Student Handbook
Berry College PA Program
First Edition (2025)

Berry College
Master of Medical Science—PA Program
Charter School of Education & Health Sciences
PO Box 495030
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Message from the Program Director

Welcome,

With great pleasure and enthusiasm, I extend a warm welcome to each of you as you embark on this transformative educational experience in the Berry PA Program! You are joining a noble profession in service to others.

As the Program Director, I am honored to guide you through our comprehensive and dynamic curriculum designed to equip you with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for a successful career as a Physician Associate. Our program fosters a collaborative learning environment that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and a commitment to excellence in patient care.

Our faculty and staff are dedicated to your success and are here to support you. I encourage you to actively engage with your peers, faculty members, and the wealth of opportunities available within our PA Program and the Berry campus. Remember that you are acquiring knowledge and becoming part of a community that values collaboration, compassion, and a commitment to serving others.

On behalf of the entire program, I wish you an inspiring and successful academic journey. May your passion for healthcare, dedication to learning, and commitment to excellence propel you toward a fulfilling and impactful career as a Physician Associate.

Welcome aboard!

Warm regards,

Dr. Galloway
Program Director
Berry Physician Associate Program

Disclaimer (A3.02, A1.02f)

This handbook supersedes any previous version of the student handbook. The information contained in this Student Handbook is an overview of current policies and procedures specific to the Berry College Physician Associate (PA) Program. It is designed to highlight and offer additional policies and procedures specific to the didactic and clinical phases of training; it is not designed to replace the policies and procedures outlined in the College's Graduate [Academic Catalog](#) and the College's [Viking Code](#). Therefore, students are also expected to review and follow the Berry College policies covered in the College's Graduate Academic Catalog and Viking Code. **IMPORTANTLY: Should there be a difference between the College's policies or procedures and the PA Program's policies or procedures, the PA Program will take precedence.**

The Berry College PA Student Handbook is published annually. While every effort is made to provide accurate and correct information at the time of publication, the Program reserves the right to change policies, calendar dates, and any statements in the Handbook at any time and to apply such revisions to registered and accepted students.

Importantly, this handbook guides students and faculty on the usual policies and procedures for day-to-day conduct in the PA Program. It does not represent an exhaustive list of all possibilities that might arise for students and faculty in the training and administration of the program. Unique situations may arise and will be handled in a manner that ensures fairness and mutual respect. All final decisions are at the discretion of the Program Director. Feel free to ask Berry College PA Program staff and faculty questions about the student handbook.

This handbook has been reviewed by Berry College General Counsel, the Vice President of Student Affairs, and the CSEHS Dean. (A1.02f)

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Accreditation (A3.12a)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

SACSCOC is the regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and charged with ensuring the quality & integrity of higher education institutions and programs. For more information see the SACSCOC website: https://sacscoc.org/

The Berry College Physician Associate Program was granted approval by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) on 1/26/2024.

Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA)

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) is the accrediting agency for all physician assistant/associate programs in the United States. The ARC-PA "protects the interests of the public and PA profession by defining the standards for PA education and evaluating PA educational programs within the territorial United States to ensure their compliance with those standards." For more information see the ARC-PA website: http://www.arc-pa.org/

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Berry College Physician Associate Program sponsored by Berry College. 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. Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class. The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-berry-college/

Introduction (A3.01)

The Berry College Physician Associate (PA) Program Handbook is designed to provide the student with the program-specific policies and information that the student needs to know as a PA student at Berry College. The student is responsible for reading the material in this PA Program student handbook. It does not represent an exhaustive list of all possibilities that might arise for students, staff, and faculty in the training and administration of the PA Program. Importantly, Program policies must apply to all students, faculty, and the program director regardless of location. (A3.01)

The PA Program consists of a rigorous master's level curriculum spanning 24 months, consisting of 127 credit hours, and combining didactic and clinical phases. Upon successfully completing the program, students will be awarded a Master of Medical Science—PA degree. They will be eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Upon successful completion of the PANCE, individuals are then eligible for state licensure in Georgia. It is the student's responsibility to be knowledgeable of regulatory and specific licensure requirements in their home state or future state of employment. For information on other state licensure requirements, please visit the American Academy of PAs website: https://www.aapa.org/advocacy-central/state-advocacy/state-licensing/.

Program Mission, Motto, Values, and Goals (A3.12b, c)

Program Mission

The Berry PA Program is committed to preparing, educating, and empowering the next generation of physician associates to deliver quality, comprehensive, compassionate, patient-centered care to their communities.

