the PA profession in all settings, including campus, clinical sites, meetings, conferences, and events.

General Guidelines

1. **Professional Appearance:** Each student must present themselves in a manner that reflects the dignity of the healthcare profession. Attire should be neat, clean, and suitable for a professional environment, ensuring it does not distract from educational endeavors.
2. **Compliance with Institutional Dress Code:** Students are required to follow the RVU institutional dress code as outlined in the RVU Student Handbook during business hours on campus (typically 8 AM – 5 PM). This includes adherence to specific dress requirements for various learning environments, such as labs, lectures, and clinical rotations.
3. **Course-Specific Attire:** Students must comply with any specific dress code requirements outlined in the course syllabi. If a professor mandates professional attire for a skills class in lieu of scrubs, students are expected to adhere to that requirement.
4. **Clinical Site Dress Code:** When on location at clinical training sites, students must adhere to the dress code of the training site, which takes precedence over both university and program policies. Students should contact each training site one week before the start of their clerkship rotation to confirm appropriate attire.
5. **Neatness and Grooming:** All students are expected to be well-groomed, with clothing free of holes, tears, or signs of excessive wear. Attire should be respectful of others and contribute to a positive learning environment.
6. **Cultural and Religious Attire:** Cultural and religious attire is welcomed, provided it is safe and appropriate for the specific learning or clinical environment. Students may dress following their gender identity and expression.

Responsibility and Feedback

Students are encouraged to self-monitor their attire and be open to feedback from peers, faculty, and staff. The appropriateness of attire can impact the RVU community, and students should maintain a mindset of professionalism in this regard.

Consequences for Dress Violations:

Egregious or repeated violations of the dress code may be considered unprofessional behavior and may result in disciplinary actions. In cases of inappropriate dress, students may be asked to change before they can return to class.

Conclusion

By adhering to this dress code, students contribute to a professional and respectful environment that reflects the values of the PA program and the greater RVU community.

Program Academic Policies

Scheduling of Outside Events

Student groups wishing to schedule events may do so before or after regularly scheduled class time (i.e. before 8am or after 5pm) and must receive approval from the RVU PA Program's Director of Curriculum prior to contacting guest lecturers. Once approved by the Director of Curriculum, students must work with the Program to reserve appropriate classroom locations for the event. Students will also need approval from the Director of Student Life in the Office of Student Affairs per RVU policy.

Course and Clinical Evaluations

At the end of each course, students are required to complete a course and a course director evaluation. An anonymous compilation of the evaluations is provided to Course Directors, the Director of the Didactic Curriculum, and the Program Director. Evaluations are reviewed and used to make improvements to individual courses, as well as the overall curriculum. Therefore, constructive student feedback provided by learners is extremely important. Students provide evaluations of clinical rotations using clinical education management software (i.e., Exxat). Constructive feedback is important in the evaluation and continued use of clinical sites. Failure to complete required evaluations may result in a course grade of "incomplete" or "in progress" until the evaluation(s) is/are completed. Repeated inability to complete required evaluations within the designated timeframe will be considered a violation of professional conduct and will be addressed accordingly. (refer to Professionalism section). Clinical evaluations of preceptors are distributed to preceptors during each summer semester. Students will remain anonymous, and scores and comments will only be provided after a preceptor has had a minimum of 3 students.

Textbook and Classroom Supply Policy

Students are expected to obtain all textbooks and course supplies as listed in each course syllabus. Many texts are available electronically through the RVU Library.

Testing Policies and Procedures

The following are general procedures used for examinations:

- Most often*, exams will be taken via the ExamSoft assessment platform.
- Proctoring will be at the discretion of the Program and is coordinated with the Office of Testing.

- Scheduled test times will be adhered to.
- Exams will start and end as scheduled.
- Students are expected to take exams as scheduled.
- Exceptions may be granted by the Course Director in the case of an emergency.
- Should a clinical exam need to be rescheduled, the student may be responsible for additional costs incurred due to the rescheduling.

*In the event another platform is utilized for examinations, students will be notified in advance.

Administration of the PAEA End of Curriculum Summative Written examination must be delivered in person with proctors, per PAEA requirements.

Reasonable Accommodation

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or meet course requirements are encouraged to contact the RVU's Disability Officer to discuss access issues. There is a Disability Officer located on both the Utah and Colorado campus. Contact can be made via the [RVU website here](#). The ADA team will assist you in determining reasonable accommodations as well as coordinating the approved accommodations.

It is the policy of the institution not to discriminate against persons with disabilities in admissions policies and procedures or educational programs, services, and activities, however, all students are expected to meet technical standards and educational objectives and requirements, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Academic Integrity and Conduct Code

Education at the RVU PA Program is conducted under the honor system. All students entering health professional programs should have developed the qualities of honesty and integrity, and each student should apply these principles to their academic and subsequent professional career.

The type of conduct that violates the PA Program's student academic integrity and conduct expectations may include but is not limited to the following:

- Academic dishonesty;
- Complicity with academic dishonesty;
- Plagiarism;
- Cheating;
- Fabrication and falsification of effort, credentials, or achievement in the academic or clinical setting;
- Submission of the same work and/or paper more than once and for different classes;
- Use of Artificial Intelligence to complete assignments unless explicitly designated by the course director;
- Misuse of academic materials;
- Redistribution, photocopying, photographing, or otherwise reproducing exam content or keys (this applies to SP cases and may apply to simulated cases used in the classroom.);
- Disruptive or disorderly conduct in a classroom or clinical setting;
- Theft, damage, or destruction of property;
- Physical or verbal altercation, assault, battery, domestic violence, or other related crimes;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bribery in an attempt to gain an academic advantage;
- Forging or altering documents or credentials;
- Utilization of position or power by a student for personal benefit or to the detriment of another student, faculty member, or member of the staff;
- Any behavior that does not meet the standards of the University, its affiliates, and the healthcare professions

Violations of Academic Integrity

The Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) reviews issues related to student academic dishonesty. The SAPC may recommend various activities and/or sanctions to remediate unethical behavior. If the behavior is found to be serious or egregious, the SAPC may recommend to the Program Director remediation without progression or dismissal as outlined in the “Student Remediation” section.

Professionalism

Becoming a Professional

By entering the RVU PA Program, students have made a conscience decision to become a professional.

Professionals are highly educated individuals who practice within an ethical framework—as outlined by an oath or promise. The main components of professional behavior include honesty/integrity, reliability/ responsibility, respect for others, compassion/empathy, self-improvement, self-awareness/knowledge of one’s limits, communication/ collaboration skills, flexibility/ adaptability, and altruism/advocacy. Students within the RVU PA Program will represent the Program in many different ways—within the classroom, within the University, or within the community—each offering ways in which to demonstrate the skills of a professional. The Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession illustrate more clearly the standards to which students will be held. These Guidelines can be found [here](#).

Professional Behavior

RVU PA students are held to a high standard of professional and ethical conduct throughout their time in the Program. Professional behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- **Patient Care:** hold primary responsibility for the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all humans; assume responsibility for all professional duties; maintain patient confidentiality.
- **Timeliness:** punctuality for class and clinic; timely submission of assignments, evaluations, patient documentation, and other required paperwork.
- **Participation:** appropriate, constructive, non-derogatory participation in the classroom and clinic (further examples may be found in individual course syllabi).
- **Appearance:** appropriate attire, hygiene, and presentation (further examples may be found in individual course syllabi).
- **Behavior:** appropriate conduct, attentiveness, and non-disruptive, preparation for class and clinic, courtesy, flexibility, collaboration and support of one’s classmates and others in the clinical setting.
- **Respect:** regard for patients, faculty, staff, colleagues, students, members of the healthcare team, and others.
- **Education:** responsibility for self-education and accepting responsibility for own learning.
- **Constructive Evaluation:** seeking and accepting feedback maturely to change behaviors; providing constructive feedback.
- **Personal Accountability:** accepts responsibility for actions and behaviors; demonstrates dependability; acknowledges limitations.
- **Self-Reflection:** willingness to examine one’s own strengths, weaknesses, and biases.

Professional behavior will be evaluated regularly by the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC), through review of classroom behaviors, PDAT scores, and clinical evaluations; behavior may be considered when Course Directors assign grades.

Student Professional Development

An important aspect of any professional educational curriculum is the development of professional behaviors and role identity. Evidence shows that unprofessional behavior exhibited during training is a predictor of future problems with state regulatory boards and the need for disciplinary actions (Papadakis, Hodgson, Teherani and Kohatsu, 2004). Unprofessional behavior presents a potential danger to the provision of good patient care and relates to the credibility of the profession.

Professionalism, therefore, shares equal importance to content knowledge and manual skills at RVU. The RVU PA Program considers a violation of professional conduct a significant deficiency. Recognizing the responsibility for professional behavior, the Program sets expectations for and evaluates students on their professional conduct. Students must demonstrate acquisition of these important behaviors.

Student professional development is evaluated on an individual basis, in each course, each semester, or more frequently, as needed. Course Directors will complete a professionalism rubric in association with determining a pass or fail score for each student. The Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) will review the rubrics from all courses at the end of each semester for unacceptable professionalism ratings. (Refer to Professional Development and Assessment Tool (PDAT) within the Appendices).

The student will be required to acknowledge the expectations for professionalism as outlined in this handbook. An incident and/or allegation of student violation of the Code of Conduct, policy, protocol, student handbook, regulation, program or course requirements and professionalism expectations will be investigated, and the Course Director or their designee, may meet with the student informally to discuss the incident and possible courses of action. If the Course Director or their designee determines there is sufficient reason to believe a violation may have occurred, the matter may be handled informally or may involve more formal disciplinary measures. In the event it is determined that formal disciplinary measures will be taken, the student will be notified in writing of the allegations and will be provided with an opportunity to be heard at a disciplinary meeting before the Student Assessment and Promotion Committee (SAPC).

The Chair of the SAPC presides over the meeting and ensures that it is conducted in an orderly fashion. The Chair has the authority to rule on questions of admissibility, adjournments, break requests, and the relevance and appropriateness of questions, evidence, and information.

A meeting before the SAPC is not intended to be criminal, and the proceeding and procedures are not intended to be that of a criminal court. The student does not have a right to be accompanied by an attorney at the meetings leading up to the hearing before the SAPC.

A student may, but is not required, to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting for consideration by the SAPC. At the meeting, the student will have the opportunity to make any relevant statements and provide their side of the story; the SAPC will have the opportunity to ask questions of the student and any other individuals that may appear before the SAPC to provide first-hand information regarding the matter.

The SAPC will act as a factfinder, reviewing all relevant information, including the student's anecdotal notes, files, admissions file, and academic history. It will then provide its findings and recommendations to the Program Director. The Program Director has the discretion to accept, reject, or modify these recommendations and sanctions. The student will be informed of the decision in writing. This decision, along with all official disciplinary correspondence, will become part of the student's official record and may be reported to licensing authorities if relevant questions arise.

The standard to be employed for all disciplinary cases is a preponderance of the evidence standard (more likely than not, greater than 50%). Clear and convincing evidence is not required. In arriving at any decision, attention is paid to the history of the student, their growth as members of an academic community and graduates and professionals within their chosen profession and the expectations and responsibilities that accompany the privilege of becoming a practicing Physician Assistant. Consideration will be given to the educational record, current status, student record, and any prior disciplinary history and/or prior formal or informal warnings, counseling, incidents, and professionalism concerns documented, which may be factored into the recommendation and decision.

If the SAPC determines a violation has occurred, it may recommend a range of penalties, including but not limited to one or a combination of the following:

- Disciplinary Warning – A written reprimand putting the student on notice that they have violated expectations and indicating that further misconduct may result in a more severe disciplinary action. A copy of this warning will be placed in the student's file, and the warning can be maintained in the student's file with or without conditions attached.
- Disciplinary Probation with or without conditions - A student may be placed on disciplinary probation for a definite period. While on probation, students may not hold office in Student Government Organizations, Clubs or Societies or represent the program in any capacity or serve in leadership positions on campus. Additional conditions may be attached, including but not limited to, prohibition against participation in extra- curricular activities without permission, limitations on access to campus-related facilities/functions that are not necessary

to attend class, mandated counseling, status updates and meetings and any other conditions found to be appropriate. Further violations while on probationary status will result in suspension or dismissal from the Program. A copy of the probation notice becomes a part of the student's file unless expunged.

- Suspension – A student may be suspended and may be barred from attending classes for a definite period, not to exceed one academic semester. Conditions may be attached to resumption of studies as a pre-requisite to return from suspension. Any student who does not complete any such conditions within the specified timeframe may be subject to dismissal.
- Disciplinary Dismissal – This is termination of the student's enrolled status. A student who has been dismissed for disciplinary reasons is not permitted to complete their courses and may not re-register for a future semester. Notification of the dismissal will appear on the student's academic transcript and students will not be allowed to enroll in other RVU programs.
- Other Sanctions- The SAPC may recommend other sanctions that it deems appropriate and fair.

Students may appeal disciplinary sanctions imposed for code of conduct violations. (*refer to "Student Appeals" "Appeals of the Decision of the SAPC or Program Director"*)

This process is cumulative over the course of the Program.

Course Schedules

Typically, required classes and events for students are scheduled by the RVU PA Program between the hours of 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday. Additional time may be needed to reschedule guest speakers or presentations that were previously cancelled or to incorporate topics that may enhance the didactic or clinical curriculum. In the event of a schedule change, the students will be notified as quickly as possible via email. During Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs), students are expected to follow the schedule set by the preceptor, which may include holiday, night or weekend shifts, or call.

Student Communication with the Program

Publication and Dissemination of Information

The Program is dedicated to providing an open and honest educational environment. To this end, the Program is committed to defining, publishing, and making readily available to prospective and enrolled students all pertinent program information including, but not limited to, general program information, the Program's accreditation status, the success of the Program in meeting its goals, first-time board pass rates, all required curricular components and academic credit, estimates of tuition and costs, [tuition refund policies](#), student grievance procedures, student-related policies, and admissions-related information. The Program will also define, publish, and make readily available to admitted students all academic performance and progression requirements. The Program shall review the publication and dissemination of said information any time a change or update is made to the information but, in any instance, not less than once per academic year.

Modes of Communication

University email is the first line of communication with the Program. Email is checked during business hours. The student is required to check their University email daily.

Timely Communication

Communication from students on weekends will be answered for emergent clinical issues only. For emergent clinical issues, please utilize the urgent after-hours phone number of the Director of Clinical Education, which is listed in the table below under "Clinical Experience Communication."

- *Emergent is defined as a physical injury, family death (or serious injury), life-threatening or a situation that is offensive or flagrant to the student.*

Students should make every attempt to respond to emails within two business days unless directed otherwise in the email. Faculty and staff will make every effort to respond to emails and voicemails within two business days.

Clinical Experience Communication

Clinical Experience Communication Issue and Contact Person

Concern/Issue	Clinical Contact
Non-emergent rotation concerns	acovak@rvu.edu
Urgent after business hours	303.588.2781
Urgent during business hours	1. Notify PA Program: 720.874.2409
Inability to attend clinic (illness, injury, family emergency)	1. Notify your Preceptor first 2. Make absence request in EXXAT 3. Notify DOCE acovak@rvu.edu if further discussion is warranted
Preceptor Illness or Vacation	Make absence request in EXXAT Contact DOCE acovak@rvu.edu
Needlestick, exposure, injury	Follow process in section " Infectious Disease "

Locating Students

All RVU PA students are required to keep current address and telephone numbers updated with the following three locations:

- **The Rocky Vista University Office of the Registrar**
Phone: (720) 874-2412
Email: registrar@rvu.edu
- **The RVU PA Program office**
Phone: (720) 874-2409
Email: paprogram@rvu.edu
- EXXAT Profile during the clinical year

When to contact these offices:

- In the event of a permanent change to phone number or home address;
- In the event of a temporary change to phone number and/or temporary place of domicile;
- In the event of a name change.

Timeliness

Promptness is crucial for students during didactic and clinical experiences. Repeated tardiness is considered unprofessional and may impact professionalism evaluations.

Attendance

PA students must attend class and exam as scheduled to develop the clinical and professional competencies necessary for successful entry into the profession. Exceptions for emergencies may be granted at the Course Director's discretion. Valid reasons for requesting an excused absence include, but are not limited to, personal illness, family emergency or religious observation. Those absences that are not pre-approved by individual Course Directors may be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences may prevent students from making up missed assignments or examinations. Students with frequent absences due to illness, or unexcused absences may be asked to provide a note from a medical provider.

Didactic & Clinical Attendance

Students are required to attend classes and clinics at scheduled times, with clinical participation generally requiring a commitment of at least 32 hours per week. If this minimum is not met, students must notify the Clinical Team. Gap weeks will be dedicated to academic responsibilities, not vacation time.

Absence Types

Excused Absences

An excused absence is granted by relevant departmental heads (Course Director, Director of Curriculum, or Director of Curriculum). Types include:

- Voluntary Absences: Generally not permitted (e.g., personal appointments).
- Involuntary Absences: These include an emergency, serious illness, injury, or jury duty. Students summoned for jury duty must inform their advisors and provide proof of attendance.

Didactic Phase:

Didactic Phase: Students may request excused absences for up to 5 business days per semester. Requests should be submitted in advance and absences will be documented. For absences longer than 3 days, a meeting with the Director of Curriculum and the student's advisor is required. Consecutive or intermittent excused absences of one week (5 days) or more are not permitted. Unexcused absences may affect the Professional Development Assessment Tool (PDAT) component of the course grade

Clinical Phase:

Students must promptly notify the Clinical Team of any absences. Unexpected preceptor absences do not require makeup days if reported within 24 hours. Repeated absences may lead to a remediation plan. Students are allowed 3 absences during the clinical year, encompassing SCPE or Clinical Seminar requirements. These days can be used for social events, personal needs, travel, interviews, etc. However, to ensure valuable learning experiences, absences should not all be taken during the same 4-week rotation. Absence requests must be submitted and approved at least 10 days in advance through the clinical tracking system (Exxat). If unique circumstances necessitate an additional voluntary excused absence, students must present a written request to the Director of Clinical Education (DOCE) at least 10 days before the desired day(s) off. The DOCE will either approve the request or inform the student that the absence is unexcused. Multiple requests for voluntary absences will not be permitted.

Unexcused Absence

An absence without approval from the Course Director, Director of Curriculum, or Director of Clinical Education is considered unexcused and may negatively impact evaluations.

Additional Didactic Considerations

- **Inclement Weather:**
 - Students should attend class unless otherwise notified by the Program or institution.
 - Students are strongly encouraged to sign up for the Emergency Alert System utilized by the University to receive text and email messages regarding weather that may impact curriculum delivery.
- **Emergency or Illness:**
 - If a student is ill or unable to attend class due to an emergent situation, they must contact their faculty advisor as soon as they are able. The advisor will notify course directors on the student's absence.

- **Other Absences:**
 - Requests for non-emergency-related absences require prior approval from the Director of Curriculum. All requests should be submitted at least 10 business days prior to the anticipated absence. (need to identify a process here)
- **Jury Duty:**
 - Students called for jury duty must notify their advisor or the Director of Curriculum. Proof of attendance may be required. Students not required to appear must still attend class. If an exam coincides with jury duty, the Program will assist in coordinating a make-up date with the appropriate institutional departments.

Additional Clinical Considerations

- **Mandatory Testing:**
 - Students must attend competency assessments, and preceptors will be notified in advance.
- **Inclement Weather:**
 - Students should attend clinic unless the rotation site is closed; notify the Director of Clinical Education as needed.
- **Emergency or Illness:**
 - If a student cannot see patients due to illness or an emergency, they must contact their preceptor and subsequently email the Director of Clinical Education to discuss potential make-up options.
- **Other Absences:**
 - Requests for non-emergency absences require prior approval from the Director of Clinical Education, prior to discussion the matter with the preceptor. All requests should be submitted at least ten (10) business days prior to the anticipated absence via the Exxat clinical tracking system.
 - An unexpected preceptor absence resulting from unforeseen changes in the preceptor's schedule, or their illness requires students to be notified within 24 hours. Students will not be responsible for making up a single day of absence in these cases. However, if a preceptor's absence lasts multiple days, students are required to make up the necessary hours to meet clinical rotation standards. The Clinical Team will assign additional clinical experiences if necessary to fulfill program requirements.
- **Jury Duty:**
 - Students called for jury duty must notify their advisor or the Director of Clinical Education. Proof of attendance may be required. Students not required to appear must still attend clinic. If an exam coincides with jury duty, the Program will assist in coordinating a make-up date with the appropriate institutional departments.
- **University Breaks and Holidays:**
 - Students are required to attend clinic during Rocky Vista University's PA Program winter break, spring break, and designated holidays.
- **On-Call & Night Shifts:**
 - On-call responsibilities may be required during specific rotations; students should discuss the details with their preceptor(s) at the beginning of each rotation.
- **Job Interviews:**
 - Job interviews must be scheduled outside of active clinical experiences and are not permitted during those times.

