

Technical Standards

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Effective: November 22, 2022

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Related ARC-PA Standards:

A3.13b

UC San Diego

School of Medicine

Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program

Technical Standards Policy & Procedure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define, publish, and make readily available technical standard requirements for matriculation and continuous enrollment in the PAE program.

The technical standards were developed by program faculty and staff in collaboration with the School of Medicine, the Office for Students with Disabilities, and a formal audit consultation with Docs with Disabilities Initiative.

Related Forms & Documents

- Technical Standards Learner Attestation Form

ARC-PA Standards:

A3.13b

POLICY

This policy defines the requirements for an individual to successfully matriculate into and complete the University of California San Diego School of Medicine Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program curriculum. Learners admitted to the program must possess the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to complete the core educational requirements to achieve the Master of Advanced Study in Physician Assistant Studies degree (MAS-PAS). The following abilities and characteristics, defined as technical standards, are requirements for admission, retention, progression, and graduation.

All candidates for the MAS-PAS degree must be able to meet these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation.

PROCEDURES

The following procedural guidelines ensure continuous improvement and evaluation of program policy.

Acceptance

At the time of acceptance to the program, learners are provided a copy of the Technical Standards for review.

Matriculation

During matriculation week (aka, Arrive and Thrive), learners receive an instructional session focused on the Technical Standards policy. The instructional session includes opportunities for learners to discuss and clarify policy details. By the end of the session, learners will be asked to acknowledge and attest to their understanding of the policy.

Progression to Clinical Phase

During the Didactic Capstone, learners receive an instructional session focused on the Technical Standards policy. The instructional session serves as a refresher and includes opportunities for learners to discuss and clarify policy details and any changes made to the policy since matriculation. By the end of the session, learners will be asked to re-acknowledge and re-attest to their understanding of the policy.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

The Technical Standards policy will be periodically reviewed and updated. Feedback will be actively collected from Physician Assistant Education learners, faculty, and staff. Changes made to the policy will be communicated to learners in writing and published in the Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Learner Manual.

Inquiry

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Associate Dean/Program Director.

Reasonable Accommodations

The mission, vision, and core values which include clinical competence, collaboration, discovery, diversity, and excellence, translate to all learners, including those with disabilities. The program actively collaborates with learners to develop innovative ways to ensure accessibility and creates a respectful, accountable culture through confidential and specialized disability support. UC San Diego School of Medicine is committed to excellence in accessibility and encourages learners with disabilities to disclose and seek accommodations. After reviewing the technical standards, learners who determine that they require a reasonable accommodation to engage in the program fully should contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) to discuss their accommodations needs confidentially. Given the clinical nature of the physician assistant program, time may be necessary to create and implement the accommodations. Accommodations are never retroactive; therefore, timely requests are essential and encouraged.

To be eligible for accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to an instructional activity, facility, program or service that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity. Both the ADA and Section 504 define disability as: (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such a condition. In order to respect your privacy and ensure a thoughtful interactive process please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities.

UC San Diego Links	Address
Office for Students with Disabilities	https://osd.ucsd.edu
Steps for Successful Transition	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/steps-for-a-successful-transition.html
Requesting Accommodations	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/registering.html
Types of Accommodations	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/accommodation-types.html
Student Veterans	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/veterans.html
Forms & Guidelines	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/forms.html
Disability-Based Grievance Procedures	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/appeal-process.html
Student Experiences	https://osd.ucsd.edu/students/testimonials.html
Useful Links	Address
Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)	https://www.ahead.org/home
Coalition of Disability Access in Health Science Education	https://www.hsmcoalition.org
Docs With Disabilities Initiative	https://www.docswithdisabilities.org
Docs With Disabilities Podcast	https://www.docswithdisabilities.org/podcast

Technical Standards

Information Acquisition

The learner should be able to:

- Acquire information from demonstrations and experiences in courses, such as lectures, groups, and physical demonstrations.
- Acquire information from written documents and computer systems (e.g., literature searches and data retrieval).
- Identify information presented in accessible images from paper, slides, and videos with audio descriptions and transparencies.
- Recognize and assess patient changes in mood, activity, cognition, and verbal and non-verbal communication.

Communication and Observation

The learner should be able to:

- Communicate with patients to elicit information and succinctly and effectively document changes in mood and activity.
- Perceive and appropriately respond to patients to establish a therapeutic relationship and to communicate in person and in writing via English.
- Establish rapport and maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with individuals, families, and groups from various social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.
- Obtain information from lectures, demonstrations, and experiments.
- Assess a patient and evaluate findings accurately. These skills require using vision, hearing, and touch or the functional equivalent.

Motor

The learner should be able to:

- Possess the capacity to perform a physical examination and perform diagnostic maneuvers.
- Execute some motor movements required to provide general care to patients and provide or direct emergency treatment of patients. Such actions require gross and fine muscular movements, balance, and equilibrium coordination.
- Possess psychomotor skills necessary to provide or assist in patient care and perform or assist with procedures and treatments.
- Practice safely and appropriately providing patient care and assessment in emergencies and life support procedures and perform universal precautions against contamination.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative

The learner should be able to:

- Assimilate detailed and complex information presented in both didactic and clinical coursework and engage in problem-solving.
- Measure, calculate, analyze, and synthesize subjective and objective data.
- Comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.
- Read and search the medical literature independently and incorporate findings into the diagnosis and treatment of patients.
- Adapt to different learning environments and modalities.