College & Program Motto

Not to be ministered unto but to minister.

Program Values

We believe that our core values inform and shape our decisions and actions. The Berry PA Program culture is defined by these values and is committed to them.

> _Excellence_- striving for continuous improvement and pursuing high-quality medical knowledge, clinical skills, and patient-centered care.
> _Inclusivity_ - including people or ideas, treating them fairly and respecting the essential dignity of all individuals.
> _Integrity_ - implies ethos of honesty, conscientiousness, trustworthiness, and responsibility.
> _Service_ - to render care, provide information, and engage in community outreach and health advocacy.

Program Goals

> _Goal 1_: To educate and prepare students with primary-care-based didactic curriculum and clinical experiences for entry-level practice as a physician associate.
> _Goal 2_: To support faculty and students in service and advocacy within the profession and their communities.
> _Goal 3_: To support Berry College's good neighbor culture.
> _Goal 4_: To achieve first-time PANCE pass rates at or above the national average. (A3.12c)

Please see the Berry PA Program webpage for evidence of meeting the above goals. (A3.12b,c)

Technical Standards (A3.13e)

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) defines technical standards as "nonacademic requirements for participation in an educational program or activity. They include physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all curriculum aspects and entry into the profession." They are designed to ensure that students have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attributes to meet the demands of medical practice and provide safe and effective patient care. These standards are prerequisites for entrance to, continuation within, and graduation from the Berry College Physician Associate (PA) Program. Importantly, they may also be prerequisites to licensure by state professional boards. Reasonable accommodation will be offered for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Accessibility Resources Office in the Academic Success Center evaluates all requests for academic accommodation at Berry College. Fulfilling the technical standards with reasonable accommodation does not guarantee that a program graduate can fulfill the technical standards for employment, residency/fellowship, or certifying board. Candidates with disabilities are

encouraged to contact the [Accessibility Resources Office in the Academic Success Center](#) early to discuss accommodation needs.

Compliance with technical standards will be assessed regularly throughout the Program. By accepting the admissions offer, the student verifies they meet these Technical Standards. They must maintain them during their time as a Berry PA student. Students are obligated to alert the PA Program promptly of any change in their ability to meet the Technical Standards. Students are subject to dismissal if they do not remain in compliance with the minimum Technical Standards of the Berry PA Program during the entire course of study if they do not participate fully in all aspects of PA training, or if they do not meet minimum competencies for entry-level practice (with or without reasonable accommodation). The following are the Berry PA Program Technical Standards:

1. Observation and related Sensory Functions
2. Communication
3. Motor and related Sensory Functions
4. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities
5. Behavioral and Social Attributes
6. Ethical and Legal Standards

1. **Observation and Sensory Functions:** Students must demonstrate the ability to observe and assess patients accurately, including visual, auditory, and tactile observations. This involves but is not limited to differentiating color changes, interpreting diagnostic images, and perceiving non-verbal cues.
2. **Communication:** Effective communication skills, including speaking, writing, and listening, are crucial for PAs. Students must be able to communicate clearly and sensitively.
3. **Motor and Sensory Functions:** Students must demonstrate the motor skills required to perform basic clinical procedures, such as physical examinations, diagnostic tests, and therapeutic interventions. They must demonstrate the necessary coordination, dexterity, and tactile sensitivity.
4. **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** Students must demonstrate strong intellectual and conceptual abilities to assimilate, analyze, and synthesize information quickly and accurately.
5. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** Students must demonstrate appropriate behavioral and social attributes as typically expected in the profession and as specifically outlined in course learning objectives throughout the program, including but not limited to emotional stability, empathy, and professionalism, which are necessary for professional practice.
6. **Ethical and Legal Standards:** Students must adhere to high ethical principles and legal regulations governing healthcare practice.

Program Learning Competencies (A3.12g)

Learning outcomes are defined as "the medical knowledge; interpersonal, clinical, and technical skills; professional behaviors; and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities that have been attained by the student at the completion of a curricular component, course, or program." (ARC-PA, 2020).

Competencies are defined as "the medical knowledge, interpersonal, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for PA practice." (ARC-PA, 2020).

The Berry Physician Associate (PA) Program has established *Program Learning Competencies*—upon completion of their PA program curriculum, Berry PA students will have attained the necessary medical knowledge; interpersonal, clinical, and technical skills; professional behaviors; and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities required for competent entry-level PA practice. Berry PA students must demonstrate proficiency in the *Program Learning Competencies* prior to graduation.