Remediation Plans

If patterns of absences—whether excused or unexcused—are observed throughout the semester or year, the SAPC may implement a remediation plan to address attendance issues. Additionally, students may be required to provide documentation from a healthcare provider that they have been seen for illness-related absences.

Accountability

Students are accountable for obtaining materials and information from any classes or assignments missed due to absences. This includes clinical absences. They must also meet all requirements set during any missed sessions.

Student Religious Accommodations for Excused Absence Policy

Rocky Vista University (RVU) aims to provide a reasonable accommodation for the [sincerely held](#) religious beliefs of a student if the accommodation would resolve a conflict between the individual's religious beliefs or practices and an educational requirement unless doing so would create an undue burden for the university. RVU will make determinations about religious accommodations and attendance/excused absences on a case-by-case basis considering various factors and based on an individualized assessment in each situation.

RVU strives to make determinations on religious accommodation requests expeditiously and will inform the individual once a determination has [been made](#). If there are questions about an accommodation request, please contact the Vice President for Inclusive Excellence, in the Office for Inclusive Excellence.

Students [are strongly encouraged](#) to [submit](#) all religious accommodation requests for the entire academic year via the iNET form (<https://inet.rvu.edu/home/forms-2/student-religious-accommodation-for-excused-absences-request-form/>) during the first week of the semester. Requests may require up to two weeks to process. Please be aware that failure to [submit](#) requests [in a timely manner](#) may delay the implementation of any approved accommodations.

Students should understand that if accommodation [is granted](#), missing time from clinical rotations/clerkships may require the student to make up work or repeat the experience [at a later time](#), potentially delaying progress in the program and/or graduation.

If examinations or assignment deadlines [are scheduled](#) on the day(s) of a religious observance, any student who provided advance notice [following](#) program policies and procedures will have the opportunity to make up the examination or extend the assignment deadline and will not [be penalized](#) for the absence.

Being absent from class or other educational responsibilities does not excuse students from meeting all expectations set during the missed class(es). Students [are responsible for](#) obtaining the materials and information provided during any class(es) missed.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience Professional Requirements

Identification During Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences

Name Tag and Badges: The RVU badge identifying the student as a Physician Assistant student must be worn at all times during the clinical experience. If a specific site requires additional identification, it is the responsibility of the student to comply. If separate badges are required at hospital sites, it is the responsibility of the student to complete paperwork necessary to obtain the required identification prior to the start of the clinical assignment. It is the student's responsibility to return the badge to the site prior to departure and, if not, the student assumes responsibility for fees associated with a lost badge.

Greeting Patients: Students are required to identify themselves to patients by their name and by their RVU PA student status. The student must explain to patients their working relationship with the Preceptor.

Signing Charts: When a student signs a chart, they must identify their student status (e.g., PA-S). The student signature on any official paperwork (e.g., charts, prescriptions) must be co-signed by their MD, DO, PA, NP, or other licensed clinician preceptor.

Student Supervision

Students are supervised by licensed/board certified physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, or other licensed providers (such as behavioral health providers) at all times. Under no circumstances should a student in the RVU PA Program be permitted to practice independent of direct supervision. The Preceptor or designee with equivalent education and qualification must be on site. Under no circumstances should the RVU PA student be used as an employee of the practice or represented to the clientele as such.

Substance Abuse and Respect for the Rights and Property of Others

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse compromises the student's ability to learn and to practice as a health provider. Intoxication or being under the influence of legal or illegal drugs and/or alcohol in a clinical or classroom setting will not be tolerated. Students who have a problem with alcohol and/or other substances should seek assistance from services available on campus or through the Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP) or other peer assistance programs. In the event these behaviors affect academic performance, interprofessional relationships, patient care, or clinical practice, the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) may mandate evaluation by CPHP or other peer assistance programs available to students.

The RVU PA Program adheres to the University policies regarding substance abuse and respect for the rights and properties of others.

Respect for the Rights and Property of Others

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that recognizes the rights and property of others. Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to the following:

- Theft;
- Damage to University or personal property of others;
- Disruption of educational or other activities on campus;
- Illegal use of University facilities;
- Harassment or physical assault;
- Any other conduct that threatens the health or safety of others.

In the event of illegal activity, the police department will be contacted and the SAPC will be notified.

Student Employment

Successful advancement and completion of the PA program requires heavy demands on each student's time, physical abilities, and emotional resources. Consequently, students are strongly discouraged from seeking or obtaining outside employment while enrolled in the PA Program. Students who require financial assistance during matriculation should contact the Office of Student Financial Services for help with budgeting or emergency loans rather than seeking outside employment.

Alterations to course or clinical schedules will not be made for students who choose to work while in the Program.

Students are not permitted to work for the Program.

Students as Instructional Faculty

Students with specialized experience, knowledge, or skills may assist Program staff, faculty, and instructors in didactic and laboratory sessions, but students are not permitted to serve as the primary instructor or the instructor of record for any course or component of the curriculum, including, but not limited to, supervised clinical practice experiences.

Students must not substitute or function as an instructor or faculty for the Program.

Students as Clinical or Administrative Staff

Although the Program values and promotes a team approach to healthcare and encourages students to aid every professional involved in patient care as appropriate during supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs), students may not, at any time, substitute for clinical or office staff during a SCPE. Any student asked to perform such a role shall immediately inform the Program.

Students must not substitute for clinical and administrative staff during supervised clinical practice experiences.

Curriculum for PA Program

Course Schedules

Curriculum

The Rocky Vista University (RVU) Physician Assistant (PA) Program curriculum is adapted from a competency-based model. This model is based on a system of medical education that focuses on outcomes. The curricular design, implementation, assessment of students, and evaluation of the program utilizes an organizing framework of competencies.

The PA Program is a 27-month curriculum developed and implemented under the authority of the Provost following approval by the PA Program Curriculum Committee and the RVU Institutional Curriculum Committee. The PA Program website contains details of the curriculum.

Class of 2027

Year I - Semester I (Fall)

Class of 2027

Year I - Semester II (Spring)

Class of 2027

Year I - Semester III (Summer)

Class of 2026

Year II - Semester I (Fall)

Class of 2026

Year II - Semester II (Spring)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year II - Semester III (Summer)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year III - Semester I (Fall)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year I - Semester I (Fall)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year I - Semester II (Spring)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year I - Semester III (Summer)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year II - Semester I (Fall)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year II - Semester II (Spring)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year II - Semester III (Summer)

Class of 2025 and Class of 2026

Year III - Semester I (Fall)

Total Credits

122

Curriculum Committee

The Committee is composed of the PA principal faculty, instructional faculty, and faculty from the College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) and/or Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences (MSBS) program. This group provides general oversight of the curriculum. Any recommended changes to course content or sequencing must be reviewed and approved by the Program Curriculum Committee. All new courses and significant changes to existing courses (e.g. adjustments to course credit hours) must meet the approval of this Committee and the Institutional Curriculum Committee.

The Course Director

The Course Director works with the Curriculum Committee to design the specific content and presentation of the course materials. The Course Director is expected to provide students with the overall goals, learning outcomes, and instructional objectives for the course. In addition, information regarding requirements of enrolled students and grading policies are presented at the onset of the course. The Course Director has overall responsibility and authority of assigning grades for the course and reserves the right to lower a student's grade based upon individual professional behavior.

The Director of Clinical Education serves as course director for Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs) and assigns the final grade after reviewing the evaluation(s) from the community preceptor, course-related assignments, and individual performance on Mini-CEX evaluations, End of Rotation (EOR) exams, and competency exams, referred to as Point of Entrustment (POE) exams.

Grade Report Symbol Information

The RVU PA Program uses a pass/fail grading system to assess student performance. No letter grades are given. At the end of each course, students will receive a grade of Pass (P), Fail (F), Incomplete (IN), Pass with Remediation (PX), or Withdrawal (W).

Pass (P): Awarded to students who meet the minimum requirements established in each course by the Course Director and detailed in the course syllabus.

Fail (F): Given when a student fails to complete the retake of incomplete course requirements, fails to meet professionalism expectations, or does not pass formal remediation for a failed course. Failing grades will be reviewed by the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC).

In Progress (IP): A temporary grade assigned when a student cannot complete course requirements due to illness or extenuating circumstances while passing the course at the time the grade is given. Upon completion of requirements, the Course Director will submit a grade change, replacing IP with either Pass (P) or Fail (F). If the requirements are not completed within one academic year, the grade will convert to Fail (F). If a student withdraws from the program with an IP grade, it will convert to Incomplete (IN) on their transcript.

Incomplete (IN): Assigned when a student has not completed all course requirements by the end of the course/rotation. A successful completion of the required components is needed, and students have one attempt to retake the necessary components. If successful, they receive a Pass (P); if not, the grade changes to Fail (F). The final grade will be denoted on the official transcript. Failure to rectify an Incomplete (IN) may hinder progress to the next level of training, potentially resulting in extended program duration and delayed graduation. After one academic year, the Incomplete (IN) will convert to Fail (F) if not resolved. If students receive more than one (1) Incomplete grade, the SAPC may recommend deceleration (see Student Performance and Remediation Section).

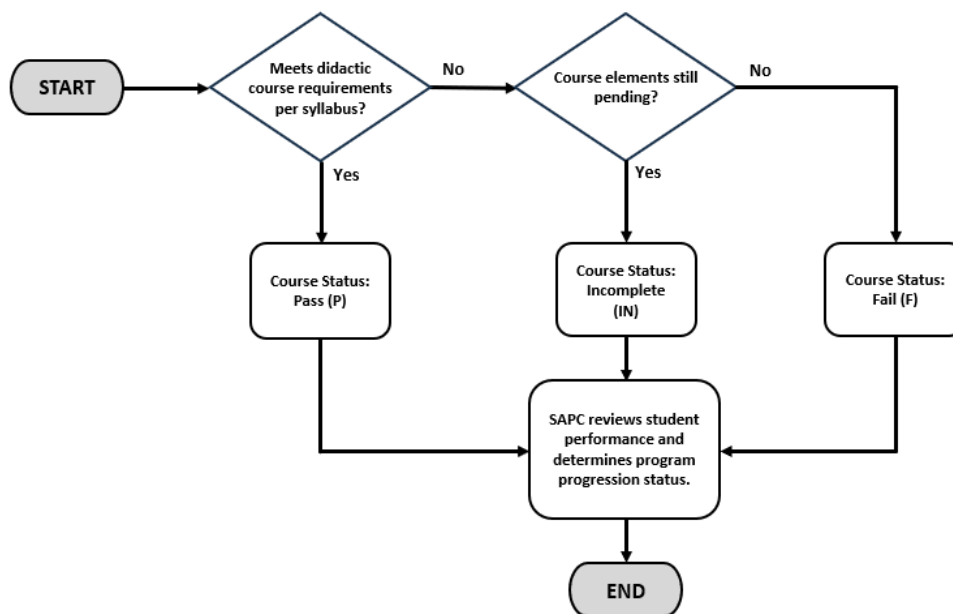
Pass with Remediation (PX): Assigned to students who fail (F) a course and then complete formal remediation, after which the Fail (F) grade converts to Pass with Remediation (PX).

Withdrawal (W): Indicates registration or grade status and is not assigned by the instructor. Withdrawal from a course requires SAPC permission; doing so typically leads to program withdrawal since courses must be completed sequentially. Withdrawal (W) is recorded on the permanent record. Students who do not officially withdraw will receive Fail (F) grades for all coursework.

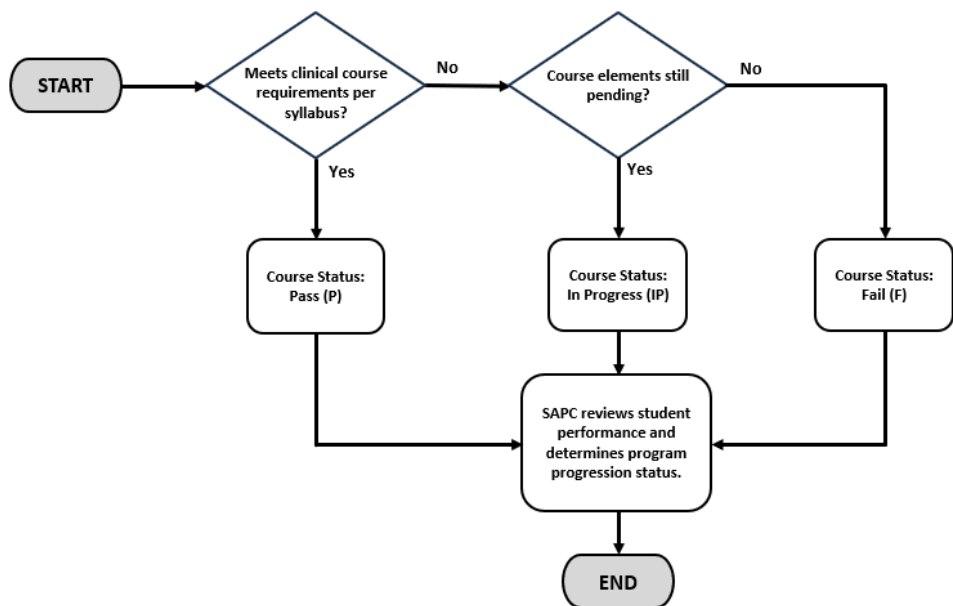
Students must complete all coursework for the academic year before progressing to the next level. If a student fails to complete the prescribed course of study satisfactorily, they must appear before the SAPC for further review. All courses and program requirements must be completed in accordance with program and course timelines for graduation.

(See Didactic and Clinical Grading Schemas below)

End of Semester Grading Schema -- Didactic



End of the Semester Grading Schema -- Clinical



Student Assessments

All assessments are tied to individual courses and include various components:

Block Examinations: Multiple-choice exams typically held every other Friday during didactic semesters, comprising test items from each course unless specified otherwise in the syllabi.

Integrated Assignments: Short-answer, essay-style assessments based on clinical case scenarios, with three assessments dispersed throughout each didactic semester.

Points of Entrustment Clinical Assessments 1-3 (POE 1, 2, and 3): Three assessments conducted at the RVU Healthcare Simulation Center to ensure learner progression to competence:

1. **Entering Clinical Rotations (POE 1):** Confirms foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes for supervised clinical experiences, associated with PAS 5138 Skills & Assessment II (consult the course syllabus for specifics).
2. **Mid-Clinical Phase competency testing (POE 2):** Assesses requirements across clinical disciplines based on common primary care presentations, associated with PAS 5262 Supervised Clinical Practicum Experiences II (consult the course syllabus for specifics).
3. **Program Completion (POE 3):** Ensures students meet graduation requirements, linked to PAS 5272 Capstone and part of the program's summative comprehensive examination.

In the event of failing the first attempt at any Point of Entrustment Examination, the student will undergo a remediation activity aimed at correcting identified deficiencies. After completing this activity, the student will be eligible for reassessment. If the student fails the reassessment, a comprehensive performance review will occur (evaluating didactic courses, clinical experience evaluations, professionalism evaluations, and competency performance). A formal remediation plan tailored to the student's needs will be established. Following this, the student has one additional opportunity for reassessment. Failure to pass the second reassessment for POE 1 or POE 2 will result in dismissal from the program.

Failure to pass the POE 3 clinical examination after a second individualized remediation will necessitate the implementation of an intensive coaching plan to enhance clinical skills before the student is eligible to graduate and sit for the PA National Certifying Examination (PANCE). This may delay the student's graduation date and their ability to take the PANCE until all program requirements are successfully met. Requirements following a second failure of POE 3 may include adherence to a tailored coaching plan and achieving Milestone Level 3 on assigned clinical case discussions or other evaluated clinical tasks.

An extended program may be required to accommodate the remediation plan and retake the examination for any of the POE competency assessments. The student may be responsible for costs associated with this extended program and retake process.

End-of-rotation exams (EORs): Multiple-choice examinations specific to each discipline are administered after each required clinical rotation. These exams are completed online via the Physician Assistant Education Association's (PAEA) assessment portal and are linked to PAS 5261-5265 Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences I-V. Refer to course syllabi for criteria regarding failure and remediation procedures.

Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating Assessment Tool (PACKRAT I and II): Online multiple-choice exams administered through PAEA's assessment portal. These exams are designed to aid students in preparing for clinical training and the PA National Certifying Examination (PANCE). PACKRAT I is administered during PAS 5150, with a second PACKRAT exam given during the clinical phase. There are no pass/fail scores; these assessments inform students of strengths and areas needing improvement.

End-of-Program Written Summative Examination: This multiple-choice examination is administered within the last four months of the program as part of the summative examination. It is associated with PAS 5272, and students must pass both the Written Summative Examination and POE 3 Clinical Summative Examination to graduate from the RVU PA Program. The program uses the PAEA's End of Curriculum Examination as its summative written exam.

Students will receive their Summative Written and Clinical Exam scores (pass/fail) within two (2) weeks following completion of the exams.

In the event of failing the first attempt at the Summative Written Examination, a thorough review of the student's performance will take place, considering factors such as didactic courses and clinical evaluations. A formal remediation plan will be initiated, after which the student may retake the exam one time, no sooner than 60 days after the initial attempt (per PAEA policy). A second failure of the written exam will require participation in an

intensive coaching plan aimed at enhancing medical knowledge before the student can graduate and take the PANCE. Graduation and certification eligibility will be delayed until all program requirements are fulfilled, including adherence to the coaching plan and completion of NCCPA practice exams until the student scores within the “green” category overall.

An extended program may be necessary to facilitate the remediation plan and examination retake. The student may bear any costs incurred from the extended program and retake process.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Policies

Overview

The clinical portion of the Program is designed to expose the student to patients in a variety of clinical settings. The setting, assigned tasks, and schedule will vary depending on the site. Clinical experiences will average approximately 40 hours/week on site, in patient-related care. Some clinical experiences may involve slightly shorter (no less than 32 hours/week) or longer hours (no more than 70 hours/week), evening, holiday, weekend, or on-call responsibilities. The Preceptor will determine the student's on-site schedule and clinical responsibilities. Students must adhere to each clinical experience schedule and to all assignments developed by the Preceptor. If this is not possible in any given week at a specific clinical site, the student is to notify the clinical team in advance. Patient-related care includes evaluating and treating patients, charting and appropriate paperwork (written or electronic), case presentations, discussions with the Preceptor, and other duties as applicable.

See specific course syllabi for objectives and goals for each rotation.

Program Responsibilities with Regard to Clinical Sites

- The Program is responsible for coordinating (identifying, contacting, and evaluating) and assigning all student supervised clinical practice experiences.
- The Program will provide clinical site learning outcomes and instructional objectives to preceptors and students.
- The Program may remove the student from any site if the Program believes the site no longer can meet Program expectations or policies.
- The Program will remove any student from a clinical experience at the request of the Preceptor when it is deemed that the student's work, conduct, or health is considered unsafe or detrimental to patients or the practice site.
- The Program will determine the final grades for students in the clinical year.

Preceptor Licensure

The Program requires Preceptors of record to maintain a valid and unrestricted state license allowing them to practice at the clinical site. The PA Program verifies the licenses at the time of student placement and annually.

Affiliation Agreements and Clinical Sites

Affiliation Agreements (AAs) must be established between all clinical sites and the University before students can begin their clinical experience. The AA is a legal document that addresses liability and issues pertinent to the site location and practice type. These agreements are obtained by the Program and/or the University.

Definition of the Preceptor-Student Relationship

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. The Preceptor should maintain a professional relationship with the PA student and always 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 (e.g. Facebook, X, TikTok, etc.) should be avoided until the student has fully completed the educational program. 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.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience Schedule

The PA Program's Clinical Team assigns all Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE) based on the Accreditation Review Commission on the Education for Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) Standards and the RVU PA Program requirements. Students may express interest in their experience placements by completing preference sheets. One-on-one meetings may occur with the Director of Clinical Education. Special requests are typically not accommodated due to clinical requirements and Preceptor availability.

Clinical experiences are scheduled and arranged by the Program (not the student). Multiple factors are considered in creating student schedules including, but not limited to the following:

- Program expectations;
- Quality of the learning experience;
- Preceptor availability;
- Requirements of the Preceptor and/or clinical site;
- Satisfaction of requirements outlined in the ARC-PA accreditation standards;
- Satisfaction of the mission and vision of the RVU PA Program.

Once the SCPE schedule is published, clinical experiences will not be changed due to student preference or request. Only extreme circumstances (e.g. a severe health emergency) will be considered for a potential change in the schedule and will be at the discretion of the Clinical Team. There may be some circumstances that may necessitate a change in a student's scheduled clinical experience (i.e. the Preceptor/clinical site requests a schedule change, or if a Preceptor terminates the partnership), such situations are managed by the Clinical Team on a case-by-case basis. Given the multiple variables in creating a student's schedule, these circumstances may require the clinical team to rearrange a student's clinical experience schedule to ensure that the student receives all experiences required.