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Social and Behavioral

The learner should be able to:

- Exhibit sufficient maturity and emotional stability required to utilize their intellectual abilities fully.
- Exercise good judgment and prompt completion of responsibilities associated with the diagnosis and care of patients.
- Exhibit integrity, honesty, professionalism, and compassion, and are expected to display a spirit of cooperation and teamwork.
- Tolerate physically taxing workloads, function effectively under stress, and adapt to changing environments.
- Display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in patients' clinical problems.
- Contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments and accept constructive feedback from others.
- Take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes.
- Demonstrate compassion for others, a consciousness of social values, and sufficient interpersonal skills to interact positively with people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, expression, sexual orientation, disability, and belief systems.

Professionalism and Ethics

The learner should be able to:

- Maintain the highest level of professional behavior.
- Possess and demonstrate the emotional maturity needed to participate fully in training.
- Exhibit regular, reliable, and punctual attendance at all learning events and clinical assignments, understanding that this may require physical presence during the day, evening, or overnight hours and any day of the week, often with very early morning reporting times.
- Maintain and display ethical and moral behaviors commensurate with the role of a physician assistant in all interactions with patients, faculty, staff, clinical team members, fellow learners, and the public.
- Always understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within the law and ethical standards of the medical profession.
- Travel to and live in remote, rural, or distant locations.
- Provide and maintain reliable transportation.
- Secure housing and plan for added expenses.
- Demonstrate intent and desire to follow program rules, codes of conduct, and all UC San Diego policies.

Assessments and Evaluations

To evaluate competence, the program employs periodic assessment in various formats, including oral, written, and practical, as an essential component of the curriculum. Successful completion of these assessments is required of all learners as a condition for continued progress through the curriculum.

Clinical Performance

Demonstration of clinical competence is of fundamental importance to the program. Attending to the needs and care of the patient is tantamount to the practice of medicine. The process of preceptor evaluations of a learner's clinical performance is an integral and essential component of the curriculum. In addition, learners must meet program expectations for each clinical experience.

Criminal Background & Drug Testing

Background Checks

The Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program does not require a criminal background check prior to matriculating into the program and will not have access to criminal background data submitted to CASPA for programs outside the state of California. However, applicants should review the following:

- An admitted learner's ability to complete the program successfully and gain the appropriate licensure could be negatively impacted by their criminal history.
- Supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE) are a critical part of the program's requirements for graduation. Many clinical sites will not place a learner on a clinical rotation unless they have successfully passed a criminal background check. Background check results that limit the program's ability to secure SCPEs may prevent a student from progressing or graduating from the program.
- As a part of the licensing process, many states require that graduates undergo a comprehensive background investigation. This process requires graduates of the program to disclose all past criminal convictions, even if they have been set aside or expunged.

Criminal background checks, including LiveScan, are required for state licensure in California. The California Physician Assistant Board, other state medical boards, and the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants in the licensure application may consider a criminal conviction history. Applicants and matriculants should consult with these entities before matriculation to ensure they will be eligible for licensure upon completion of their degree.

Drug Testing

The Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program does not require drug testing prior to matriculating into the program. However, applicants should review the following:

- Supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE) are a critical part of the program's requirements for graduation. Many clinical sites will not place a learner on a clinical rotation unless they have successfully passed drug testing. Drug testing results that limit the program's ability to secure SCPEs may prevent a student from progressing or graduating from the program.
- As a part of the licensing and credentialing process, many state boards, healthcare systems, and third-party payers require that graduates undergo a comprehensive drug testing.

To satisfy the requirements of affiliated clinical partners both internal and external to the university, learners in the Program may be subjected to programmed drug testing throughout the didactic and clinical curriculum at their expense.

Accreditation Status

Accreditation Statement

The University of California San Diego School of Medicine Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program has applied for Accreditation - Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The University of California San Diego School of Medicine Atkinson Physician Assistant Education program anticipates matriculating its first class in January 2024, pending achieving Accreditation - Provisional status at the September 2023 ARC-PA meeting. Accreditation - Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding accreditation-provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Implications of Non-Accreditation

If Accreditation - Provisional status is not granted by the ARC-PA, the University of California San Diego School of Medicine Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program will not matriculate its first class in January 2024 as planned. The University will not be responsible for refunding application fees or expenses incurred by applicants during the application and/or interview process (e.g., CASPA fees, supplemental application fees, travel to/from campus, etc.).

MAS-PAS Degree Approval

The University of California San Diego School of Medicine Atkinson Physician Assistant Education Program has submitted the Master of Advanced Study in Physician Assistant Studies (MAS-PAS) degree plan of study for approval through the UC system. Approval is anticipated prior to the planned January 2024 launch. In the event that the MAS-PAS degree is not approved in time for a January 2024 launch, the program will not matriculate its first class in January 2024 as planned. The University will not be responsible for refunding application fees or expenses incurred by applicants during the application and/or interview process (e.g., CASPA fees, supplemental application fees, travel to/from campus, etc.).

Useful Links

Address

ARC-PA

<https://www.arc-pa.org>

Atkinson UC San Diego PA Education E-mail

paeducation@health.ucsd.edu

Atkinson UC San Diego PA Education Website

<https://medschool.ucsd.edu/education/pa-education>