1. **Medical Knowledge**
   1.1: Demonstrate knowledge of medical sciences for common diseases and conditions across the life span for all major human organ systems in order to identify, diagnose, manage, and provide effective patient-centered care.
   1.2: Demonstrate general knowledge of the healthcare business and systems, including their impact on healthcare access and delivery.
   1.3: Demonstrate knowledge of social-behavioral sciences, including population health, health policy, and social determinants of health as they impact patient care.

2. **Interpersonal & Communication Skills**
   2.1: Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange and collaborative relationships with patients, families, and healthcare delivery team members.
   2.2: Deliver effectively succinct and comprehensive oral communication pertaining to patient care.
   2.3: Demonstrate accurate and adequate written communication pertaining to patient care.

3. **Clinical & Technical Skills**
   3.1: Safely demonstrate the appropriate and effective performance of history and physical examinations as indicated by the patient presentation and setting.
   3.2: Safely demonstrate the accurate performance of clinical skills common to general medical practice.
   3.3: Safely demonstrate the effective performance of clinical procedures common to general medical practice.

4. **Professional Behaviors**
   4.1: Demonstration of professional behavior in all interactions with patients, families, colleagues, and other health professionals and staff.
   4:2: Demonstrate understanding and commitment to adherence to the ethical principles that guide the PA profession.
   4.3: Demonstrate cultural humility and competency in an equitable manner across diverse patient populations.
   4.4: Demonstrate knowledge of PA profession requirements and regulations.

5. **Clinical Reasoning & Problem-solving Abilities**
   5.1: Demonstration of an appropriate analytical approach to clinical situations, including investigation, evaluation, formulation of differential diagnoses, management, and prevention.
   5.2: Demonstrate ability to investigate, evaluate, and apply evidence-based practice.

Berry PA Program Code of Conduct

As practicing clinicians, PAs are required to adhere to regulations, policies, and ethical codes from various regulatory organizations, including but not limited to the PA profession ethical guidelines, state medical boards, hospital medical boards, malpractice carriers, and private employers.

PA students are expected to one day serve the needs of the public and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to do so safely and effectively. In addition to adequate academic knowledge, PA program graduates must possess behavioral characteristics consistent with professional standards. It is the responsibility of the PA program to ensure its students demonstrate professional behaviors throughout the course of training and meet professional behavior competencies upon graduation.

Berry PA students are expected to adhere to:
- The Berry College Code of Student Conduct as found in the Viking Code Handbook
- Academic Integrity as found in the Graduate Academic Catalog
- The American Academy of PAs Ethical Guidelines for the PA Profession
- The Berry PA Program Technical Standards as outlined in the Handbook.
- The policies and procedures as outlined in this Handbook.

Students must abide by the PA Program Code of Conduct to remain in good academic standing. Suspected violations of this code can be expressed by any student, faculty member, or staff to the PA Program Director. The PA Program Student Progression Committee (SPC) determines the consequences for any violation after a thorough review of the incident(s) and a holistic review of the student's academic record. Students are invited to submit a written statement for the SPC's review as part of this process. Disciplinary measures may include, but are not limited to, warnings, academic probation, or dismissal. Decisions made by the SPC specific to academic integrity violations, academic probation, or program dismissal can be appealed in writing following the Student Grievances and Appeals process outlined in this Handbook.

Academic Integrity Policy
In keeping with its educational mission, Berry College places the highest value on academic integrity and does not tolerate academic dishonesty and other forms of abuse of the academic process. The college's faculty and administrators consider that entering students, in accepting admission to Berry College, are aware that they will submit themselves to the college's standard of academic honesty and agree to follow the procedures by which the college and PA program observes and enforces its standard.

Curriculum (A1.02e, A3.11, A3.12d, A3.12e)

The Berry College PA Program is a professional degree program intended to prepare students academically and professionally for responsibilities and services as an entry-level PA. The program consists of 127 credit hours divided into two phases that span 24 consecutive months. The Didactic Phase represents the preclinical 'year' and spans 12 months. The Clinical Phase, including 40 weeks of supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE), represents the clinical 'year' and comprises 12 months of coursework. All courses listed below are required. Each cohort progresses through the program as a group, with all classes and activities required for all students in the same sequence. Upon successfully completing the program, students are awarded the Master of Medical Science—PA degree. (A1.02e)