Students are expected to be flexible and professional in such matters. Clinical experiences are scheduled in various geographic locations and are coordinated to provide quality learning experiences, achieve competencies, satisfy accreditation standards, and align with the RVU PA Program mission. Travel outside of the Denver metropolitan area is expected.

Clinical Experience Requests

The PA Program will acquire and coordinate all clinical rotation sites and Preceptors for students. Students are not required to obtain their own sites or Preceptors. (*ARC-PA standard A3.03*) Students may, however, suggest sites or Preceptors to the PA Program. The Program, at its sole discretion, will review and evaluate student-suggested sites and Preceptors for educational suitability before approving them for use as clinical sites. All clinical sites and Preceptors must meet Program expectations and policies.

Before considering a clinical experience request, the student must ensure that the potential Preceptor/site does not pose a conflict of interest. If there is any potential for conflict of interest, the request should not be made.

In-State Requests (Colorado): If a student is interested in a clinical experience at a certain site or with a specific Preceptor within the state of Colorado, the following protocol must be followed:

- Refrain from contacting the site or Preceptor until a discussion with a member of the PA Clinical Team has occurred.
- Discuss preferences and interests during a one-on-one meeting and/or record your preferences in the elective interest surveys.

- Complete as much information as possible on the Preceptor recommendation link.
- Communication with the site and/or Preceptor will follow the Clinical Team's established process.

Out-of-State Requests: The student should only contact sites/Preceptors where a personal relationship has previously been established. Students should not “cold-call” sites/Preceptors or contact other PA Programs requesting clinical experiences.

If a student is interested in a clinical experience at a certain site or with a specific Preceptor outside of Colorado, the following protocol must be followed:

- Complete as much information as possible in the preceptor recommendation link located in the SCPE syllabus. If the rotation is deemed appropriate, a member of the Clinical Team will extend a courtesy call to the PA Program(s) in that state to ensure there is no conflict with their scheduling needs.
- The student is responsible for arranging transportation and housing for their out-of-state clinical experience.
- Some states require additional authorization or fees for an out-of-state student to complete a rotation. The student will accept responsibility for the fees and additional paperwork needs.

Clinical Site Evaluation

The Program is responsible for ensuring proper and adequate education of all its students on clinical rotations. The Program engages in a robust and ongoing evaluation of each Preceptor and clinical site to ensure that each Preceptor and site can meet Program expectations for student learning and performance evaluation measures. RVU clinical faculty routinely visit each active clinical site to assess the site, Preceptors, and students. These visits may be announced or unannounced. If at any time a site or Preceptor is deemed inadequate, the Program may remove current students from the rotation and will not schedule future students until the site is re-evaluated and found acceptable.

If a student believes there is a problem with a site or a Preceptor, the student must contact the Director of Clinical Education either via:

- the mid-rotation questionnaire that is designed to evaluate potential concerns,
- phone (if emergent),
- or email if non-emergent.

The Director of Clinical Education will contact the student for additional information and enact protocols to further evaluate the site and/or Preceptor.

Immunizations, Screenings, and Titers

All students are required to remain current on all immunizations, screenings, and titers per current Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for health professionals. Current recommendations can be found on the CDC website. If a clinical rotation site requires additional immunizations, screenings, or titers, students will be required to obtain them at their own cost and provide proof of same, in writing, to the Program directly. Additionally, in the event a student attends a Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) at an international location, they are required to remain current on all immunizations, screenings, titers, and written policies per current CDC recommendations for health professionals, for the locations at which they are participating in the clinical experience. Current international recommendations can be found on the CDC website.

Students must submit proof of current immunization, screening, and titer compliance to the Program in writing prior to matriculation and prior to the start of the clinical rotation year. Students must be prepared to prove current compliance at any additional time, should the Program request it. Students are responsible for maintaining and updating their immunization, screening, and titer status at all times. Failure to maintain any immunization, screening, or titer requirement will result in immediate removal from all educational activities, including didactic courses and clinical rotations, until the student becomes current.

Any student who misses any portion of a SCPE because of incomplete or out-of-date immunizations, screenings, or titers may receive a failing grade for the rotation.

Any student who requests an exemption to any immunization, screening, and titer requirement due to a medical contraindication or religious mandate must contact the Program in writing immediately upon acceptance into the Program, or immediately upon learning of a new medical contraindication. The request for exemption must include the reason(s) for the request and any applicable supporting documentation. If the request for exemption is approved, the student will be permitted to matriculate; however, the student may not be able to participate in all required educational activities, and the student will be required to acknowledge that not all educational activities or SCPE sites may be available to them. This may result in a delayed graduation.

Clinical sites maintain their own regulations and policies regarding immunizations, screenings, and titers, as well as any potential exemptions. Students are expected to maintain compliance with the clinical site requirements at all times. If a student is unable to maintain compliance with site requirements due to medical contraindications or religious reasons, the student is responsible for immediately notifying the clinical site and the Program, as indicated above.

Exemptions

Requests for exemptions may be granted under certain circumstances. **Students not receiving vaccination due to an approved exemption must still comply with any vaccination policy of each clinical site.**

Medical: Documentation from student's primary healthcare provider is required. For example, a severe, life-threatening allergy to eggs or other components of influenza vaccine is a contraindication for flu vaccination.

Religious: Exemptions for religious belief will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. A written request and explanation are required.

TB Clearance

Per University policies and procedures in addition to clinical site requirements, students are required to have their TB status checked yearly.

Infectious Diseases, Body Fluid, and Needle-Stick Exposures

Rocky Vista University has adopted policies and procedures for dealing with exposure to infectious diseases including, but not limited to HIV, hepatitis, and tuberculosis. In the event a student experiences an exposure or needlestick, the student shall seek immediate treatment in accordance with current and appropriate medical standards. Costs related to evaluation and treatment of an exposure or needlestick injury will be submitted as a claim through Workers' Compensation.

Students must contact RVU's Human Resources Department, as well as the RVU PA Program immediately after care is initiated.

Rocky Vista University has adopted policies and procedures for dealing with exposures. Students can find the full policies in the [RVU Policy Repository](#).

Students in the RVU PA Program are required to adhere to these guidelines.

Drug Screens and Background Checks

All students are required to submit to a criminal background check and drug screen upon matriculation and prior to the start of the clinical rotation year. Students are also subject to additional background checks and drug screens at any time during their tenure in the Program. All students may be subject to additional background checks or security measures per clinical site requirements. These measures may include, but are not limited to, fingerprinting and drug screening. Refer to "Criminal Background Checks" for additional information.

Positive Drug Screening Results

Students who do not pass a required drug screen may face disciplinary action, including administrative withdrawal from courses, placement on a leave of absence, or dismissal from the Program. Students may be referred for evaluation and treatment through the Colorado Physicians Health Program (CPHP) or another designated program as a condition for remaining in the Program. Costs incurred are the responsibility of the student.

Students found to have a substance abuse problem that will likely pose a danger to patient care, as determined through the drug screening evaluation process, will be referred for independent evaluation and treatment at the student's expense.

Student Travel and Housing

Clinical experiences are scheduled in various geographic locations and are coordinated to provide quality learning experiences, achieve competencies, satisfy accreditation standards, and align with the RVU PA Program mission. Some rotations require travel outside the Denver metropolitan area to participate in clinical experiences or didactic educational opportunities. Travel is at the student's expense and unless otherwise notified, is not paid for by the PA Program, RVU, or the clinical agencies. Reliable transportation and a valid driver's license are necessary to complete the program of study. In the event of inclement weather, students are advised to use their best judgment when considering travel to educational experiences. Unless otherwise specified, all costs associated with student attendance and travel to and from educational or professional conferences are the responsibility of the student.

Rotation Commute Policy

If a student is required to do a clinical rotation that entails a commute greater than 50 miles or 60 minutes from the RVU campus, the Program will identify housing for the student through the Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC). All AHEC rules and guidelines must be acknowledged by the student prior to applying for AHEC housing. Costs associated with housing will be paid by the Program directly to AHEC.

If a student is scheduled for clinical rotations that require a commute greater than 50 miles or 60 minutes from the RVU campus for a period greater than five (5) consecutive months, the student will not be eligible for AHEC housing and will need to secure and pay for their own housing.

In the event the student is required to attend a clinical experience with a commute greater than 50 miles or 60 minutes from the RVU campus in an area where family offers housing, we request that the student make all reasonable accommodations to stay with family at no cost to the Program.

In the event that the student is required to do a clinical rotation with a commute greater than 50 miles or 60 minutes (not including extended time for traffic or construction delays) from the RVU campus and AHEC housing is not available, the Program will assist the student in locating housing following the same rules and guidelines provided by AHEC.

Individual needs beyond the scope of this policy may be considered on a case-by-case basis and in adherence with institutional policy.

Student Responsibilities/Expectations

The following is a list of responsibilities to which the student must adhere during their participation in SCPEs. These are in conjunction with or in addition to student expectations covered elsewhere in this *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog*:

- The student will conduct oneself in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner at all times.
- The student will wear proper identification as an RVU PA Student while on campus and while participating in Program-assigned clinical experiences.
- The student will be conscientious and accountable.
- The student will be responsible for taking an active role in their clinical education.
- The student will demonstrate awareness of professional limitations and will only perform activities assigned by and under the supervision of their Preceptor.
- On the first day of the clinical experience, the student will discuss educational goals with the Preceptor and review clinical experience objectives and evaluation forms with the Preceptor.

- The student will follow the rules and regulations of the hospital or other institutions in which they work and agree to complete any additional training and/or testing required by the facilities. The student will comply with requests for information needed for credentialing in clinical facilities.
- The student will complete all assignments (as assigned by RVU or Preceptor(s)) and submit site and Preceptor evaluations to the RVU PA Program by stated deadlines.
- The student will be responsible for discussing the clinical evaluation forms with their Preceptor(s) for each clinical experience.
- The student will handle all confidential information in a professional and ethical manner in accordance with all applicable federal and state regulations, including HIPAA laws.
- If a student is removed from a clinical experience either by the Program or at the request of a Preceptor, the student must be available to meet in-person with the Program Director and/or the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee.
- Students are required to keep a timely and complete clinical log of every patient encounter. The Program monitors these records using the electronic patient tracking system (i.e. Exxat).
- If a rotation requires that a student participate in supervised call time, the student is expected to do so.

Clinical Tracking System

The clinical tracking system (Exxat) will provide data indicating the learner has been exposed to patient encounters that will enable them to meet Program expectations and acquire the competencies needed for entry into clinical practice. Data is tracked for the following:

- Preventive, emergent, acute, and chronic patient encounters;
- Medical care across the life span—including infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly;
- Women's health – including prenatal and gynecologic care;
- Surgical management—including pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care;
- Behavioral and mental health;
- Various Settings—outpatient, emergency department, inpatient, operating room.

All learners are expected to maintain a patient tracking log for each rotation. Learners log information into a clinical tracking system (Exxat) that includes but is not limited to patient demographics, chief complaints, procedures, level of participation etc. Students are strongly encouraged to log information within 24 hours of an encounter to ensure most accurate logging. The data obtained follow HIPAA guidelines and no patient-specific identifying information is entered. These data are used to provide documentation of adherence to accreditation standards, as well as provide a synopsis of what was experienced during the clinical rotation. Graduates find these data particularly useful when discussing their experiences with potential employers and for documentation of skills associated with securing privileges.

Members of the PA Program clinical team review learner logs on a regular basis. Failure to log patients in a timely fashion may trigger further evaluation by the Director of Clinical Education or Medical Director - Clinical. Refer to the SCPE course syllabi for specific expectations related to patient logging.

Clinical Preceptor Responsibilities

- Provide student(s) with an orientation to the office on the first day of the rotation. This may include a tour, introduction to the EHR system, and policies/procedures as applicable.
- Discuss rotation-specific expectations with student.
- Review learning outcomes and instructional objectives and guide students to assist them in the achievement of these objectives for the particular discipline.
- During most clinical experiences, students are expected to work the same hours their Preceptor works.
- Allow students to obtain patient histories, perform physical examinations, and perform procedures on patients based on the Preceptor's comfort level.
- Allow student(s) the opportunity to present patient cases.
- Discuss diagnostics, assessment, plan, and patient education with student.
- Observe the student in patient interactions.
- Provide student(s) with regular feedback regarding their performance.
- Complete the rotation evaluations.

Mini-Clinical Examination Experiences (Mini-CEX)

Preceptors evaluate student performance by completion of one Mini-CEX exam per clinical experience. A Mini-CEX is a structured direct observation of learner skill that contributes to the evaluation of the student's competency.

Preceptor Evaluation of Student

Preceptors assess student performance using the student evaluation form for each clinical experience, with the final evaluation impacting the course grade. The syllabus outlines how this evaluation contributes to the final grade. Student evaluations by Preceptors are managed through Exxat software. Before the rotation ends, students should review the evaluation with their Preceptor for feedback and to confirm completion. Students are accountable for ensuring the Preceptor submits the evaluation, as it influences their grade.

Outside State-Specific Consumer Protections

[California](#)

[Connecticut](#)

[Iowa](#)

[Kansas](#)

[Wisconsin](#)

Promotion and Graduation

The Student Assessment and Promotions Committee

The Student Assessment & Promotions Committee (SAPC) is responsible for maintaining academic and professional standards within the RVU PA Program. The Committee monitors student performance and addresses academic and professional issues as students' progress toward graduation. Composed of core RVU PA Program faculty members, a representative from RVU Student Affairs, and one or both PA Medical Directors, the Chair is designated by the Program Director.

The SAPC oversees several activities, including but not limited to:

- Creating assessment and promotion policies.
- Issuing status notices.
- Evaluating and acting on student professionalism.
- Granting leaves of absence.
- Reviewing/acting on results of criminal background checks; and
- Determining promotion, remediation, remediation with progression, referral, and entrustment.

The SAPC makes recommendations to the Program Director regarding:

- Remediation without progression
- Dismissal

The Committee employs a comprehensive approach to reviewing student progression, considering factors such as:

- Professional behaviors.
- Resources accessed by student, either proactively or as suggested by faculty (Course Director, advisor, tutoring, mental health).
- Academic progression over time (improvement, lack of progression, or decline).
- Number of courses or competencies in which the student is considered "at risk".

- Previous remediation of a course(s) or competency(ies).

The appeals process for SAPC is detailed under the “Rights for Appeal” section.

Student Progress/Performance

Student academic and professional performance is reviewed regularly, throughout each semester, at the end of the semester, and on an as-needed basis. Student performance issues are reported to the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC). Course Directors report final grades to the Registrar's Office.

The RVU PA program utilizes a developmental approach to assessing student progress toward competence. This method allows the Program to evaluate student performance based on the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that the students demonstrate rather than those that might be theoretical.

Using this assessment method, students can identify areas of strength and specific areas for improvement, guide their future educational goals, and provide a measure of their progression over the course of the curriculum. Individual competencies are assessed across the curriculum. The Program associates these competencies with core clinical tasks, known as Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs).

The EPAs represent an integration of competencies and students are expected to begin integration of competencies during the clinical phase of training. Preceptors assess students both on Program outcomes (tied to competencies), and an entrustment scale—indicating their level of trust in the student's ability to function with specific degrees of supervision. All data points collected are utilized to garner a 360° evaluation of student progression prior to making determinations of preparedness to enter clinical practice. The Program expects that all students will reach “competence” (developmental milestone level 3) or beyond, in the assessed competencies and EPAs, by graduation.

Course Requirements

The PA Program is a 27-month program, comprised of a 9-month didactic education phase followed by a 15-month clinical and 3-month research phase. There are seven (7) total semesters—years one and two are comprised of three semesters each and the last year is comprised of one semester. Every course in the didactic education phase is offered once each academic year.

The requirements for each year must be completed successfully before a student can begin the next year's curriculum, unless the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) makes the decision of “Progression with Remediation” (see “Student Remediation”). All students have the same didactic and clinical course requirements.

Students must maintain all requirements for clinical rotations including immunization/health screening, OSHA training, HIPAA training, drug screening, and BLS certification. Expenses associated with maintaining these requirements are the responsibility of the student.

Failure of a Course

When a student incurs a failing grade, the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) reviews that student's entire academic record in detail and may impose remedial action as described in the “Student Remediation” section.

Receipt of a failing grade, regardless of course, or reasoning (knowledge, skills, behavior) will result in a change in academic standing to “Academic Probation”. Refer to the section labeled “Academic Standing and Probation”

A failed course can only be repeated or remediated one time. The student cannot retake a course for a third time, nor can a student re-remediate any failed course. Therefore, a second failure, after either repeating a course or in remediation of a course, will result in dismissal.

Decisions about remediation and promotion will be made in consideration of multiple factors (refer to Figure 1 "SAPC Review Process" within the Student Dismissal section) including but not limited to:

- The number of courses failed in a given semester;
 - e.g. ≥2 course failures in a single semester
- The number of competencies in which expectations were not met as outlined in the course syllabi;
 - e.g. multiple competencies unmet in more than 1 course
- The types of competencies requiring remediation;
 - e.g. knowledge deficits vs. skill or behavioral deficits
- Professionalism concerns;
 - e.g., documented discussions around expected behaviors
- The learner's ability to proactively seek out resources.
 - e.g. consulting with Course Director(s), meeting with faculty advisors, seeking a tutor, if needed

The SAPC's role is to apply established policies and processes equitably. Additional documentation may be submitted by a student with an appeal but will not be considered during the SAPC's review of the student's academic performance and determination of progression.

If a student is "at risk" for failing a course/competency, the Course Director(s) and SAPC will notify the student at least one time during each semester. Notification will include recommended and/or required activities designed to promote success.

At Risk

The "at risk" notification to the student is the Program's due diligence in making the student aware of their unsatisfactory status and is issued by the Student Assessment & Promotions Committee (SAPC). "At risk" indicates a student is at risk for not being promoted to the next semester. At risk notifications are given to students at least once a semester.

An "at risk" notification may be rendered when the student has:

- Failed two or more exams;
- Scored below expected levels of performance on assignments;
- Has achieved an unacceptable professionalism rating; and/or
- Is mathematically at risk for failing one or more courses.

Students receiving "at risk" notifications from the SAPC may:

- Be required to meet with the Student Success Facilitator as determined by the Course Director or SAPC.
- May be required to meet with Course Directors.
- May be required to contact the Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP).

Academic Standing and Probation

Students receiving a failing grade will be placed on "academic probation" and considered "not in good standing".

Students must successfully complete all requirements associated with academic probation, as outlined by the Student Assessment & Promotions Committee (SAPC), within one semester, to be returned to "good standing". If the requirements of academic probation are not successfully met within the timeframe designated by the SAPC, the student will be recommended for dismissal. Students on academic probation will be required to step down from elected or appointed leadership positions. Should the student return to "good standing", he/she/they will not be able to resume their previous leadership position.

Student Performance and Remediation

Failure of a Course: In the event a student receives a failing (F) grade for a course, they will be placed on Academic Probation by the Student Assessment & Promotions Committee (SAPC) until remediation is completed. A failed course can only be remediated one time.

Remediation: To determine remediation status, the SAPC will review the student's entire academic record and take one of the following actions:

- Enact Remediation with Progression, or
- Make a recommendation to the Program Director of either Remediation without Progression or Student Dismissal

Remediation with Progression: A determination made when, in the opinion of the SAPC, the failure may be rectified through minimal remediation that will support the student's success in the subsequent semester.

Examples of when the determination of Remediation with Progression may be made include, but are not limited to:

- Not meeting expected level of performance in a single competency (e.g. "taking a history" or "performing a physical exam")
- Receiving a failing grade in a single course due to knowledge gaps (e.g. falling below the passing criteria for the course)

Remediation with Progression will require an individualized remediation plan which may include, but is not limited to:

- Enrollment in an individual study course
 - Tuition will be charged for all individual study courses and is the responsibility of the student
- Work with the Student Success Facilitator
- Working one-on-one with a faculty member or Program-approved tutor;
- Additional review of course material;
- Additional practice with multiple choice exams via testing software;
- Re-testing;
- Case discussions
- Simulations;
- Additional weeks of supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs); and/or
- Any combination of the above listed items.

Successful completion of Remediation with Progression is necessary for the student status to return to "good academic standing" and removal from Academic Probation.

A student who is unsuccessful in their remediation and reassessment attempt will be recommended for dismissal.

A student who receives a failing grade in a separate course or competency while remediating will be reviewed by the SAPC to determine their eligibility for continued study, progression, and promotion. This may involve options such as remediation with or without progression or dismissal.

Remediation without Progression (deceleration): A recommendation made to the Program Director when, in the opinion of the SAPC, remediation will place a substantial burden on the student if conducted while the student is attempting new coursework. The student will be decelerated, which may include:

- Taking a leave of absence and re-matriculating into the next cohort, or
- being removed from the clinic for a month or more to remediate identified deficits.