Didactic Phase (Year 1):
Fall 1

1. MPA 501 Anatomy & Physiology 1 (3-2-4)
2. MPA 511 Clinical Medicine 1 (8-0-8)
3. MPA 521 Clinical Pharmacology 1 (3-0-3)
4. MPA 531 Clinical Skills & Procedures 1 (2-3-4)
5. MPA 541 Clinical Application 1 (2-0-2)
6. MPA 551 Professional Topics 1 (4-0-4)
7. MPA 560 Clinical Science (2-0-2)

Spring 1
1. MPA 502 Anatomy & Physiology 2 (3-2-4)
2. MPA 512 Clinical Medicine 2 (8-0-8)
3. MPA 522 Clinical Pharmacology 2 (3-0-3)
4. MPA 532 Clinical Skills & Procedures 2 (2-3-4)
5. MPA 542 Clinical Application 2 (2-0-2)
6. MPA 552 Professional Topics 2 (4-0-4)
7. MPA 570 Evidence Base-Practice (2-0-2)

Summer 1
1. MPA 503 Anatomy & Physiology 3 (3-2-4)
2. MPA 513 Clinical Medicine 3 (8-0-8)
3. MPA 523 Clinical Pharmacology 3 (3-0-3)
4. MPA 533 Clinical Skills & Procedures 3 (2-3-4)
5. MPA 543 Clinical Application 3 (2-0-2)
6. MPA 553 Professional Topics 3 (4-0-4)
7. MPA 580 Didactic Seminar (2-0-2)

Clinical Phase (Year 2):
Fall 2
1. MPA 600 Emerging Topics in Medicine Course (Fall 2) (2-0-2)
2. Take three of the following:
   a. MPA 610 Family Medicine Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Course (5 credits)
   b. MPA 620 Emergency Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   c. MPA 630 Pediatric Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   d. MPA 640 Internal Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   e. MPA 650 Women's Health SCPE Course (5 credits)
   f. MPA 660 Surgical Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   g. MPA 670 Behavioral & Mental Health SCPE Course (5 credits)

Spring 2
1. MPA 605 Transition to Practice Course (Spring 2) (2-0-2)
2. Take three of the following (cannot duplicate from Fall 2):
   a. MPA 610 Family Medicine Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Course (5 credits)
   b. MPA 620 Emergency Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   c. MPA 630 Pediatric Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   d. MPA 640 Internal Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   e. MPA 650 Women's Health SCPE Course (5 credits)
   f. MPA 660 Surgical Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
   g. MPA 670 Behavioral & Mental Health SCPE Course (5 credits)

Summer 2
1. Take the remaining course not taken in Fall 2 or Spring 2:
    a. MPA 610 Family Medicine Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE) Course (5 credits)
    b. MPA 620 Emergency Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
    c. MPA 630 Pediatric Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
    d. MPA 640 Internal Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
    e. MPA 650 Women's Health SCPE Course (5 credits)
    f. MPA 660 Surgical Medicine SCPE Course (5 credits)
    g. MPA 670 Behavioral & Mental Health SCPE Course (5 credits)
2. MPA 680 Elective SCPE Course
3. MPA 690 Summative Course

The PA Program curriculum details, including course sequence and all course descriptions, are noted in Berry College's Graduate Academic Catalog, which is updated annually.

PA Program Admission and Matriculation Requirements (A3.14)

The Centralized Application Service for PAs (CASPA) will open in late April and close on April 1st of the following year (applications must be completed and verified by CASPA by 11:59 PM EST on April 1st). The PA Program will follow a rolling admissions process with on-site* interviews beginning each September through Spring for upcoming August matriculation. Please see the Berry PA Program information available in CASPA for more information.

To be applied to all applicants, a rubric has been developed for the below requirements and invitation-only on-campus interviews. Likert scales will be used, as well as both quantitative and qualitative data. Prescreening for minimum requirements will be completed before invitations for interviews, then top applicants from rolling admissions will be invited for a required all-day interview.

Please carefully review the below information and the Frequently Asked Questions, as many of the student questions may be answered here. For further information, please contact our Program Manager, Polly Evans-Thomas, at pevanthomas@berry.edu

NOTE: Meeting the minimum admissions requirements and/or preferences does not guarantee an interview or admission to the Berry PA Program. The Berry PA Program admissions committee will review applications holistically through a rolling admissions process.

*Virtual interviews will not be offered. All interviews will be conducted on the Berry Campus in Mt. Berry, Georgia.