The student may or may not be [refunded any tuition](#) for the current year, following university policies. The student will be placed on Academic Probation as part of this decision.

Examples of when the determination of Remediation without Progression may be made include, but are not limited to:

- Not meeting expected level of performance in more than one competency (e.g., "taking a history", "performing a physical examination", "prioritizing a differential diagnosis", "developing a plan");
- Receiving a failing grade in more than one course due to knowledge gaps (e.g. falling below the 70% cut off); and/or
- Demonstrating inappropriate professional behavior for which the student has been notified, but has not corrected.
- Failure of an End of Rotation Exam retake and/or failure of a clinical rotation.

If, after reviewing the recommendations of the SAPC, the Program Director concurs with the recommendation, the student will be notified and required to meet with the Program Director, or their designee, and the student's advisor to review the status and recommendations. Following this meeting, the student may need to complete a "Change of Status" form, per university policy.

Deceleration with re-matriculation into the next cohort: Deceleration with re-matriculation will result in an Official Leave of Absence (LOA) from the Program and institution. In addition, this determination may have a financial impact on the student; therefore, a meeting with the Office of Student Financial Services will be recommended. This determination will result in delayed graduation.

Prior to re-matriculating, the student must notify the Program, in January, in writing, of his/her/their intent to return and is expected to confirm their intent to return to the program no later than April 1st. A \$500 non-refundable deposit to hold a place in the next cohort must be submitted with this notification. The deposit will be applied toward tuition when the student returns from the LOA.

The student will meet with the Director of Curriculum and/or the Chair of the SAPC to review remediation and re-matriculation requirements before, and upon return from the LOA. The student's status upon re-matriculation will remain "Academic Probation", until such time as the failed courses are successfully remediated.

Deceleration from clinical progression:

Deceleration from clinical rotations may result in an official LOA if the deceleration extends beyond 30 days. In the event this occurs, consultation with the Office of Student Financial Services will be recommended. This determination may result in delayed graduation and the student's status will be converted to Academic Probation.

Remediation without Progression (whether didactic or clinical) will require an individualized plan which may include, but is not limited to:

- Enrollment in courses for which the student received a failing grade (F)
- Enrollment in independent study course(s) to cover content areas in which the student demonstrated deficiencies in learning objectives within courses for which the student previously received a passing grade (P)
 - Content and assessments associated with these courses will be based on any prior deficits and may include, but are not limited to:
 - Attendance in all courses to ensure acquired skills and knowledge are maintained or advanced.
 - Assignments or assessments based on prior deficits (e.g., block exam scores with scores in the "at risk" (70-75%) or failed ranges (<70%); assignments with scores below expected levels)
 - Complete all Integrated Assignments to ensure a level of competency is maintained or advanced.
- Completion of any new or updated pre-matriculation requirements.
 - Cost(s) associated with tuition and pre-matriculation requirements are the responsibility of the student.
- Removed from clinical rotations to focus on the identified deficit (pertains to clinical phase students only)
- Meetings with the Student Success Facilitator
- Meetings with individual Course Directors.

Successful completion of Remediation without Progression is necessary for the student's status to return to good academic standing and removal from Academic Probation. Eligibility for continuation in the Program will be determined upon successful completion of remediation in the case of Remediation with or without Progression.

A student who is unsuccessful in their remediation and reassessment attempt will be recommended for dismissal.

A student who completes Remediation without Progression and subsequently receives a failing grade in ≥ 2 courses either within a single semester or two (2) additional failures at any point after completing Remediation without Progression will be recommended for dismissal.

Regardless of the type of remediation, students in the Physician Assistant Program must meet academic, clinical, and professional milestones to progress through the program toward graduation. The normal timeframe for completing required coursework for the MPAS degree is 27 consecutive months. The student must complete all Program requirements within a maximum of **40.5 months** from the time of the original matriculation date or be dismissed from the Program.

Student Dismissal

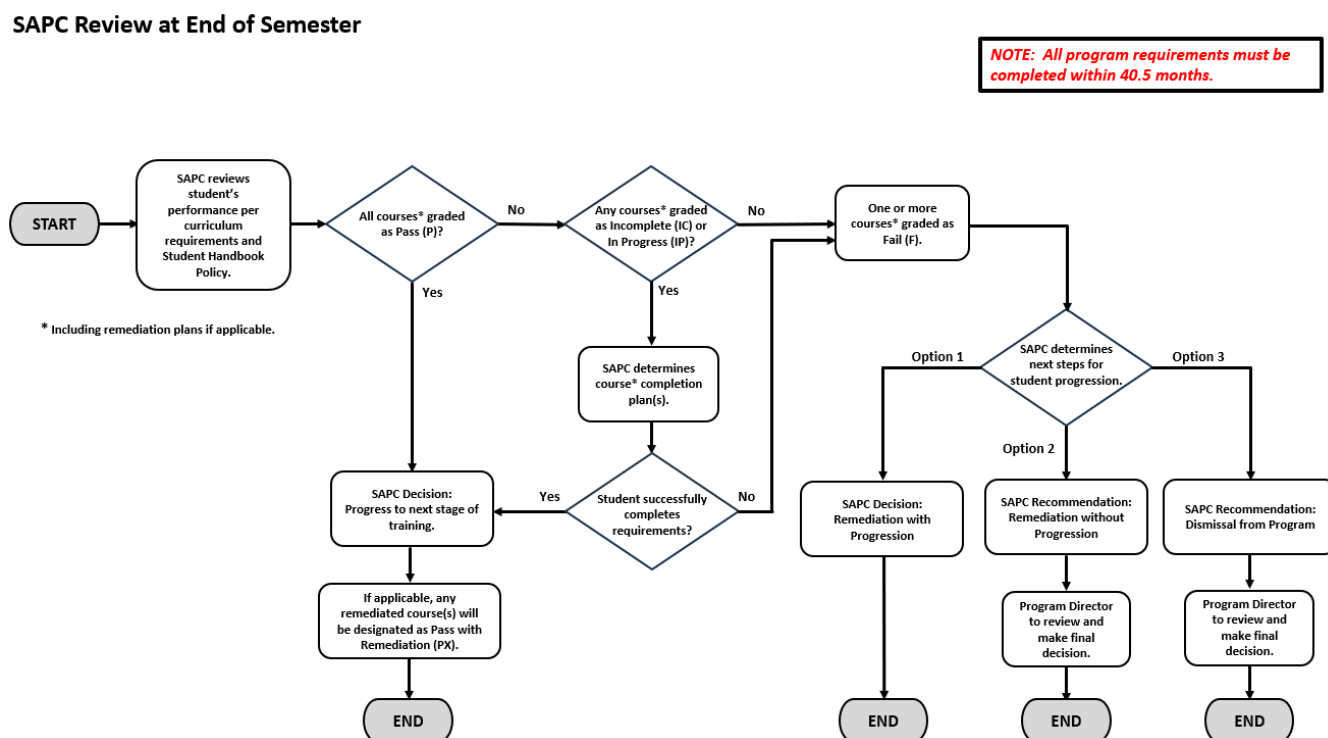
Recommendations of student dismissal may be submitted by the Student Assessment & Promotions Committee (SAPC) to the Program Director when the student is unlikely to successfully complete Program requirements.

Examples of when the recommendation of dismissal may be made, include, but are not limited to:

- The student unsuccessfully completes Remediation with or without Progression;
- The student receives ≥ 2 failing grades after completing Remediation with or without Progression;
- The student receives more than 2 failing grades within a single semester;
- The student violates conditions of “at risk”, remediation, or disciplinary sanctions;
- The student can no longer meet the technical standards;
- The basis of the failure is a serious breach of professionalism such that it violates the Program’s “Safe Practice” policy (Appendix V) and the student is deemed unfit to practice;
 - Students considered unfit to practice will be immediately removed from the didactic or clinical setting until such time as a determination can be rendered regarding continuation in the Program.
 - “Unfit to practice” includes actions that indicate:
 - A direct threat is imminent and severe;
 - The student’s physical or mental health increases the probability of an adverse effect on oneself, a peer, or a member of the public;
 - Actions that are dishonest, unethical, or considered egregious.

Students with one deficient grade in an academic semester are not dismissed.

Figure 1: SAPC Review Process



Requirements for Annual Promotion

Students must successfully pass all required courses, be "in good standing" (not on Academic Probation) and have successfully met each level of competence as outlined in the Milestones and Progress (MAP) grid for each stage of training, before becoming eligible to progress to the next academic year. Students who have an Incomplete in SCPE must be successfully progressing through assigned remediations to be promoted to the next academic year.

Student progression toward each level of competence is reviewed during individual and group academic advising sessions held throughout the didactic and clinical phases of the curriculum.

Requirements for Program Graduation

The Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) reviews each student for eligibility for entrustment and graduation. The student must successfully complete all requirements in each year of the Program and successfully meet or exceed Milestone Level 3 ("Competent") in each of the assessed entrustable professional activities (EPAs) to be eligible for entrustment and graduation. Students who have completed the Program and are eligible for graduation are presented to the RVU Faculty Senate, Provost, and Board of Trustees for approval of degree award.

Graduates will receive a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree.

Extended Curriculum

Students are expected to complete their course requirements as full-time students over 27 consecutive months. Any students failing to complete Program requirements in this timeframe will be considered on extended curriculum. This may occur in instances of an Official Leave of Absence, an Official Medical Leave of Absence, remediation, or need for special accommodations. The maximum time to complete the Program is **40.5 months** from the original matriculation date.

Students on extended program may incur additional tuition and/or fee expenses.

Requests for Leave of Absence (LOA)

All program learning sessions, didactic and clinical, are mandatory as they are designed and sequenced to build competency. Students experiencing significant or unforeseen life circumstances may apply for a leave of absence (LOA). Students with an LOA ≥ 30 days will no longer be eligible to receive financial aid during their leave.

Requesting a LOA

Before submitting an LOA, the student must meet with his/her/their faculty advisor and either the Director of Curriculum or the Director of Clinical Education. All requests for LOAs, whether didactic or clinical, must be submitted via the student iNet (inet.rvu.edu) portal > Student Forms > Change of Status Form. The form will be auto-routed to the appropriate Program and university team members to notify them of the change of status.

As part of the form, the student acknowledges and accepts that they may have additional costs associated with the LOA if it takes place after the designated drop/ add period. Additionally, the student may be placed on an extended program, resulting in delayed graduation.

This is due to factors including, but not limited to, clinical site availability and summative examination scheduling.

The chair of the SAPC may grant a presumptive LOA on behalf of a student who is incapacitated or otherwise physically unable to submit a request for an LOA. The student will be required to meet with the Office of Student Financial Services to discuss any potential impact of an LOA on student loan status.

Types of Leave

Official Non-Medical Leave of Absence (LOA)

A student requesting an Official Non-Medical LOA must submit a written petition as described in “Requesting a LOA”. The Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) may grant a leave of absence for a maximum of one (1) year, placing the student on an extended program. If the request for an Official Non-Medical LOA is granted, a student will begin the Official Non-Medical LOA in “at risk”, “academic probation”, or “in good standing” as determined at the time of the LOA by the SAPC.

The student’s academic work, including course performance, clinical requirements, and professional behavior prior to beginning an Official Non-Medical LOA will be used in determining the student’s status at the time the LOA begins. At the time the Official Non-Medical LOA is granted, the SAPC will establish criteria for return. Upon receipt of a petition to return, the SAPC will determine whether the student is eligible to continue the RVU PA Program. Such a determination is based upon various factors including, but not limited to:

- The student’s status at the time the leave began;
- The student’s performance before taking the leave;
- Curricular or Program changes, if any, that occurred while the student was on leave;
 - Additional requirements may be instituted due to changes in the Program curriculum or policies since the leave began.

An Official Non-Medical LOA for any reason may be granted for variable amounts of time; however, no more than two (2) leaves may be granted, and all Program requirements must be completed within the maximum time of 40.5 months from the time of matriculation. The two (2) leaves of absence may not be consecutive. If the student is not ready to return after a one (1) year Official Leave of Absence, the student must withdraw from the University and the RVU PA Program or be dismissed. The SAPC determination of the student’s status at the time of Official Non-Medical LOA begins is not appealable.

Official Medical Leave of Absence (LOA)

A student requesting an Official Medical LOA must submit the written petition as described in “Requesting a LOA”. The request must include:

- Evidence from a licensed practitioner of medicine (MD/DO/PA/licensed mental health provider) that the student is under the care of the practitioner and the LOA is required for medical reasons.

If the request for an Official Medical LOA is granted, a student will begin the Official Medical LOA “at risk”, “academic probation” or “in good standing” as determined at the time of the LOA by the SAPC. The student’s academic work, including course examinations, clinical requirements, and professional behavior prior to beginning an Official Medical LOA, will be used in determining the student’s status at the time the LOA begins.

At the time the Official Medical LOA is granted the SAPC will establish criteria for return. Upon receipt of a petition to return, the SAPC will determine whether the student is eligible to continue the RVU PA Program. Such a determination is based upon various factors including, but not limited to:

- The student’s status at the time the leave began;
- The student’s performance before taking the leave;
- Curricular or Program changes, if any, that occurred while the student was on leave.

Additional requirements may be instituted due to changes in the Program curriculum or policies since the leave began. A LOA for any reason may be granted for variable amounts of time; however, no more than two (2) leaves may be granted; and all Program requirements must be completed within the maximum time of 40.5 months from the time of matriculation. The two (2) leaves of absence may not be consecutive. If the student is not ready to return after a one (1) year Official Medical Leave of Absence, the student must withdraw from the University and the RVU PA Program or be dismissed. The SAPCs determination of the student’s status at the time of Medical Leave of Absence begins is not appealable.

Request to Return from an Official Non-Medical and Medical Leave of Absence

To request a return from an Official Non-Medical and Medical Leave of Absence, a student must submit:

- A written petition requesting return to the Program.
- The SAPC must receive the written request no later than 10 calendar days before the LOA ends.
- For a Medical Leave of Absence, documentation from a licensed practitioner of medicine (MD/DO/PA/licensed mental health provider) indicating the student is able to return to studies and clinical rotations.
- Requests may be submitted via email directly to the Director of Curriculum, Director of Clinical Education, or the Program Director, who will route the request to the SAPC.

If a student fails to submit a complete and timely petition to return to the Program, that student will be deemed permanently withdrawn from the Program and will not be permitted to reapply except through the standard application process described in “Rights of Reapplication”.

If the SAPC denies the student’s petition to return, the student may appeal that determination through the appellate process described in “Rights for Appeal.” The SAPC may request an independent medical evaluation if there is a question regarding the students need for medical leave or readiness to return to the Program.

A student on an official leave, regardless of the reason, may NOT participate in RVU PA program activities including, but not limited to, courses, examinations, or student organization activities.

Requests for Withdrawal

Students may, at any time and for any reason, voluntarily withdraw from the Program. Such action will be considered a resignation under which the student surrenders all rights and privileges as a student of the PA program and the University. A student must notify the Program Director in writing of their desire to voluntarily withdraw from the Program. If the student desires to return to the Program in the future, he or she must initiate a new application through CASPA and, should the student be re-accepted into the Program, he or she will be required to start the Program from the beginning and complete all Program requirements, including any courses previously successfully completed prior to voluntary withdrawal.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the Program are required to meet with the Program Director and the Office of Student Financial Services prior to completing the change of status form on the iNET and the withdrawal becoming official.

Student Rights

Rights for Appeals

All appeals are academic proceedings of the RVU PA Program. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the appropriate appeal officer and must be submitted within the designated period for the appeal. Students may be asked to appear before the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC), the Provost, or the Program Director as part of the appeals review process. If this occurs, the student will be permitted to bring an advocate, but the advocate may not speak on behalf of the student. Actions by the Provost regarding readmission are not subject to reconsideration or appeal.

Appearing before the Provost, or Program Director

If the student is asked to appear as part of the appeals process, they may choose, but are not required, to submit a written statement before the meeting. At the meeting, the student will have the opportunity to make any relevant statements and provide their side of the story; the Provost or Program Director will have the opportunity to ask questions of the student and any other individuals who may appear before them to provide first-hand information regarding the matter.

A meeting before any one of these groups or individuals is not intended to be criminal in nature, and the proceedings and procedures are not intended to be those of a criminal court. The student does not have a right to be accompanied at the meetings leading up to or the hearing before the meeting(s) by an attorney.

The Program Director, or Provost, will consider all of the information before rendering a decision. The information reviewed includes, but is not limited to, the student's anecdotal notes and files, as well as their admissions file and academic history while in the Program. The student shall be informed of any decision by the Program Director or Provost in writing. This decision and all official disciplinary correspondence shall become part of the student's official record and could be reportable to licensing authorities to the extent relevant questions are raised.

The standard to be employed for all disciplinary cases is a preponderance of the evidence standard (more likely than not, greater than 50%). Clear and convincing evidence is not required. In arriving at any decision, attention is paid to the history of the student, their growth as members of an academic community and graduates and professionals within their chosen profession, and the expectations and responsibilities that accompany the privilege of becoming a practicing physician assistant. Consideration will be given to the educational record, current status, student record, and any prior disciplinary history and/or prior formal or informal warnings, counseling, incidents, and professionalism concerns raised, which may be factored into the recommendation and decision.

Appeal of a Decision made by the Program Director

A student who disagrees with the decision of the Program Director (Remediation without Progression, dismissal, disciplinary sanctions due to code of conduct violations) may appeal the decision within five (5) business days of the date the decision is sent. Any such appeal must be made to the Provost. The Provost, or their designee, shall consider an appeal that is timely and properly filed and render a final determination. For an appeal to be properly filed, it must be sent to the Provost, with a copy to the Program Director and must be received within five (5) business days of the date the notice of the decision of the Program Director was given. During the appeals process, the Provost will not reconsider the facts and statements upon which the original decision was based, but will consider only:

1. Whether new information not available at the time of the meeting, which, if available, would have impacted the decision or outcome.
2. Whether there is an allegation of discrimination as determined by the appropriate institution (allegations of discrimination will be forwarded to the appropriate University office for investigation).
3. Whether there is evidence of a procedural error that affected the decision.
4. Whether there is evidence that the decision was made arbitrarily or capriciously; or
5. The preponderance of the evidence presented does not support the findings and decisions.

The Provost, or designee, may affirm or reject the Program Director's decision or refer the matter back to the Program Director for further consideration. The Provost's decision is final.

Appeal of a Decision made by the Student Assessment & Promotions Committee

A student who disagrees with the decision of the SAPC (of Remediation with Progression; disciplinary sanctions) may appeal the decision within five (5) business days of the date the decision is sent. Any such appeal must be made to the Program Director. The Program Director, or their designee, shall consider an appeal that is timely and properly filed and render a final determination. For an appeal to be properly filed, it must be sent to the Program Director, with a copy to the chair of the SAPC, and must be received within five (5) business days of the date the notice of the decision of the SAPC was given. During the appeals process, the Program Director will not reconsider the facts and statements upon which the original decision was based, but will consider only:

1. Whether new information not available at the time of the meeting, which, if available, would have impacted the decision or outcome;
2. Whether there is an allegation of discrimination as determined by the appropriate institution (allegations of discrimination will be forwarded to the appropriate University office for investigation);
3. Whether there is evidence of a procedural error that affected the decision;
4. Whether there is evidence that the decision was made arbitrarily or capriciously; or
5. The preponderance of the evidence presented does not support the findings and decisions.

The Program Director, or designee, may affirm or reject the SAPC's decision or refer the matter back to the SAPC for further consideration. The Program Director's decision is final.

Appeal of a Failing Grade

Each Course Director has overall responsibility and authority for their course. Only the Course Director may assign a grade for the course.

A student may appeal a course grade only in the instance of a failing grade (F). The appeal may be submitted in writing to the Program Director within five (5) business days of notification of a failing grade (F). The Program Director, or their designee, shall consider an appeal that is timely and properly filed and render a final determination. For an appeal to be properly filed, it must be sent to the Program Director, with a copy to the appropriate Course Director, and must be received within five (5) business days of the date the final grade was issued. During the appeals process, the Program Director will not reconsider the facts and statements upon which the original decision was based, but will consider only:

1. Whether new information regarding the student's academic progress has been discovered, previously unknown to the student or Course Director;
2. Whether there is an allegation of discrimination as determined by the appropriate institution (allegations of discrimination will be forwarded to the appropriate University office for investigation);
3. Whether there is evidence of a procedural error in the Course Director's assignment of the final grade; or
4. Whether there is evidence that the Course Director acted arbitrarily or capriciously.
5. The preponderance of the evidence presented does not support the findings and decisions.