Program Cost: Tuition & Fees (A3.12f)
Estimates of all costs (tuition, textbooks, equipment, etc.) related to the program are published and updated on the program website so prospective students can easily determine total cost of attendance.

Program Attrition Information (A3.12i)
The most current annual student attrition information, on the table provided by the ARC-PA, no later than April first each year (beginning after the first cohort graduates) is published and updated on the program website.

PA Program Admission Requirements (A3.14)

Residency Requirement

Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. legal permanent resident to qualify for admission to the program.

Advanced Placement (A3.13c)

The PA Program does not offer or permit advanced placement or waive any program prerequisite or course requirement.

Degree Requirements (A3.13d)

- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution will be required prior to matriculation. This degree can be from any field and does not need a specific science or pre-professional degree.
- Applicants who completed coursework from a college or university outside of the U.S. must submit a transcript evaluation from the World Education Services (WES) to the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA).

Prerequisite Coursework Requirements (A3.13d)

- All courses must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.
- To ensure standardization and fairness among applicants, we are unable to waive any prerequisite course requirement for any applicant.
- Prerequisite courses must be completed within five years (cohort 2027) and ten years (all other cohorts) of application with a minimum grade of C per course.
- At the time of application, only two prerequisites may be outstanding.
- If admitted to the program on a conditional basis, the student must earn a minimum of C in the outstanding prerequisites and earn the minimum GPA requirements for entry into the program. If both requirements are not met, the conditional applicant will forfeit their acceptance and not be permitted to matriculate. The student may reapply during the next cycle.
- ***NOTE: Higher individual course grades will result in higher weighting on the Berry PA Program admissions rubric. Meaning As are weighted higher than Bs, and Bs are weighted higher than Cs.***

Prerequisite Coursework	Berry Equivalent	Notes
Human Anatomy- 4 credits	BIO 206 & 207 8 credits total	Lab required
Human Physiology- 4 credits		Lab required
General Chemistry-8 credits	CHM 108 & 109 8 credits	Lab required
Microbiology- 3 credits	BIO 301 or 201	
Biochemistry- 3 credits	CHM 341	
Organic Chemistry- 4 credits	CHM 221 or 223	Lab required
Genetics-4 credits (*cohort 2027 only*)	BIO 304	Lab required
Psychology- 3 credits	Any	
Statistics- 3 credits	MAT111	
English composition/writing	RHW 102	

GPA Requirements (A3.13d)
- **Prerequisite Course Grade and GPA requirement**
  All prerequisite courses must be completed with a grade of 'C' or higher, and all applicants must have a cumulative Prerequisite Course Grade Point Average (as calculated by CASPA) of 3.0 or higher.
- **Cumulative Science GPA Requirement (Biology, Chemistry, Physics or BCP courses)**
  All applicants must have a cumulative overall BCP Course Grade Point Average (as calculated by CASPA) of 3.2 or higher (cohort 2027) and 3.0 or higher (all other cohorts).
- **Cumulative Overall GPA Requirement**
  All applicants must have a cumulative overall Grade Point Average (calculated by CASPA) of 3.0 or higher for all undergraduate and graduate courses.
- ***NOTE: Higher GPA will result in higher weighting on the Berry PA Program admissions rubric.***

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Requirement (A3.13d)
- GRE requirement applies **only to the 2027 cohort**.
- All candidates must submit unofficial GRE scores to CASPA at the time of their application and official scores by the time of the interview.
- MCAT and PCAT scores are not accepted in place of GRE scores.
- There is no minimum score requirement. Scores will be reviewed holistically with the candidate's application and compared to the applicant pool.
- GRE must be taken within five years of the date of application.

Language Requirement (A3.13d)
- Applicants must be fully proficient in the use of the English language.
- If English is not the student's primary (i.e., native) language, the Program may require the student to complete the Test of English as a Foreign Language Test (TOEFL). If required, the minimum total score needed is 90.
- Please submit at the time of application.

Health-Care Related Experience Requirements (A3.13b)
Health-care-related experience is required.

Patient contact and/or clinical experiences may include health-related, patient care, shadowing, and volunteer experiences as defined by CASPA Experiences – Liaison (liaisonedu.com).

There is no minimum number of hours required. Generally, competitive applicants should have at least 500 accrued patient contact and/or clinical experience hours at the time of application submission. This requirement will be reviewed holistically with the candidate's application and compared to the applicant pool at the time of application.

Letters of Reference Requirement
- Applicants must provide three letters of reference at the time of their application, with valid contact information for the reference.