The Program Director may affirm or reject the Course Director's decision or refer the matter back to the Course Director for further consideration. The Program Director's decision is final.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted or otherwise prohibit the Program Director or their designee from immediately suspending a student for an egregious violation of the honor code, code of conduct, professionalism, allegations involving serious criminal behavior, or when the continued presence of the student raises serious concerns for the health, safety, and wellbeing for that student and/or others or where there is reason to believe that the continued presence or participation of the student will be disruptive to the educational process and/or the orderly administration of the University or University activities. In such case, the student will be provided with written notice of the suspension and after review, appropriate action will be taken pursuant to policy.

Rights of Reapplication

A student who withdraws either before or after establishment of an academic record may reapply to the RVU PA Program (or any other physician assistant program) at any time through the regular admissions process.

A dismissed student may reapply to the RVU PA Program or any other physician assistant program through the regular admissions process.

Student Right to Review Academic File

Any enrolled student may review their entire academic file. Inquiries to review personal academic files should be directed to the Program Director.

Other Policies

Conflict of Interest

RVU has a Conflict-of-Interest policy that is reviewed with students during the didactic phase. Students must review this policy prior to (and during) clinical rotations to remind themselves of expectations regarding this policy.

Additional SCPE Costs

All expenses related to clinical experiences are the student's responsibility (e.g. parking, use of scrubs, additional background checks, drug screens, rotation applications). These expenses should be anticipated and budgeted for before the scheduled clinical experience begins.

Fingerprints

If required to have fingerprints for specific clinical experiences, the student must pay the additional fee for the police to provide this service.

Participating in Community Service

Outside of clinical rotations, the Program does not sanction or support students providing medical care or health screenings as healthcare providers. Students must be supervised in a clinical setting and are only covered by liability insurance and Workers' Compensation when in Program-assigned clinical experience or testing. If the volunteer service is a part of the clinical experience and the student will be actively supervised, this should be discussed with the Director of Clinical Education.

PA Graduation

The RVU PA Program Commencement Ceremony occurs each year in November. Attendance at this ceremony and taking the PA Oath are required of all Program graduates. Petitions to be excused from the ceremony must be submitted in writing to the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) and will be considered for extenuating circumstances only. All students will also be required to complete an exit interview with the Program Director (or designee). The requirement to take the PA Oath and complete the exit interview will not be waived. Class members whose Program completion is delayed may be invited to the ceremony.

Expenses Related to Graduation

The Program assumes the costs for academic regalia, the graduation ceremony, and the sitting fee for the class photo.

Visitors and Guests

Non-RVU PA Students

Only enrolled Physician Assistant students may participate in the required courses. In some courses, RVU PA students and students from other professional schools are enrolled through a joint arrangement made by Course Directors and the PA Program.

Friends and Family

If a student has a friend or family member who wishes to visit a particular lecture or small group, that student must have the Course Director's permission before the visitor attends. In general, visiting is not encouraged.

Faculty-Provided Health Services

In the absence of emergent extenuating circumstances, the PA Program Director, principal faculty, and Medical Directors may not participate as healthcare providers for students currently enrolled in the PA Program.

Preparation for Certification

The Program will forward the student's name and verification of the anticipated date of Program completion to the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

The student's graduation date is used to determine their eligibility to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE). The NCCPA will then send the student an application form, which they will need to complete and return. Students are not permitted to take this exam until they have graduated. The earliest the student may take this exam is seven (7) calendar days after their graduation date.

Graduation is held the third week in November. All transactions with the NCCPA are strictly the responsibility of the student. The student will need to authorize the NCCPA to forward their numerical scores to the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners or the state in which they plan to practice for their licensure. See www.nccpa.net for more information and FAQs.

Preparation for Licensure

Colorado Licensure

All transactions with the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners are strictly the student's responsibility – not the Program's responsibility. The Program will inform the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners (BME) of who has graduated and provide the required form(s). Graduates must forward their Board scores and official transcripts directly to the Colorado BME for the application. Go to <https://dora.colorado.gov/licensing-and-permitting> for more information.

Other State Licensure

For applications for licensure outside the state of Colorado, the student must provide the PA Program with the required paperwork. See www.aapa.org for information related to licensure in other states.

Reference Request

Requests for a Program (not personal) reference must be submitted in writing to the Program Director. The Program Director will complete all required documents to verify program attendance and completion, as well as any documents relevant to obtaining privileges. A formal letter including information obtained from the student's official academic file (e.g. competency progression, comments from Preceptors, official correspondence) will be provided only if requested by credentialing/privileging organizations.

Credentialing and Privileges Request

Requests for credentialing and privileges following graduation should be directed to the RVU PA Program office. Requests will be provided within ten business days.

Student Services

Administration/Faculty Office Hours

The University administration endorses an open-door policy and encourages students to meet regularly with the administration and faculty. Regular office hours are established by the administration and faculty for student appointments.

The Office of Inclusive Excellence

The Rocky Vista University Office of Inclusive Excellence is a resource for students, staff, and faculty regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion opportunities and challenges in healthcare education across the Colorado, Utah, and Montana campuses.

The Frank Ritchel Ames Memorial Library

The Frank Ritchel Ames Memorial Library fosters information literacy by providing students with access and the skills necessary to use the most current and impactful medical information for the health of their future patients. Students, faculty, residents, and staff—in Colorado, Utah, Montana, or elsewhere—share access to the same digital collection, which contains books, journals, and databases necessary to learn and practice healthcare. All physical library locations provide access to print copies of required and recommended textbooks, as available. Library users can enjoy a warm and collegial space staffed by highly-trained information professionals who play a significant role in the development of future healthcare providers learning to practice medicine with compassion, integrity, and excellence.

IT Support Services

The Office of Information Technology is available to assist students both on- and off-campus with technical issues they may encounter throughout enrollment. The support center, known as IT Support Services, is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm MST.

Students can email support@rvu.edu for assistance.

For general information regarding technology services, students can visit support.rvu.edu.

Student Portal

Students are provided access to the University's Student Portal (MyUniversity) upon depositing with Rocky Vista University. The Student Portal provides students with access to the academic calendar, links to financial information, and Community Groups. Important news and alerts are also communicated through the Student Portal. After Matriculation, quick access to Grades for exams, quizzes, and other course assignments, as well as, final course grades are also available on the Student Portal, via the link to the Learning Management System (MyCourses - Canvas).

Office of Testing

The Office of Testing (OOT) is in charge of preparing, administering, and processing scores for all written exams, quizzes, and rubrics-scored essay assignments, and providing score reports to faculty. The OOT is available to answer student questions about testing, provide technical assistance with testing software, arrange make-up exams and reviews for excused absences, and work with faculty, staff, and administration to ensure the quality and security of evaluation material.

The OOT designs the proctoring and administration of exams to meet the highest standards of academic integrity. With student cooperation, the Office of Testing seeks to provide the most secure, consistent, and low-distraction exam environment possible, modeled after the environment of NBME Board exams.

RVU uses ExamSoft™, a secure item banking and electronic testing software platform, to create and administer all written exams and quizzes. Students are required to own and maintain a laptop that meets the minimum requirements of Exemplify™, the exam taker application of ExamSoft. Those requirements are here: [Exemplify MSRs](#)

Requirements are subject to frequent change, so the OOT recommends that students check them before purchasing or updating a laptop for use at RVU. If a student has a last-minute issue with their personal laptop, the OOT has loaner laptops available to borrow. The OOT asks that students limit use of this option to emergencies and to no more than five times per student, per semester.

Please contact officeoftesting@rvu.edu for the Colorado and Utah campuses, or MTOOT@rvu.edu for the Montana campus, with any questions, testing concerns, or to notify OOT of unexpected absences from testing events.

Detailed exam day instructions, best practices, and testing protocol for each program can be found on the [Office of Testing tab](#) under Students on MyVista.

Print Center

The Print Center streamlines the University's print needs. It reduces outsourcing and incorporates additional services, including business card production, poster printing, lamination, binding, and more. RVU departments and students are able to send their print jobs directly to the Print Center through an online system and can pick them up at their convenience.

The Print Center is located at the Colorado campus on the second floor inside the library and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm MST. RVU Utah and RVU Montana print jobs are ordered online, processed in Colorado, and then shipped to the appropriate campus for pick up. The Print Center may be contacted through email at printcenter@rvu.edu or by phone at (720) 874-2459.

Writing Center

The Rocky Vista University Writing Center assists writers in the development of effective written communication, assignments, and professional documents, offering guidance from start to finish—from brainstorming and outlining to revising and editing. To schedule an appointment, please complete their form at <https://www.rvu.edu/writing-center/>.

Through audience- and genre-centered instruction, specific feedback, and access to resources, the RVU Writing supports faculty and students alike.

One-on-one and small-group sessions are tailored to support students and build more accomplished writers in any type of written work, including:

- Reflective writing;
- Proposals, reports, and reviews;
- Abstracts and manuscripts;
- Personal statements; and,
- CVs, resumes, and other professional writing documents.

Sessions are designed to help students:

- Understand assignment expectations;
- Generate, organize, and develop ideas;
- Analyze, synthesize, and argue;
- Summarize, paraphrase, and document sources; and,
- Recognize and revise issues with grammar and syntax.

Campus Safety and Security

The Campus Safety and Security has several ways to ensure that the campus community remains a safe and secure learning environment, including CCTV surveillance cameras, an access-controlled facility, an advanced fire control system, RAVE Emergency Notification systems in Colorado, as well as officer patrols and escorts. The Campus Safety and Security team is committed to providing safety and security services professionally and consistently. RVU strives to provide these services with integrity, timely communication, and problem-solving. The Campus Safety and Security Department serves 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They provide patrols, escorts, investigations, crime prevention, and many other services. Students, staff, or faculty who witness a crime, accident, emergency, or suspicious person should promptly call the Campus Safety and Security Department at (720) 875-2892 in Colorado or 911. The Campus Safety and Security Department should be informed of any 911 calls so that assistance can be provided to the local law enforcement or fire personnel.

Students, staff, and faculty will receive emergency notifications, including campus closures and weather delays, via SMS text messages and email notifications. In the event a Timely Warning Notice is issued, the campus community will be notified as soon as possible through our RAVE Emergency Notification Systems in the form of SMS text messages, email, audible announcement beacons, and/or bullhorn/public address system. Students, staff, and faculty will receive a text message notification of RVU campus closures or emergencies.

CLERY Act

Rocky Vista University shares many of the same interests and concerns as other colleges and communities, including a concern about crime. The University has been fortunate not to have experienced a significant number of crimes, but one should not be misled into thinking the campus is crime-free. There is always the possibility of a criminal act occurring against a member of the RVU community despite the best efforts of the Safety and Security Department and the administrative staff. A truly safe campus can only be achieved through the shared responsibility of all members of the RVU community.

The University is committed to maintaining a safe environment to support a healthy, learning-centered campus. This commitment includes making necessary physical improvements that promote safety and well-being; the revision and updating of policies, procedures, and rules; and an obligation to hold accountable those who choose to commit crimes or violate rules and regulations.

Every student, faculty, staff member, and visitor has an individual responsibility to be aware of their personal safety, to properly utilize college resources, to make positive choices, and to use common sense. Crimes, violations, hate crimes, suspicious persons or activity, and safety issues should be reported upon discovery through the appropriate channels as described in this Handbook. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the emergency procedures and the important information on the website. Updates, timely warnings, and important information regarding safety on campus will be communicated by emails, fliers, TV monitors, and other presentations.

For more information, view the [RVU Annual Security Report](#).

To obtain a copy of the Daily Crime Log, please visit the Security Office on any of the campuses.

Firearms, Weapons, and Other Prohibited Items Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish restrictions regarding the possession, carry, transportation and storage of firearms and weapons and other dangerous items on Rocky Vista University properties or areas of responsibilities. This policy applies to all RVU students, faculty, staff, guests, visitors and contractors.

Possession of firearms, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, and/or other dangerous weapons, which may cause fear, alarm, or threat to another person within or upon the grounds, buildings, or other facilities of RVU or at any RVU-sponsored or supervised functions or events is prohibited.

However, if the individual is legally permitted to transport, possess, purchase, receive, transfer, or store the firearm in the state of the RVU location where they are working, studying, or visiting, it is allowable for the firearm(s) to be stored in the individual's private vehicle in the University parking lot. The firearm must be locked securely in the motor vehicle or in a locked container attached to the motor vehicle while the motor vehicle is not occupied; and the firearm is not in plain view from the outside of the motor vehicle. Any employee or student who intends to have a permitted firearm in their vehicle while in the University parking lot must complete a disclosure form, available at the Department of Campus Safety and Security. If the weapon is a loaded handgun, employee or student must provide proof on the form that the employee or student has a concealed carry permit valid in the state of the RVU location where they are working or attending school. In no event may a person store or possess a loaded rifle, shotgun, or muzzle-loading rifle in a vehicle in the University parking lot.

Purpose and Scope:

The purpose of this policy is to establish restrictions regarding the possession, carry, transportation and storage of firearms and weapons and other dangerous items on Rocky Vista University properties or areas of responsibilities. This policy applies to all RVU students, faculty, staff, guests, visitors and contractors.

Policy Statement:

Possession of firearms, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, and/or other dangerous weapons, which may cause fear, alarm, or threat to another person within or upon the grounds, buildings, or other facilities of RVU or at any RVU-sponsored or supervised functions or events is prohibited.

However, if the individual is legally permitted to transport, possess, purchase, receive, transfer, or store the firearm in the state of the RVU location where they are working, studying, or visiting, it is allowable for the firearm(s) to be stored in the individual's private vehicle in the University parking lot. The firearm must be locked securely in the motor vehicle or in a locked container attached to the motor vehicle while the motor vehicle is not occupied; and the

firearm is not in plain view from the outside of the motor vehicle. Any employee or student who intends to have a permitted firearm in their vehicle while in the University parking lot must complete a disclosure form, available at the Department of Campus Safety and Security. If the weapon is a loaded handgun, employee or student must provide proof on the form that the employee or student has a concealed carry permit valid in the state of the RVU location where they are working or attending school. . In no event may a person store or possess a loaded rifle, shotgun, or muzzle-loading rifle in a vehicle in the University parking lot.

Any person(s) in violation of this policy shall be subject to University disciplinary action and/or criminal charges.

Exception to this policy would be granted to city, state, or federal law enforcement officers on RVU property for official business.

Other Prohibited Weapons or Dangerous Items:

RVU disallows the following items within its facilities due to existing RVU policies, fire safety laws, as well as federal, state, and local laws. Possession of any of the following items may result in seizure and/or destruction of the items by an RVU representative and may result in disciplinary action:

- Rifles, weapons, ammunition and related paraphernalia, BB guns and air guns.
- Narcotics, recreational or illicit drugs and drug-related items.
- Explosive materials.
- Realistic replicas of firearms or other weapons.
- Gasoline, kerosene and other fuels.
- Firecrackers and fireworks.
- Combustible decorations.
- Candles, lanterns, incense, etc. (No open flames).
- Toxic and hazardous chemicals, except cleaning chemicals and approved lab chemicals.
- Unauthorized cooking equipment (i.e., grills, toaster ovens, hot pots, hot plates, fry pans, etc.).
- Immersion heaters.
- Any other items that may affect the safety or security of the University.

Additional Information:

Employees or students who are aware of violations of this policy are required to report such violations to the Department of Campus Safety and Security.

Clinical Rotations:

Students on Clinical Rotations must learn and adhere to the policy of the facility in which they are rotating, as RVU policy does not supersede any outside facility's policies in this regard.

The most current version of this policy may be found in the [RVU Policy Repository](#).

Lost and Found Policy

This policy is intended to ensure that items reported lost or found are properly accounted for and, in the case of items found, returned to their rightful owners, donated, recycled, or disposed of.

The Department of Campus Safety and Security (CSS) Colorado Campus will receive and collect lost and found items and store them in the property room until claimed by the owner or to the end of the school academic year. After the school ends, any unclaimed property will be donated, recycled, or destroyed.

All found Property must be logged into the Lost and Found property book. All items are tagged and stored in the Lost and Found Cabinet. When an item is claimed, a release of property waiver must be completed and signed before any item is returned to the owner. The waiver is to be filed in an appropriate folder, and the ARMS entry must be updated.

Items turned in will be held for 90 days from the date of intake. At the determination of the CSS Manager or designee, all remaining unclaimed items will be purged from the inventory by one of the following methods: donated, recycled, destroyed, or returned to the finder.

Cash money turned in to CSS will be turned over to finance immediately; CSS will not hold money.

Security will not hold the following items: Clothing, notes, notebooks, coffee mugs, thermoses, water bottles, plates, bowls, eating utensils, food, or drinks.

Any items collected as evidence will be given to the CSS Manager or designee, to be stored in a secure location until handed over to law enforcement for further investigation.

Parking Permits

Parking permits are required to park on campus and must be properly displayed. They are issued on an individual basis and may not be transferred. Permits are only valid when obtained through the RVU Security Office and they remain the property of RVU. The owner of a permit is responsible for any/all citations issued to any vehicle displaying their permit. Students are to park in specified areas only.

Personal Safety and Security

Rocky Vista University, together with the clinical site and the student, share the responsibility for ensuring that adequate policies and procedures are in place regarding the safety and security of the students and faculty in all locations where instruction occurs. This includes sites where clinical rotations occur, as well as off-site training locations for University-sponsored events.

The Physician Assistant Program will provide information on best practices for personal safety and security during the student's initial orientation and again prior to the beginning of clinical rotations. Students will be encouraged to become familiar with all safety and security policies in effect at all sites and off-campus events. Finally, all Preceptors will be expected to communicate their site-specific policies and safety considerations with students and faculty involved at their location.

RVU as an educational institute falls under the jurisdiction of the [Clery Act](#). *The annual security report can be found by taking the Clery Act hyperlink.*

Student ID Badge Policy

University policy requires all students obtain and carry their RVU Student ID Badge while on campus. It is primarily used for identification, entry into the RVU buildings, for verification of RVU status, and for using University services, such as access to the building. The badge may be obtained at the Security Office on each campus.

Completion of the Critical Student Information Survey is required to obtain the RVU Student ID Badge. Use of the badge by anyone other than the person to whom it was issued is strictly prohibited. The cardholder is responsible for any and all losses associated with their card. RVU Student ID Badges are the property of RVU and must be returned on request.

It is the responsibility of the University to ensure the safety and security of all its students and employees. All students are expected to wear their RVU ID Badge at all times when in RVU buildings. Current students may request the replacement of ID badges according to the following information.

Campus Safety and Security will issue one (1) ID badge at no charge to current employees and students; however, subsequent requests to replace additional ID badges will result in a fee of \$10 each. Replacement for ID badges will be referred to the Safety and Security Department and payment will be made through the Finance Department prior to the creation of a new ID badge.

Marketing and Communications

The RVU Marketing Department provides many services for members of the RVU community:

RVU Branding Guidelines and Logo Files

At Rocky Vista University, maintaining a strong and unified brand identity across all communication channels is a top priority. Our [brand page](#) serves as a comprehensive resource, empowering every member of the RVU community to present a consistent and cohesive brand image in all marketing and communication endeavors.

We encourage you to frequent this hub to stay informed about the latest updates to our brand guidelines.

Marketing Approvals

For all marketing materials, both internal and external, please adhere to the University's brand guidelines. Requests can be submitted to the marketing department at RVU via email at marketing@rvu.edu. Please provide a detailed description of the proposed material, along with relevant design files and mock-ups. Kindly allow 5 business days for feedback or approval.

All designs should incorporate an approved university logo. The RVU logo should be prominently displayed, unaltered, and unobstructed. Logo size should be appropriate and maintain its integrity across different formats and platforms. Designs should utilize the designated fonts and colors specified in the RVU branding guidelines.

Press Releases

If students, faculty, or staff would like to have a press release created and distributed about an event or accomplishment (either individually or departmentally), please submit your request to marketing@rvu.edu.

Peak to Peak Post

The Peak to Peak Post serves as a cross-campus, RVU-wide internal newsletter, delivering crucial updates, upcoming events, and Inclusive Excellence resources, all while highlighting and honoring the achievements of our faculty, staff, and administrators across all campuses and programs.

The editors of Peak to Peak welcome input and active engagement from the community to shape each unique issue. To contribute or be featured in future newsletters, please fill out our communication [request form](#).

Event Marketing

When students or clubs are holding events, they can contact Marketing for assistance in planning, materials (such as fliers), and/or social media and regular media marketing. Requests can be made to marketing@rvu.edu.

Apparel and Products

Marketing approval is required for any apparel or merchandise that students or employees would like to produce that uses the RVU logo, wordmark, mascot, or any other reference to the University or its programs. Approval requests can be made to marketing@rvu.edu. RVU branded merchandise can be purchased from Shop.RVU.edu.

Website

The Marketing Department is responsible for maintaining and updating the RVU website. If a student or employee has suggestions or revisions for the website, they should contact marketing@rvu.edu.

Email Signature Policy

RVU utilizes a standardized email signature for students and employees, in order to maintain consistent branding for the University, to exhibit professionalism, and to identify spam emails. The Marketing Department is responsible for ensuring the appropriate branding and representation of the University. Examples and instructions for setting it up are provided during orientation.

Social Media Policy

The Rocky Vista University (RVU) social media policy is established to ensure that all social media activity representing the University is conducted in a manner that upholds RVU's mission, vision, and core values. This policy applies to all members of the RVU Community, including employees, students, alumni, and designated external representatives, who manage or contribute to social media accounts on behalf of the University. The policy is necessary to guide the professional and responsible use of social media, protect the University's brand and reputation, and ensure compliance with applicable laws and University policies.

For the purpose of this policy, "social media" refers to, but is not limited to, blogs (web-based journals) and microblogs (e.g., Tumblr); collaborative websites (e.g., Wikipedia, etc.); message boards; social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, GroupMe, LinkedIn, X, Snapchat, Pinterest, WhatsApp); social networking features (University Portal); podcasts (multimedia distributed over the internet); video sharing (e.g., YouTube, TikTok); and photo sharing (e.g., Instagram, Facebook).

Policy

RVU authorizes the creation and use of approved University social media accounts, provided such use is professional (i.e., HIPAA and FERPA compliant), protects the reputation and brand of the University, is owned and operated under RVU or approved by RVU Marketing, and complies with RVU policies, applicable laws, and regulations.

RVU encourages respectful and constructive interactions among users and with the institution on its social media channels and within comment threads of RVU content. Users are reminded that their posts and comments on RVU's platforms are publicly visible. As such, they should be appropriate for all audiences and reflective of RVU's values.

RVU is not responsible for content posted by visitors on its social media channels. RVU reserves the right to screen and remove any content deemed inappropriate, including but not limited to offensive language; political endorsements; content that harasses, abuses, threatens, or otherwise violates the rights of others; advertisements, promotions, or other commercial content that sells products or services; any outside links; or spam. RVU also reserves the right to block and/or remove users and any associated content who violate this policy.

Requirements

The Marketing Department maintains, manages, and owns the official Rocky Vista University social media accounts. RVU is the exclusive owner of all RVU trademarks, branded merchandise, and related logos and imagery. Employees and students may not use the RVU logo without an approval ID from the Marketing Department. Visual identity standards must Page 2 OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY POLICY be properly adhered to by following RVU visual identity guidelines at <https://www.rvu.edu/brand/>. The RVU Marketing Department will oversee and monitor all RVU owned and approved accounts to ensure the following maintenance and updates are maintained.

Account Maintenance and Updates

1. **Regular Updates:** Official RVU social media accounts will be updated regularly, outlined during the initial setup of the account. Accounts or pages that remain inactive for three months or more may be deactivated or deleted.
2. **Administrator Changes:** If there is a change in account or page administrators, the new administrator must notify the Marketing Department within one month. Failure to do so may result in account deactivation.
3. **Content Responsibility:** The account or page administrator is responsible for ensuring that posts accurately reflect RVU's core values. Social media communications must comply with all applicable University policies.
4. **User Access:** The account or page administrators are responsible for ensuring the proper review, maintenance, and establishment of user roles and responsibilities within the selected platform; and conducting regular audits that include but are not limited to: datetimestamps of access by user, datetimestamp of content accessed by user, datetimestamp of any data downloaded by user, and/or provisioning/deprovisioning of accounts.

Approval and Branding Requirements

1. **Merchandise Sales:** Any merchandise sold via social media accounts or pages must be pre-approved by the RVU Marketing Department.
2. **Naming Conventions:** All social media accounts representing RVU must adhere to University naming conventions for consistent branding across platforms.
 1. **Handles (Usernames):** Accounts on platforms such as Twitter or Instagram should end with "RVU" (e.g., @LibraryRVU).
 2. **Full Name Display:** Accounts on platforms like Facebook or LinkedIn must start with "Rocky Vista University" (e.g., "Rocky Vista University Founders Library").

Professional Conduct and Content Guidelines

1. **Code of Conduct:** Students should refer to the Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook, and employees should consult the Appropriate Conduct and Discipline section of the Employee Handbook to guide decisions about what is and isn't appropriate to post on social media. Negative or unprofessional behavior online may result in consequences like those for in-person behavior.

2. Content that violates RVU's conduct expectations includes but is not limited to:
 1. Evidence of drug use
 2. Evidence of criminal activity
 3. Evidence of medical malpractice
 4. Violation of patients' rights
 5. Evidence of workplace abuses (such as theft, harassment, or dishonesty)
 6. Evidence of academic fraud or abuses (cheating or dishonesty)
 7. In the interest of collegiality and inclusion, employees and students may not disparage other students, employees, or schools. RVU is a community and encourages everyone to act as such.
3. Content Focus: Posts must be service- or education-based, supporting the objectives of the student club, interest group, track, or department. Posts about student life or RVU culture are permitted if appropriate. Departments and tracks should avoid engaging in political or sensitive topics through affiliated user sites, as they represent RVU. Student clubs, interest groups, and fellows should exercise good judgment in determining appropriate and professional content and avoiding cultural appropriation.
4. Copyright: Respect copyright and fair use policies. When posting content, individuals must ensure they have the right to share it, especially if it involves third-party materials. If unsure about posts that may infringe on the copyright and intellectual property rights of others, contact the Marketing Department for further guidance.
 1. The following credits must be included when using photos or videos owned or provided by the Marketing Department: "Photos courtesy of Marketing Department at Rocky Vista University."

Media Inquiries and Confidentiality

1. Media Requests: Requests for information or interviews by the media must be referred to the Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Management. Individual employees or students may not speak to the press on behalf of RVU without prior authorization.
2. Confidential Information: Do not post proprietary or confidential information about RVU, including student, alumni, employee, contractor, or partner information or RVU proprietary information, including course content and test information. Be mindful of FERPA regulations and ensure that no personally identifiable student education records are disclosed through social media. Information collected in connection with research may be protected under a Nondisclosure Agreement, research protocol, or other applicable law or agreement.
 1. Any student in photographs that will be posted on social media sites must sign a photo release form before the photo may be posted. Copies of the photo release form can be requested from the Marketing Department.

Authorization and Oversight

1. Posting Authority: Authorization is required to post on behalf of RVU or speak on behalf of the University in the social media space. This includes University departments, programs, and student organizations. An approval to post can be rescinded at any time.
 1. Personal testimonials and opinions should be presented in first-person, i.e., "My experience..." or "I think..." For further guidelines, see "Posting on Personal Sites" below.
2. RVU Marketing or IT Department Access: The RVU Marketing or Information Technology (IT) Department may request access to any official RVU social media site. Administrators must comply with such requests to ensure oversight and adherence to University policies.

Compliance with Platform Rules

1. Platform-Specific Rules: Follow all rules and regulations specific to each social media platform used (e.g., Facebook (TM), X (formerly Twitter) (TM), LinkedIn (TM), etc.).
2. Compliance with University Policies: Communications on social media sites for University purposes must follow all applicable RVU policies.

Posting on Personal Sites

1. Sharing University News: Employees are encouraged to share RVU news and events that are a matter of public record on their personal social media sites, preferably by linking directly to the source to avoid copyright infringement.
2. Personal Opinions: When sharing views about RVU, make it clear statements are personal views and not on behalf of the University. A disclaimer, such as "The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer," may be appropriate.
3. University Logo Usage: Do not use the RVU logo on personal social media sites.

Student Affairs

Career and Professional Development

The Career and Professional Development team is dedicated to setting RVU students up for success during and after their time at RVU, however, Rocky Vista University does not guarantee employment. The Career and Professional Development team provides resources to guide students in making informed decisions and successfully planning their careers through professional development. The team encourages students to cultivate their professional skills including, but not limited to, resiliency, service, innovation, and collegiality. Information is provided on an individual or group basis, as well as through a variety of programs, workshops, and specialty interest groups. The team provides a variety of services including but not limited to:

- LinkedIn creation,
- Start-to-finish CV or resume support,
- Professional profile planning,
- Specialty exploration,
- Career information,
- Advice on specialty competitiveness
- Networking guidance

Students are encouraged to make an appointment with a team member once per throughout their entire educational career or more as needed to foster dialogue tailored to individual students' needs and goals.

Disabilities and Academic Accommodations

Disabilities and Academic Accommodations

Rocky Vista University recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students are required to meet the technical standards set forth by the college/program in which they are enrolled, with or without reasonable accommodations. RVU complies with federal and state law prohibiting discrimination against any applicant or enrolled student on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual preference, age, disability, or other protected status. In accordance with its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 5.04 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, RVU does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in admission or in access to programs and activities.

Students who may qualify for accommodations include those who have received accommodations previously or who have been diagnosed with a condition impacting one or more major life activities (such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, learning, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, and working, etc.). Although students with temporary illness or injury are not considered disabled by law, every reasonable effort to accommodate their needs will be exercised. If you feel you meet these criteria or would like to discuss your eligibility for accommodations, you are encouraged to complete our registration [form](#).

Requests for accommodations and services are evaluated on an individual, case-by-case basis and are dependent on a student's functional limitations within a given environment. Through an interactive dialog facilitated by Disability Services, all relevant factors, including the impact of the disability on the student's access to a course or a program, supporting clinical or diagnostic documentation, and the relevant learning outcomes of the given program, will be considered. Requests for accommodations that would result in an alteration of the fundamental nature or learning outcome of a course or a program are not reasonable and will not be approved.

Clinical documentation or other diagnostic information submitted to Disability Services is kept confidential and is released to a third party only with the student's written permission or as required by law. General information about a student's disability and accommodation request/s, however, may be shared with other RVU officials or, in limited circumstances, with third parties who have a legitimate educational need to know. The student's disabilities file is maintained by the RVU Disability Officer and is held separately from the student's official academic record.

Students requesting disability-related accommodations must follow the process outlined below.

Accommodations Request Process

Step 1: Complete the [Initial Accommodation Request Form](#)

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the process with Disability Services as soon as possible after committing to attend RVU, or after diagnosis, to ensure timely approval and implementation of approved accommodations. While requests may be submitted at any point throughout the year, students should consider that the interactive process, including documentation review and eligibility notification, typically requires two (2) weeks. Incomplete documentation may delay the review process.

Step 2: [Schedule an Appointment](#) with Disability Services

After submitting the Initial Accommodation Request Form, students must schedule a Welcome Meeting with [Disability Services](#).

Meetings can be held virtually for students on all three campuses or in-person for students on the Utah campus.

Disability Services' priority is initiating the interactive process with students; therefore, students should not delay submitting a request due to a lack of documentation concerns. The Disability Officer will discuss [acceptable types of documentation](#) during the Welcome Meeting, and can answer specific documentation-related questions at that time.

Step 3: Welcome Meeting

The Welcome Meeting is the beginning of an interactive process in which the Disability Officer will talk with students about disability-related barriers they may be experiencing, any history of accommodations they may have, as well as possible accommodations that may be reasonable and appropriate in the various RVU learning environments within the program. Students will also have the opportunity to ask questions, provide information and otherwise engage with the Disability Officer to understand how accommodations work within a medical education setting and what to expect relative to next steps in the process of establishing eligibility.

Step 4: Documentation Review and Notification of Eligibility Determination

Upon receipt of the Initial Contact Form-Request for Accommodations and other supporting documentation, the student's eligibility for accommodations will be reviewed and the student will receive a Notification of Eligibility Determination. The eligibility notification will specify the accommodations for which the student has been approved, and copies will be sent to the Office of Testing and appropriate RVU officials. Once approved for accommodations, the Testing Center will send out instructions regarding the administration and location of exams with accommodations.

In some cases, a student may be asked to provide additional supporting documentation/information if the submitted documentation is outdated or does not include sufficient relevant information to determine the impact of the disability. Last-minute submission of documentation may result in unavoidable delays in consideration of requested services.

Please note that accommodations granted by the University are not applicable retroactively and will not affect past administrative or academic actions, or past performance evaluations and examinations.

Additionally, students are encouraged to meet with the Disability Officer prior to entering the clinical rotation portion of their program, if applicable, or at any time an adjustment to currently approved accommodations may be necessary.

National Board Accommodations

Students seeking accommodations for licensure exams must directly petition the organization administering the exam to seek test accommodations. Please schedule a meeting with the Disability Officer to discuss this process in more detail and learn about additional support RVU may be able to provide.

ADA Accommodation Review Requests and Appeals

Disability Services is committed to ensuring that Rocky Vista University is inclusive and accessible to all students. Several options are available to students who would like to address disability-related concerns, complaints, or issues.

If a student has concerns about the support provided by the [Disability Officer](#), or if they believe that they have been denied reasonable accommodations as requested, we recommend initiating a conversation with the Disability Officer to discuss those concerns. If the matter remains unresolved or if the student disagrees with the determination reached by the Disability Officer, the student may appeal the decision to the [Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs](#) by submitting an [Accessibility Grievance Form](#). The student will be contacted within seven (7) days of submission and will be given an opportunity to share additional details regarding their specific situation and the reason for the appeal request.

If the student believes their complaint is a matter of discrimination, the student has the right to bypass the Associate/Assistant Dean of Student Affairs by submitting an EthicsPoint Complaint [online](#) or by calling (844) 936-2729.

If a satisfactory solution is still not offered, the student may choose to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, [Office of Civil Rights](#).

Educational Support

Educational support is available to all students. Services are provided to all students who may be experiencing academic difficulty and wish to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of their study and test-taking strategies. Support is offered through individual consultation tailored to identify potential problem areas and provide strategies and resources which meet each student's specific needs and are integrated with the course curricula.

Individual Consultation

- Confidential, individualized consultation regarding learning styles, time management, test-taking strategies, and academic performance;
- Diagnostic evaluation of study practices and their effectiveness;
- Structured intervention strategies to increase learning productivity and efficiency;
- Individual preparation for courses, clerkships, and licensure examinations;
- Referrals to on- and off-campus professionals;
- Information about resources to enhance learning, and
- Learning disabilities and ADA Accommodations.

Workshops and Group Sessions

- Effective study strategies, test taking, and time management; and
- Strategy and resource preparation strategies for comprehensive examinations (such as COMLEX and USMLE)
- Small and large group sessions available

Tutoring

Tutors are a vital part of RVU and a valuable resource for all students. The tutoring program provides support for students in most courses. Student tutors have a strong level of understanding/ and competence of the course content and are available at no charge. Tutoring sessions are available in one on one, small group, and large group sessions. For questions about the tutoring program or assistance with scheduling, please contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Educational Support Services are free of charge for RVU students. Students may contact the Office of Student Affairs to request educational support services.

Mental Health and Wellness Services

All students have access to a variety of mental health and wellness services, including:

- 24/7 access to a mental health clinician;
- Individual counseling/therapy;
- Couple counseling;
- Group counseling/therapy driven by need and interest;

- Legal consultation;
- Health coaching;
- Financial Coaching;
- Help finding resources such as housing, childcare, and health services; and
- Psychoeducational and mental health outreach programming to support mental health and wellness.

Information about mental health and wellness services is maintained on the RVU website www.rvu.edu/mentalhealth. Some services are provided through a third-party vendor. All services provided by RVU Mental Health and Wellness are available at no cost, and all treatment services are confidential, in accordance with applicable law, and not part of the student's academic record. For concerns outside the scope of practice of RVU Mental Health and Wellness and/or the contracted third-party vendor, individuals can receive a referral to services in the community. When receiving community services or when receiving services from the third-party vendor outside of established session limits, individuals and their personal health insurance are responsible for all fees that are incurred through the utilization of such services.

Colorado Physician Health Program

(303) 860-0122; www.cphp.org

950 S Cherry St, Suite 1222, Denver, CO

The Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP) is a nonprofit organization, independent of other medical organizations and the government. CPHP provides peer assistance services for licensed physicians and physician assistants of Colorado as well as medical students and physician assistant students in Colorado. CPHP clients have assured confidentiality as required by law or regulation. Peer assistance services aid individuals who have any health problems such as emotional, psychological, or medical problems. For example, CPHP assists its clients with medical and/or psychiatric conditions (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, HIV infection, depression or substance abuse) as well as psychosocial conditions (e.g. family problems or stress related to work or professional liability difficulties). CPHP provides diagnostic evaluation, treatment referral, and treatment monitoring and support services. CPHP believes that early intervention and evaluation offer the best opportunity for a successful outcome and preventing the health condition from needlessly interfering with medical practice.

Office of Research and Scholarly Activity

Rocky Vista University is committed to producing high-quality basic, clinical, and educational research and scholarly works to achieve new heights in medical education and be a thought-leader in healthcare research. As such, the institution supports research and scholarly activities both financially and with support services available through the Office of Research and Scholarly Activity.

In order to achieve this, all students participating in research or scholarly activity agree to follow all policies and procedures outlined by the Office of Research and Scholarly Activity as found in the [RVU Policy Repository](http://www.rvu.edu/academics/office-of-research-and-scholarly-activity/) and linked to the University's website (<https://www.rvu.edu/academics/office-of-research-and-scholarly-activity/>). Additionally, students will be able to find a quick-start guide on the website that will walk them through the steps of starting at research project at RVU.

RVU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) must review and approve all human subjects research. Information about the IRB can be found at: <https://www.rvu.edu/academics/office-of-research-and-scholarly-activity/irb-and-human-subjects-research/>.

Appendix I: PA Student Resources

Communication with the PA Program / Referral for Emotional Hardship

Open communication between the Program and students is essential to an amicable and successful learning and working environment for all. Students are encouraged to communicate with program faculty and staff regarding professional or academic help and advice at any time. RVU email is the official source of communication between the Program and students. Students are required to check their RVU email daily.

If a student experiences personal emotional hardship during their tenure at RVU, there are several mental health and wellness services available:

Mental Health and Wellness Services

All students and their household have access to a variety of mental health and wellness services, including:

- 24/7 access to a mental health clinician by calling 866-640-4777;
- Individual counseling/therapy;
- Couple counseling;
- Group counseling/therapy driven by need and interest;
- Legal consultation;
- Health coaching;
- Financial Coaching;
- Help finding resources such as housing, childcare, and health services; and
- Psychoeducational and mental health outreach programming to support mental health and wellness.

Information about mental health and wellness services is maintained on the RVU website www.rvu.edu/mentalhealth.

Some services are provided through RVU's contract with WellConnect. All services provided by RVU Mental Health and Wellness and WellConnect are available at no cost, and all treatment services are confidential, in accordance with applicable law, and not part of the student academic record.

For concerns outside the scope of practice of RVU Mental Health and Wellness and WellConnect, individuals can receive a referral to services in the community. When receiving community services, individuals and their personal health insurance are responsible for all fees that are incurred through the utilization of such services.

Colorado Physician Health Program

(303) 860-0122; www.cphp.org
899 Logan Street, Suite 410, Denver, CO

The Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP) is a nonprofit organization, independent of other medical organizations and the government. CPHP provides peer assistance services for licensed physicians and physician assistants of Colorado as well as medical students and physician assistant students in Colorado. CPHP clients have assured confidentiality as required by law or regulation. Peer assistance services aid individuals who have any health problems such as emotional, psychological, or medical problems. For example, CPHP assists its clients with medical and/or psychiatric conditions (e.g. Alzheimer's disease, HIV infection, depression or substance abuse) as well as psychosocial conditions (e.g. family problems or stress related to work or professional liability difficulties). CPHP provides diagnostic evaluation, treatment referral, and treatment monitoring and support services. CPHP believes that early intervention and evaluation offer the best opportunity for a successful outcome and preventing the health condition from needlessly interfering with medical practice.

Processing Student Grievances and Allegations of Harassment

The RVU PA Program is dedicated to a vibrant, robust, and enriching academic and clinical learning experience for all students. In the event a student feels there are concerns regarding the learning environment or encounters a problem with another student or Program faculty or staff, the student should first communicate with the relevant student, faculty, or staff member in an effort to resolve any and all grievances. Should such communication prove unsuccessful, or should the student feel such communication may impact the student's success in the Program, the student shall then schedule an in-person meeting with the Program Director (or the Program Director's immediate supervisor, should the grievance be with the Program Director). The Program Director (or the Program Director's immediate supervisor) and the student shall formulate a plan that addresses and resolves the student's concerns. Should this plan prove unsuccessful, the student should then refer to the University section of the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* for policies and procedures regarding processing student grievances.

Additionally, the RVU PA Program is dedicated to a safe learning environment. Students, faculty, staff, preceptors, and patients shall be treated with respect and dignity at all times. The Program expressly prohibits all conduct that

interferes with the learning and working environment or otherwise creates a hostile, intimidating, or unsafe situation. Members of the RVU community have the right to remain free from sexual, physical, or mental harassment. If a student feels they have been exposed to a hostile or otherwise offensive situation or environment, the student should refer to the University section of the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* for policies and procedures and immediately contact the Program Director or the University Title IX Coordinator.

Student Mistreatment

Rocky Vista University's Physician Assistant Program (RVU PA) recognizes its obligation to its students, faculty, staff, and community, to maintain the highest ethical standards. As part of this obligation, the RVU PA Program has a responsibility to ensure a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment free of belittlement, humiliation, or hostility. The PA Program is committed to providing an environment conducive to effective learning by creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and collegiality among faculty, students, staff, and our clinical partners. This policy was developed for all students, faculty, staff and preceptors to ensure this type of environment.

The RVU PA Program has adopted the following definition of student mistreatment: "Mistreatment, either intentional or unintentional, occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process." Examples of mistreatment include:

- public belittlement or humiliation
- verbal abuse (e.g., speaking to or about a person in an intimidating or bullying manner)
- physical harm or the threat of physical harm
- requests to perform personal services
- being subject to offensive sexist remarks, or being subjected to unwanted sexual advances (verbal or physical)
- retaliation or threats of retaliation against students
- discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, color, creed, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation, mental or physical disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic
- the use of grading or other forms of assessment in a punitive or discriminatory manner.

A suboptimal work or learning environment, although not mistreatment, can interfere with learning, compromise patient care, marginalize students, and cause significant distress among students. Student feedback about suboptimal learning environments should be given to Course Directors, to the Program Director as appropriate, or reported in student course evaluations.

If a student feels that they have been subject to mistreatment in the learning or clinical environment, the student should first communicate with the relevant student, faculty, or staff member in an effort to highlight and resolve the behaviors. Should such communication prove unsuccessful, or should the student feel, such communication would further jeopardize the student's success in the Program, the student shall then schedule an in-person meeting with the Program Director (or the Program Director's immediate supervisor, should the concern be with the Program Director). The Program Director or the Program Director's immediate supervisor shall investigate the student's concerns and formulate a plan that addresses and resolves the issue. Should this plan prove unsuccessful, the student should then refer to the *RVU Student Handbook and Catalog* for policies and procedures regarding processing student grievances. Additionally, the RVU PA Program is dedicated to a safe learning environment.

Students, faculty, staff, preceptors, and patients shall be treated with respect and dignity at all times. The Program expressly prohibits all conduct that interferes with the learning and working environment or otherwise creates a hostile, intimidating, or unsafe situation.

If a student feels they have been subject to mistreatment in the classroom or clinical environment, and wishes to make an anonymous report, concerns may be filed through EthicsPoint via phone (844.936.2729) or [online reporting](#).

If a student feels that they have witnessed or been subject to sexual misconduct, or discrimination or harassment based on sex, the student should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator. (720.874.2481; Idement@rvu.edu)

If any student complaint is unresolved, appeals may be heard by the provost or University President.

Discrimination/Harassment/Title IX

It is the policy of Rocky Vista University and all of its affiliated colleges and organizations not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion or creed, sex, gender, pregnancy, national or ethnic origin, non-disqualifying disability, age, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, political beliefs or affiliations, and to comply with all applicable federal and state non-discrimination, equal opportunity laws, orders and regulations, including remaining compliant and consistent with the Civil Rights Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

This policy on non-discrimination applies to admissions; enrollment; scholarships; loan programs; participation in University activities; employment; and access to, participation in, and treatment in all University centers, programs, and activities.

Students may report allegations of discrimination or harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. Reports are confidential. Investigation reports may be forwarded to the Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) to determine if other action needs to be taken.

Title IX Coordinator and Compliance Specialist Department of Planning and Assessment can be contacted at (720) 874-2481.

Non-Discrimination Statement

It is the policy of Rocky Vista University and all of its affiliated colleges and organizations not to engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion or creed, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, pregnancy, national or ethnic origin, non-disqualifying disability, age, ancestry, marital status, parental status, genetic information, sexual orientation, veteran status, political beliefs or affiliations, and to act in conformity with all applicable federal and state laws, orders and regulations, including the Civil Rights Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy on nondiscrimination applies to admissions, enrollment, scholarships, loan programs, participation in University activities, employment, and access to, participation in, and treatment in all University centers, programs, and activities.

Questions, comments, or complaints regarding discrimination or harassment may be directed to the Rocky Vista University Office of Compliance and/or the Title IX Coordinator (if discrimination is based on sex/gender-identity) at: compliance@rvu.edu or by calling 720-874-2481. Another option is to file a complaint through the [RVU EthicsPoint system](#).

Complaints may also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, [Office for Civil Rights \(here\)](#) or calling their Customer Service Hotline at (800) 421-3481.

Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs is responsible for student life at Rocky Vista University. Through services and co-curricular opportunities such as academic advising, career development, disability services, tutoring, activities, and student leadership, the Office of Student Affairs facilitates personal and professional development.

Lastly, the Office of Student Affairs cultivates a positive climate and culture dedicated to excellence with a personal touch unique to our community.

Contact the Office of Student Affairs at: studentaffairs@rvu.edu, or 720.795.9740

Tutoring

PA Program Advisors

All students are assigned a core PA faculty member as their Academic Advisor. Advisors are available as a resource for the student in the achievement of academic and professional goals throughout the Program.

Student Success Facilitator

The Program is committed to supporting students in achieving academic success and maintaining low levels of attrition. The Program uses several data points throughout the curriculum to identify learners at risk for academic struggle and places these learners with a student success coach. The Program's Student Success Facilitator may be assigned as early as the first semester of training, and/or at points during the didactic or clinical phase of instruction, as needed.

Student Tutor Services

Should tutoring services be needed, the Office of Student Affairs provides access to student-led tutoring sessions (either individual or group, depending on student need and overall demand).

The PA Program Director of Curriculum, Student Assessment and Promotions Committee, student advisor or Course Director may recommend tutoring for students needing additional academic services. If tutoring is recommended, they will be directed to an approved tutor for that course content.

Appendix II: RVU PA Program Graduate Competencies and Entrustable Professional Activities

Graduate Competencies

Patient Care: Provide patient-centered care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health.

Medical Knowledge ("Knowledge for Practice"): Demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological, and social-behavioral sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care.

Practice-Based Learning & Improvement: Demonstrate the ability to investigate and evaluate one's care of patients, to appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and life-long learning.

Interpersonal & Communication Skills: Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals.

Professionalism: Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles.

Systems-Based Practice: Demonstrate an awareness of, and responsiveness to, the larger context and system of healthcare, as well as the ability to call effectively on other resources in the system to provide optimal healthcare.

Interprofessional Collaboration: Demonstrate the ability to engage in an interprofessional team in a manner that optimizes safe, effective patient and population centered care.

Personal & Professional Development: Demonstrate the qualities required to sustain lifelong personal and professional growth.

EPA 1: Gather a History and Perform a Physical Examination

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 2: Gather essential and accurate information about patients and their conditions through history-taking, physical examination, and review of the medical record.

- PC 2.1 History-Taking
- PC 2.2 Physical Examination
- PC 2.3 Review of the Medical Record

Medical Knowledge (MK) 1: Demonstrate an investigatory and analytic approach to clinical situations.

Interpersonal Communication Skills (ICS) 1: Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Interpersonal Communication Skills (ICS) 5: Demonstrate appropriate responses to human emotions.

Professionalism (PRO) 1: Demonstrate behaviors that convey compassion, respect, integrity, and empathy for others.

Professionalism (PRO) 3: Demonstrate respect for patient privacy.

Professionalism (PRO) 4: Demonstrate respect for patient autonomy.

Professionalism (PRO) 6: Demonstrate sensitivity and openness to a diverse patient population.

EPA 2: Prioritize a Differential Diagnosis Following a Clinical Encounter

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 2: Gather essential and accurate information about patients and their conditions through history-taking, physical examination, and review of the medical record.

- PC 2.1 History-Taking
- PC 2.2 Physical Examination
- PC 2.3 Review of the Medical Record

Patient Care (PC) 3: Develop an appropriate patient assessment including diagnosis, differential diagnosis, and medical decision making.

Patient Care (PC) 5: Select, justify, and interpret clinical tests and imaging.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 1: Demonstrate an investigatory and analytic approach to clinical situations.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 2: Apply principles of basic science to patient care.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 3: Apply principles of clinical science to patient care.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 4: Apply principles of epidemiology to patients and populations.

Practice-Based Learning & Improvement (PBL) 1: Identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA).

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Personal and Professional Development (PPD) 6: Recognize and utilize resources in dealing with the ambiguity of clinical care.

EPA 3: Recommend and Interpret Common Diagnostic and Screening Tests

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 5: Select, justify, and interpret clinical tests and imaging.

Patient Care (PC) 7: Counsel and educate patients and their families.

Patient Care (PC) 9: Provide preventative healthcare services to patients, families, and communities.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 1: Demonstrate an investigatory and analytic approach to clinical situations.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 4: Apply principles of epidemiology to patients and populations.

Practice-Based Learning & Improvement (PBL) 7: Continually identify, analyze, and implement new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 2: Incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk benefit analysis in patient and/or population-based care.

EPA 4: Develop and Implement Patient Orders and Management Plans

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 2: Gather essential and accurate information about patients and their conditions through history-taking, physical examination, and review of the medical record.

- PC 2.1 History-Taking
- PC 2.2 Physical Examination
- PC 2.3 Review of the Medical Record

Patient Care (PC) 6: Develop and carry out patient management plans.

Patient Care (PC) 7: Counsel and educate patients and their families.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 5: Apply cultural and behavioral principles to patient care.

Practice-Based Learning & Improvement (PBL) 1: Identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA).

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 1: Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 1: Work effectively in various healthcare delivery settings and systems to coordinate patient care.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 4: Participate in identifying system errors and implementing potential systems solutions.

EPA 5: Document Clinical Encounters in the Patient Record

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 4: Organize and prioritize responsibilities to provide care that is safe, effective, and efficient.

Patient Care (PC) 5: Select, justify, and interpret clinical tests and imaging.

Patient Care (PC) 6: Develop and carry out patient management plans.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 1: Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 3: Maintain clear, accurate, timely, and legible medical records.

Professionalism (PRO) 4: Demonstrate respect for patient autonomy.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 1: Work effectively in various healthcare delivery settings and systems to coordinate patient care.

EPA 6: Provide an Oral Presentation of a Clinical Encounter

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 2: Gather essential and accurate information about patients and their conditions through history-taking, physical examination, and review of the medical record.

- PC 2.1 History-Taking
- PC 2.2 Physical Examination
- PC 2.3 Review of the Medical Record

Patient Care (PC) 5: Select, justify, and interpret clinical tests and imaging.

Practice-Based Learning & Improvement (PBL) 1: Identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA).

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 1: Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Professionalism (PRO) 1: Demonstrate behaviors that convey compassion, respect, integrity and empathy for others.

Professionalism (PRO) 3: Demonstrate respect for patient privacy.

Professionalism (PRO) 4: Demonstrate respect for patient autonomy.

Personal and Professional Development (PPD) 3: Practice flexibility and maturity in adjusting to change.

Personal and Professional Development (PPD) 5: Demonstrates self-confidence that puts patients, families, and members of the healthcare team at ease.

EPA 7: Formulate Clinical Questions and Retrieve Evidence to Advance Patient Care

Competencies:

Medical Knowledge (MK) 3: Apply principles of clinical science to patient care.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 4: Apply principles of epidemiology to patients and populations.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 1: Identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA).

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 3: Identify and perform learning activities that address one's learning and improvement goals.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 6: Locate, appraise, and assimilate evidence from scientific studies related to patients' health problems.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 7: Continually identify, analyze, and implement new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

EPA 8: Give or Receive a Patient Handover to Transition Care Responsibility

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 8: Provide appropriate referral of patients, including ensuring continuity of care.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 5: Incorporate feedback into daily practice.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 7: Continually identify, analyze, and implement new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Professionalism (PRO) 3: Demonstrate respect for patient privacy.

Professionalism (PRO) 4: Demonstrate respect for patient autonomy.

Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) 3: Participate effectively in different team roles to provide population- based and patient-centered care.

EPA 9: Collaborate as a Member of an Interprofessional Team

Competencies:

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 5: Demonstrate appropriate responses to human emotions.

Professionalism (PRO) 1: Demonstrate behaviors that convey compassion, respect, integrity, and empathy for others.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 1: Work effectively in various healthcare delivery settings and systems to coordinate patient care.

Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) 1: Collaborate with other health professionals to promote a climate of mutual respect and trust.

Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) 2: Recognize the roles of various members of the interprofessional healthcare team and the scope of their practice.

Interprofessional Collaboration (IPC) 3: Participate effectively in different team roles to provide population- based and patient-centered care.

EPA 10: Recognize a Patient Requiring Urgent or Emergent Care and Initiate Evaluation and Management

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 1: Perform basic medical procedures required for patient care with assistance or direct supervision.

Patient Care (PC) 2: Gather essential and accurate information about patients and their conditions through history-taking, physical examination, and review of the medical record.

- PC 2.1 History –Taking
- PC 2.2 Physical Examination

Patient Care (PC) 3: Develop an appropriate patient assessment including diagnosis, differential diagnosis, and medical decision making.

Patient Care (PC) 4: Organize and prioritize responsibilities to provide care that is safe, effective, and efficient.

Patient Care (PC) 5: Select, justify, and interpret clinical tests and imaging.

Patient Care (PC) 6: Develop and carry out patient management plans.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 1: Identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA).

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 4: Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in difficult conversations.

EPA 11: Obtain Informed Consent for Tests and/or Procedures

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 4: Organize and prioritize responsibilities to provide care that is safe, effective, and efficient.

Patient Care (PC) 6: Develop and carry out patient management plans.

Patient Care (PC) 7: Counsel and educate patients and their families.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 1: Communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 3: Maintain clear, accurate, timely, and legible medical records.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 5: Demonstrate appropriate responses to human emotions.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 2: Incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk benefit analysis in patient and/or population-based care.

Personal & Professional Development (PPD) 5: Demonstrates self-confidence that puts patients, families, and members of the healthcare team at ease.

EPA 12: Perform General Procedures

Competencies:

Patient Care (PC) 1: Perform basic medical procedures required for patient care with assistance or direct supervision.

Patient Care (PC) 7: Counsel and educate patients and their families.

Medical Knowledge (MK) 2: Apply principles of basic science to patient care.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 3: Maintain clear, accurate, timely, and legible medical records.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 4: Demonstrate sensitivity, honesty, and compassion in difficult conversations.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 5: Demonstrate appropriate responses to human emotions.

Professionalism (PRO) 7: Demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 2: Incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk benefit analysis in patient and/or population-based care.

Personal and Professional Development (PPD) 5: Demonstrates self-confidence that puts patients, families, and members of the healthcare team at ease.

EPA 13: Identify System Failures and Contribute to a Culture of Safety and Improvement

Competencies:

Medical Knowledge (MK) 1: Demonstrate an investigatory and analytic approach to clinical situations.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 4: Systematically analyze practice using quality improvement methods and identify solutions with the goal of practice improvement.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBL) 7: Continually identify, analyze, and implement new knowledge, guidelines, standards, technologies, products, or services that have been demonstrated to improve outcomes.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS) 2: Communicate effectively with healthcare professionals as part of a healthcare team.

Professionalism (PRO) 4: Demonstrate respect for patient autonomy.

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 3: Advocate for quality patient care and optimal patient care systems

Systems-Based Practice (SBP) 4: Participate in identifying system errors and implementing potential systems solutions.

Appendix III: The RVU PA Program's Competency-based Curriculum

The RVU PA Program's curriculum is adapted from a competency-based model. This curriculum focuses on outcomes. Graduate outcomes are identified based on core clinical tasks grounded in patient safety. Each clinical task is known as an Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA), and each is associated with professional competencies – the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to complete each task. Advancing sequencing of competencies supports learner progression from novice to competent physician assistant. Learning experiences resemble the practice environment and are tied to an essential graduate ability. Clinical teaching emphasizes learning through experience and application, not just knowledge acquisition. The progression of learners is identified via multiple frequent assessments held throughout the curriculum, to confirm a threshold level of competence is reached prior to graduation and is sufficient for clinical practice.

The ability to measure competence in students promotes confidence—for students, program faculty, clinical preceptors, and the public, with patient safety being the ultimate goal.

Competency-based models offer the following additional benefits to students:

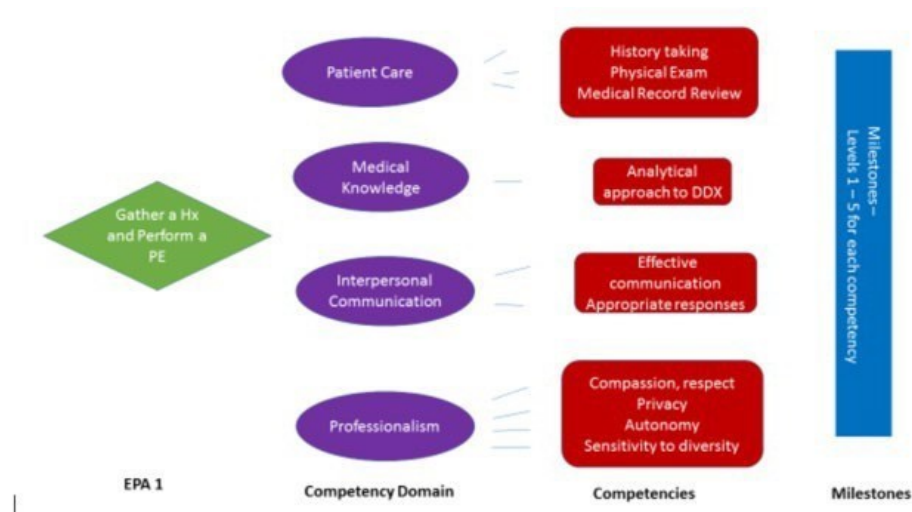


Figure 1. Example of EPA 1 – Gather a history and perform a physical exam - and its associated competencies.

Takes learning from knowledge acquisition to knowledge application;

- Less memorization and more hands-on experiences

Allows for multiple measures of performance;

- Frequent assessments with regular feedback regarding performance; fewer “high stakes” exams

Measures student performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria.

- Expectations are identified “up-front” through objectives and use of scoring rubrics.

There are three major, interrelated components associated with competency-based curricula:

Entrustable professional activities (EPAs);

- Tasks or responsibilities performed unsupervised once competence is attained

Competencies;

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to perform an EPA Milestones.

- Description of the developmental steps (levels) needed to reach competence
- Students must reach level 3 or beyond, for each competency, by the time of graduation



Expectations for student progress are identified in all course syllabi—didactic and clinical—with milestones for each level of competence serving as rubrics for assessment. Timeframes for achieving competence are delineated for each competency and EPA through a Milestones and Progress grid - or MAP. (*Refer to Table 1*)

Clinical Rotations

The RVU PA program clinical curriculum supports competency development through its rotation offerings.

Rotations may range in length between 2 and 10 weeks. Locations may include Denver-Metro greater Colorado areas (e.g. Ft. Collins, Colorado Springs, Alamosa, etc.), Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, and Kansas.

Appendix IV: Professional Development Assessment Tool (PDAT) Rubric

Professional Development Assessment Tool (PDAT Rubric)

Competency:	Meets Level 1	Approaching Level 2	Meets Level 2	Approaching Level 3	Meets Level 3
PRO-9: Demonstrates basic professional responsibility Expected behaviors include: •Positive attitude •Dresses according to accepted standards •Timely (on time for class/clinic and submitting assignments on time) •Academic integrity •Reliable (i.e. informing of status changes, possible concerns, consistently fulfills obligations) •Communicate effectively, both verbally and written (i.e. appropriate tone, timely responses, respectful, etc.)	The learner rarely exhibits basic professional responsibility	The learner inconsistently exhibits basic professional responsibility	The learner consistently exhibits basic professional responsibility	The learner consistently exhibits basic professional responsibility AND The learner intermittently takes initiative to proactively seek to participate in the learning process in a professional manner	The learner consistently takes initiative and proactively seeks to participate in the learning process in a professional manner

PPD-3: Practice flexibility and maturity in adjusting to change Expected behaviors include: •Emotional maturity, stability (i.e. resiliency, appropriate responses despite emotional triggers) •Altruistic (i.e. concern for others' wellbeing above your own) •Can learn and function in a variety of settings appropriately •Self-aware/holds self-accountable •Adaptability – to new information, changing environment, challenging situations	The learner rarely exhibits emotional stability, adaptability, maturity, empathy, and mental stamina.	The learner inconsistently exhibits emotional stability, adaptability, maturity, empathy, and mental stamina.	The learner consistently exhibits emotional stability, adaptability, maturity, empathy, and mental stamina.	The learner consistently exhibits emotional stability, adaptability, maturity, empathy, and mental stamina. AND The learner intermittently proactively seeks opportunities for growth in emotional stability, adaptability, maturity, empathy, and mental stamina	The learner consistently proactively seeks opportunities for growth in emotional stability, adaptability, maturity, empathy, and mental stamina.
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PRO-1: Demonstrate behaviors that convey compassion, respect, integrity, and empathy for others. <i>Expected behaviors include:</i> •Respect for students, faculty and staff (clinical and didactic) •Collaborative/cooperative •Engaged •No unnecessary conversations in class/labs/practicums/etc.	The learner rarely shows respect for other learners.	The learner inconsistently shows respect for other learners.	The learner consistently shows respect for other learners.	The learner consistently shows respect for other learners. AND The learner inconsistently takes initiative and proactively seeks to participate in the learning process while showing respect for others (i.e. faculty, staff, other learners, etc.)	The learner consistently takes initiative and proactively seeks to participate in the learning process while showing respect for others (i.e. faculty, staff, other learners, etc.)
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Appendix V: RVU PA Technical Standards Required for Admission, Matriculation, and Progression; Safe Student Policy

Technical Standards

Introduction

Rocky Vista University (RVU) maintains a strong institutional commitment to equal educational opportunities for qualified applicants and students with disabilities. We collaborate with students to develop innovative ways to ensure accessibility and strive to create a respectful, accountable culture through our confidential and specialized disability support. Technical standards are required to engage in the program fully. Students' competency related to learning objectives throughout and pertaining to their level of education will be addressed by the individual program. These technical standards are not intended to deter any candidate for whom reasonable accommodation will allow the fulfillment of the complete curriculum. RVU encourages students with disabilities to disclose and seek accommodations.

Seeking Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations

Prospective and enrolled students seeking accommodations engage in an interactive and confidential process with a Disability Officer to determine reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access. This process is informed by RVU's commitment to inclusive excellence and the knowledge that students with varied types of disability can become successful healthcare professionals. Students are encouraged to submit requests for reasonable accommodations as early as possible, given the time required to process those requests. Accommodations may not

be applied retroactively and may not fundamentally alter the nature and objectives of the program. Additionally, accommodations are generally not provided while requests are being reviewed/processed. Therefore, early disclosure is strongly encouraged for those requesting disability-related adjustments or modifications.

If you are an applicant, accepted student, or enrolled student with a disability who may require accommodations, we encourage you to contact the Office of Disability Services via ADAACcommodations@rvu.edu. Additional information regarding disability resources at RVU is available on our [website](#).

Fulfilling Technical Standards

RVU approaches technical standards and accommodations on a non-discriminatory basis that is consistent with our values of equity and inclusion. This approach is also in accordance with legal requirements as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. To matriculate and remain in an RVU educational program, the specific program's technical standards (delineated below) must be met with or without reasonable accommodations (i.e., students who have and students who do not have accommodations must meet all applicable technical standards). Students must be able to participate in all required activities necessary to meet the educational objectives of each course and of the collective program. While enrolled at RVU, fulfilling the technical standards does not guarantee that an applicant, student, or graduate will be able to fulfill the technical requirements of any specific residency program, employment, future training programs, or other pursued opportunities.

Immunizations

Students must satisfy all immunization requirements at the time of admission and throughout their time at RVU. Failure to do so will prevent matriculation or, in the case of an enrolled student, lead to dismissal. For specific information, please see "Health Records/Immunizations" in the Student Educational Records section of this Handbook.

Observation

Students must be able to obtain, gather, and synthesize information in didactic and clinical settings. This includes but is not limited to, lectures, lecture supplemental materials, labs, physical exams, interviews, and raw diagnostic representations of physiologic data (e.g., radiology images, echocardiograms, ECGs, lab results, and microscopic images).

Communication

Students must be able to communicate with others to elicit information, detect mood and activity changes, and establish a therapeutic relationship. Students must exhibit interpersonal skills to communicate with others accurately. Students must be able to clearly, accurately, and sensitively record information obtained through communication. Students must demonstrate effective communication, participation, and collaboration with all healthcare and educational team members across various communication mediums (e.g., in-person, Zoom, written). English is the primary language of the RVU PA program curriculum, and students are expected to have a level of proficiency that eliminates language as an access barrier.

Motor

Due to the clinical nature of the RVU PA program, all students must be able to coordinate gross and fine muscular movements, balance, and equilibrium. They must also be able to complete a comprehensive physical examination, perform diagnostic maneuvers, provide general care to patients, and provide/direct emergency treatments.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

Students must possess conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities, including measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem-solving, the critical skill necessitated by all RVU programs, requires these intellectual abilities. In addition, students must be able to observe and comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationship of structures. Students must be present, engage, and participate in all required activities necessary to achieve the activity objectives and outcomes. Students must be capable of extended periods of intense concentration and attention.

Behavior and Social Abilities

Students must have the emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good insight and judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the demands of the educational program. Students must have the capacity to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with members of the internal and external RVU community (e.g., peers, faculty, staff, patients, and healthcare professionals). Students must be able to function as part of a healthcare team and participate in a multi-disciplinary environment. Students must be able to accept constructive feedback, demonstrate accountability, and take responsibility for improving personal performance and team interactions. Students must be able to tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. Students must adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and professionalism, and function and perform in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical nature of the RVU PA program.

Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

Students must maintain, demonstrate, and display high ethical and moral behaviors commensurate with being productive, compassionate, and professional members of society in all interactions (e.g., faculty, staff, peers, patients, and the public). Students are expected to have the cognitive ability to understand the legal and ethical aspects of the PA profession. They must recognize the limitations of their skills, authority, and authorization within the practice context.

Safe Student Policy

If an RVU Physician Assistant Program student is suspected or determined to be unsafe due to a temporary or permanent inability to meet the Technical Standards, the Program's Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) is required to act to ensure a safe environment for students, patients, and other personnel. It is the duty of all faculty, students, and staff to report to the Chair of the SAPC (or their designee) concerns that a student is acting in a manner that could jeopardize patient safety. These observations may occur within or outside of a clinical practice environment.

Upon receipt of a report of potential unsafe behavior, the Chair of the SAPC (or their designee) will investigate and determine whether immediate action is necessary to remove the student from a clinical and/or academic environment. Should removal from either the clinical or academic environment be deemed necessary, the Chair will convene a meeting of the SAPC to determine what action is most appropriate.

Actions may include, but are not limited to, external professional evaluation from a peer assistance group

such as the Colorado Physician Health Program (CPHP), remediation, referral to the SAPC for consideration of a professionalism violation, restriction of practice, removing/transferring a student from a clinical rotation, restricting a student from clinical rotations, and/or other actions necessary to address the unsafe situation or concerns. Professional evaluations may include the assessment of the student in question by a variety of professionals including healthcare providers, mental healthcare providers, drug and alcohol counselors, English as a Second Language instructors, the campus Disability Resource Officer, and/or other professionals as deemed appropriate by the SAPC.

It is the student's responsibility to undergo evaluation if required. If the student does not complete the requirements, they will not be allowed to proceed in the curriculum and their refusal will be referred to the SAPC for review.

The SAPC in conjunction with the student's advisor will serve to assist the student in arranging for the appropriate evaluation (or ongoing evaluation) or any other remedial actions required. Other remedial actions may include, but are not limited to, taking no further action, modifying the student's educational plan, requiring mandatory changes in student behavior, requiring the student to take a leave of absence from the program to address specific concerns, or withdrawing the student from their educational experience.

For any issues arising out of the application of this policy, the student may request a review by the Program Director by written request within five (5) business days of learning of the proposed action. During the appeals process, the Program Director will not reconsider the facts and statements upon which the original decision was based but will consider only:

1. Whether new information regarding the status of the student has been discovered, previously unknown to the student or to the Program;
2. Whether there is an allegation of discrimination as determined by the appropriate Institutional Office;

3. Whether there is evidence of a procedural error in the SAPC's review that prejudiced the student's ability to receive a fair decision; or
4. Whether there is evidence that the SAPC acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

The Program Director, or designee, may affirm or reject the SAPC's decision or refer the matter back to the SAPC for further consideration. The Program Director's decision is final.

Appendix VI: The Physician Assistant Profession

The Physician Assistant Concept

In the early 1960s, physicians and educators recognized the declining numbers of general practitioner physicians and a maldistribution as physicians moved away from rural areas. Dr. Charles Hudson was one of the first physicians to conceptualize the physician assistant, presenting the model to the American Medical Association in 1961. In 1965, Dr. Eugene A. Stead, Jr., launched the first physician assistant program at Duke University and the first physician assistant graduated on October 6, 1967.

Physician assistants (PAs) are clinical professionals academically and clinically using the medical model developed for physician. PAs are licensed clinicians who make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive, and health maintenance services. They are committed to providing team-based patient care, working with physicians and other members of the healthcare team to provide the optimal care for patients. The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings, while their non-clinical roles may include education, research, and administration.

PAs are educated and trained in intensive education programs accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of PAs (AAPA), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, the American Medical Association, the PA Education Association (PAEA), the Society of Emergency Medicine PAs, the Association of PAs in Psychiatry, the American Association of Surgical PAs, the Society of Critical Care Medicine PAs, the Society of PAs in Family Medicine, the Society of PAs in Pediatrics, and the Association of PAs in Obstetrics & Gynecology all collaborate with the ARC-PA to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for entry-level education of physician assistants.

The professional curriculum for PA education includes basic medical, behavioral, and social sciences; introduction to clinical medicine and patient assessment; supervised clinical practice; and health policy and professional practice issues. Core clinical rotations include internal medicine, family medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, and behavioral health. Students also complete elective clinical rotations which may include surgical and medical specialties.

Upon graduation, PAs take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination® (PANCE) developed by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners. The Board of Directors of NCCPA includes Certified PAs, physicians and representatives from the public. Graduation from an accredited physician assistant program and passage of the PANCE are required for state licensure.

PAs continue learning in the clinical work environment and through continuing medical education. The PA scope of practice grows and shifts over time with advanced or specialized knowledge, with changes or advances in the medical profession overall, or with changes in the PA's practice setting or specialty. A number of clinical postgraduate PA educational programs have developed across the U.S to provide practicing PAs with optional advanced clinical education and training in medical and surgical specialties. The responsibilities of a physician assistant depend on the practice setting, education and experience of the PA, and on this licensing state's laws and regulations.

Certification of Physician Assistants

As the concepts of new health practitioners gained acceptance, state legislatures began to turn their attention to formulating statutes to incorporate these professionals into the framework of the health care delivery system. The development of a nationally standardized mechanism for evaluating PA proficiency became desirable, particularly in those states that mandated that health care providers could practice only after their credentials had been reviewed by the appropriate regulatory agency. With this in mind the American Medical Association and the National Board of Medical Examiners developed a national certifying examination for physician assistants and the first PA certifying examination was administered in 1973.

The original members of the newly formed independent National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) included representatives from: American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Physician Assistants, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, Association of American Medical Colleges, Federation of State Medical Boards of the U.S., National Medical Association, Physician Assistant Education Association, and U.S. Department of Defense.

The NCCPA is charged with assuring the public that physician assistants are competent. This is accomplished through entry level and recertification examinations and acquisition of continuing medical education. Current certification requirements for physician assistants include:

Graduating from an accredited physician assistant program;

Obtaining a passing score on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination® (PANCE);

Completing approved continuing medical education every two years;

Obtaining a passing score on the Physician Assistant National Recertifying Exam® (PANRE) or the Physician Assistant National Recertifying Exam-Longitudinal Assessment (PANRE-LA®) every 10 years.

In summary, the PA profession is committed to ensuring the highest quality of healthcare by following an organized plan of program accreditation, certification of graduate competency, and continuing medical education.

Professional Title Change

The PA scope of practice has evolved since the inception of the profession in 1965. As a result, a perceived gap between the profession's title and the role that PAs assume in day-to-day medical practice became evident. In 2018, the national professional society for PAs, and the Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) began a PA Title Change Investigation to address the perceived gap. The results of the investigation were discussed and debated by the AAPA House of Delegates (HOD), with input from the NCCPA, the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) and the Accreditation Review Commission for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). In May 2021 the AAPA HOD passed a resolution affirming "physician associate" as the official title of the profession. The AAPA officially changed to the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA).

The NCCPA acknowledges the May 2021 decision by the AAPA House of Delegates to change the name of the profession from "physician assistant" to "physician associate. NCCPA regards the titles "physician assistant," "physician associate," and "PA" as synonymous.

PA practice, including the name of the profession, is regulated at the state level. NCCPA also recognizes that the title of the PA profession, the PA-C credential, the national certifying body, and the certifying exam are specifically named in many state statutes and regulations, as well as federal regulations. Transitioning of the PA title will take time and require state legislative and regulatory updates. The Physician Assistant title will remain until the state in which the PA is practicing officially updates a title change to Physician Associate.

The NCCPA, ARC-PA and PAEA maintain "physician assistant" in their organizational title. A professional title change does not impact the PA scope of practice, which is determined by the PA's education, clinical practice experience, practice setting and state laws and regulations. "Physician Associate", "Physician Assistant" and "PA" are synonymous and reflect the professional title.

The Physician Assistant Guidelines for Ethical Conduct (AAPA: *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession. Adopted 2000, amended 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2018, reaffirmed 2013, 2023.*)

The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) recognizes its responsibility to aid the profession in maintaining high standards in the provision of quality and accessible health care services. The PA profession has revised its code of ethics several times since the profession began. Although the fundamental principles underlying the ethical care of patients have not changed, the societal framework in which those principles are applied is constantly changing. Economic pressures, social pressures of church and state on the healthcare system, technological advances, and changing patient demographics continually transform the landscape in which PAs practice.

Previous codes of the profession were brief lists of tenets for PAs to live by in their professional lives. The AAPA has departed from that format by describing how these tenets apply to PA practice. Each situation is unique. Individual PAs must use their best judgment in a given situation while considering the preferences of the patient and the healthcare team, clinical information, ethical principles, and legal obligations.

Four main bioethical principles broadly guided the development of these guidelines: patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

Autonomy, strictly speaking, means self-rule. Patients have the right to make autonomous decisions and choices, and PAs should respect these decisions and choices.

Beneficence means that PAs should act in the patient's best interest. In certain cases, respecting the patient's autonomy and acting in their best interests may be difficult to balance.

Nonmaleficence means to do no harm, to impose no unnecessary or unacceptable burden upon the patient.

Justice means that patients in similar circumstances should receive similar care. Justice also applies to norms for the fair distribution of resources, risks, and costs.

PAs are expected to behave both legally and morally. They should know and understand the local, state and federal laws governing their practice. Likewise, they should understand the ethical responsibilities of being a healthcare professional. Legal requirements and ethical expectations will not always be in agreement. Generally speaking, the law describes minimum standards of acceptable behavior, and ethical principles delineate the highest moral standards of behavior.

Statement of Values of the PA Profession

PAs hold as their primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings.

PAs uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

PAs recognize and promote the value of diversity.

PAs do not discriminate; PAs treat equally all persons who seek their care.

PAs hold in confidence the patient-specific information shared in the course of practicing medicine.

PAs actively seek to expand their knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine. PAs assess their personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve their practice of medicine.

PAs work with other members of the healthcare team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.

PAs use their knowledge and experience to contribute to a healthy community and the improvement of public health.

PAs respect their professional relationship with all members of the healthcare team.

PAs share and expand clinical and professional knowledge with PAs and PA students.

Physician Assistant Professional Oath

I pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings. I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.

I will recognize and promote the value of diversity. I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.

I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.

I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.

I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.

I will work with other members of the healthcare team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.

I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.

I will respect my professional relationship with physicians and all other healthcare professionals.

I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.

Physician Assistant Professional Organizations

American Academy of Physician Associates 2318 Mill Rd., Ste.1300, Alexandria, VA 22314 703/836-2272;
<http://www.aapa.org/>

Founded in 1968, the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) is the national professional society for PAs (physician associates/physician assistants). It represents a profession of more than 168,000 PAs across all medical and surgical specialties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and the uniformed services.

The AAPA's purpose and mission is to ensure the professional growth, personal excellence, and recognition of PAs, and to support their efforts to enable them to improve the quality, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness of patient-centered healthcare.

The Academy is the official organization of the PA profession and is recognized as such by other medical associations and federal, state, and local governments, serving as an advocate for PAs and PA students.

The [Board of Directors](#) is AAPA's governing body, responsible for AAPA's strategic, administrative, and financial management. The [House of Delegates](#) is AAPA's policy-making body. The HOD represents the interests of the membership, exercising the sole authority on behalf of the Academy to enact policies establishing the collective values, philosophies, and principles of the PA profession. Independent organizations affiliated with the AAPA include Constituent Organizations (COs) which provide local continuing medical education programs, networking opportunities and advocacy for PAs. The AAPA COs include: state and federal service chapters; PA specialty organizations; PA special interest groups; and PA special interest caucuses. Other AAPA bodies include the Physician Assistant Foundation and the Student Academy, both with their own boards and committees.

The AAPA partners with the 3 other national organizations related to PAs in providing resources to support PAs and the PA profession: The National Commission for Certification of PAs (NCCPA); the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA); and the PA Education Association (PAEA).

Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Associates

950 N. Washington St. Alexandria, VA 22314-1552 (703) 836-2272

Email: students@aapa.org <http://saaapa.aapa.org>

The Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Associates (SAAAPA) is a unique part of AAPA, as it was established in 1978 with its own bylaws, a Student Board of Directors, and a legislative and policy-making body. SAAAPA's members consist of the registered student society at each accredited PA program. Student members of

SAAAPA are members of the AAPA. Student voices are heard through their PA program's student society representative to the Student Academy's Assembly of Representatives (AOR), which is SAAAPA's legislative and policy-making body. The AOR meets annually at the AAPA annual conference.

In addition to representing students at the local, regional and national level, SAAAPA works with the PA Foundation to provide patient-centered, community-based health projects through grants, fellowships and scholarships for students.

Student membership dues to the AAPA and SAAAPA are one time and expire 4 months after the student's graduation.

Specialty Organizations and Caucuses

PA specialty organizations and caucuses consist of PAs, PA students and individuals who share a common interest in clinical specialties or healthcare issues. Many of these organizations offer student benefits, including scholarships. A current list of specialty organizations and caucuses can be found at aapa.org. Physician Assistant Education Association

655 K Street NW, Ste 700, Washington, DC 20001

703/548-5538; <http://www.paeaonline.org/>

The PA Education Association (PAEA) is the only national organization in the United States representing PA educational programs. Founded in 1972, the PAEA provides services for faculty at its member programs, as well as to applicants, students, and other stakeholders. Its mission is to advance excellence in PA education through leadership, scholarship, equity, and inclusion. The PAEA goals are:

Be the primary source of educational resources and professional development for PA educators.

Educate and inspire programs to prepare the next generation of PAs who deliver quality patient care and are representative of our nation's population.

Eliminate systemic racism and bias in PA education.

Sustain and strengthen a positive, healthy organizational culture and operational backbone.

The PAEA is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors, elected by the membership. Voting members are Member Programs consisting of PA educational programs accredited by ARC-PA and are represented by a program representative. Voting members provide input on PAEA policy and initiatives, supporting alignment of policy changes with the PAEA's broader strategy. Board Committees, taskforces and work groups composed of PAEA members serve to address policy, strategic thinking and initiatives pertinent to PAs and PA education.

The PAEA created and maintains the Central Application Service for PAs (CASPA), by which prospective applicants complete one secure online application to be sent to the PA programs of their choice. This application service has been available to PA programs and prospective students since 2001.

PAEA supports student, faculty, and program resources essential for maintaining high quality education of PAs. These include objective, comprehensive self-assessment tools for student and curricular evaluation: PA Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT); End of Rotation exams; and End of Curriculum exams. It also publishes study resources for PA re-certification, sponsors educational sessions for educators and students, workshops for specialized faculty education, and sponsors grant programs for faculty and students.

Colorado Academy of Physician Associates **720/880-7657**; <http://www.coloradopas.org/>.

The Colorado Academy of Physician Associates (CAPA) is the AAPA constituent organization that represents PAs in Colorado. CAPA is a non-profit organization established in 1976 to promote the PA profession to Colorado's lay and medical community, advocate for PA practice and access to quality healthcare, and provide high-quality continuing medical education for PAs.

CAPA represents Colorado PAs before the Colorado State Legislature and the Colorado Medical Board, as we as monitor their decisions and disseminate information. CAPA also serves as a resource for companies, medical education programs, and community programs.

A Board of Directors acts on behalf of the PA members and governs the organization. CAPA Board of Directors (BOD) consists of the following voting members: President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasure, Chief Delegate, five (5) Directors-at-Large and one (1) Student Director. Non-voting BOD members consist of Committee Chairs, Delegates, and Student Representatives. CAPA Student Representatives from each Colorado PA program are elected by their respective classmates and are members of the CAPA Student Affairs Committee. CAPA members elect delegates to serve in the AAPA's House of Delegates and attend the annual HOD meetings.