- The letters of reference must be completed by individuals who have first-hand knowledge of the student's skills, strengths, and weaknesses.
- References from friends, family members, relatives, and personal healthcare providers are not appropriate and will not be accepted.
- One letter must be from a nationally certified and state-licensed Physician Assistant.
- One letter must be from a professor with whom the student completed one or more college-level courses, or from a supervisor who has worked with the applicant for six months or more.
- One letter must be from a healthcare professional (i.e., physician, nurse, healthcare supervisor).
- ***NOTE: References without reservations will receive a point on the Berry PA Program admissions rubric. References with reservations will receive no points.***

Preferences (A3.13a)
Preferences are in keeping with the mission and values of the Berry PA program.
- Berry student in good standing and graduates: confirmed with transcripts.
- Veterans with honorable discharge: confirmed with DD214 discharge papers.
- Applicants from a medically underserved area: confirm with the applicant's home address and compare to the posted federal website link https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/mua-find.
- Applicants from Appalachia: confirm with the applicant's home address and compare to the posted federal website link https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-counties-served-by-arc/.
- ***NOTE: For each confirmed preference (applicants are required to submit proof to the PA program through CASPA), applicants will receive one additional point on the Berry PA Program admissions rubric.***

Personal Statement
Applicants are required to submit a personal statement in CASPA at the time of application. Personal statements will be reviewed holistically and compared to the applicant pool. AI-generated personal statements will not be accepted, whether in part or whole. Please know that if invited for an in-person interview, a handwritten essay will be required on-site. For more information, please contact the PA Program Manager.

AHA BLS Certification Requirement
- Prior to matriculation, students must hold current certification in American Heart Association Basic Life Support (AHA BLS).
- Students must maintain continuous certification throughout the Program.

Medical Terminology
- It is strongly recommended, but not required, that applicants successfully complete a medical terminology course or certification.

Interviews
An interview is required for acceptance into the program and is by invitation only. Applicants are selected for interviews based on a holistic evaluation of their application and supporting materials.

The interview day will include an introduction to the program, faculty, and staff. Students will complete individual interviews (two each) with faculty/staff, group discussion, and a handwritten essay. We hope

to engage prospective applicants to mindfully review our program curriculum, campus, faculty, and staff while considering their personal goals for a PA education.

Required Seat Deposit

Upon receiving an offer of admission, candidates will have 14 days to accept the position and conditions of acceptance and to pay the $1000 security deposit to secure their position. The security deposit will be applied to the student's tuition if the student matriculates.

Deferral Policy

BCPA does not allow deferrals of acceptance.

Students who have been accepted but wish to defer to a later cohort must reapply for the following application cycle. If the applicant meets all minimum requirements for that cycle, they will be guaranteed an interview in the first available interview session.

Applicants who decline an offer of acceptance will not be placed on the waitlist for the same application year.

Admission Process Timeline

ITEM	TIMELINE
CASPA Application Open	April (See CASPA website)
Applications Reviewed by Admission Committee	As received/rolling admissions
Interview offers made	Rolling, starting in August and ending in mid-spring
Interviews conducted	September through late spring
Offers of admissions extended.	Rolling basis, starting in September
Seat Deposit	Due within 14 days following the offer
Immunizations and outstanding requirements	August 1st prior to start of program

Other Policies Related to Admissions

BCPA Student Re-Application

Students who are dismissed from the BCPA program may reapply to the program. There is no guarantee of an interview or acceptance. Students will be subject to the admissions criteria, tuition, and fees of that cohort's cycle. If a student is re-accepted, the decision will be made based on competitiveness with other applicants in the current admissions pool. Please note that re-admitted students will be required to take all courses in a lock-step fashion along with the new cohort for that academic year. No previous PA coursework will be recognized for advanced placement; however, it will be evaluated in determining the minimum GPA requirements for admission. The BCPA program does not offer advanced placement credit.

Policies for Admissions of Faculty Family Member

It is the professional responsibility of a BCPA faculty member to notify the program director and admission committee chair when a family member has applied to the BCPA program. Measures will be

taken to ensure that the admission process is as objective as possible. The faculty member must recuse themselves from admissions activities where the family member candidate is being reviewed.

It is the professional responsibility of a BCPA faculty member to notify the department chair (program director) and dean when an immediate family member enrolls in a course taught by the faculty member. Measures should be taken to ensure that grading is as objective as possible.

Faculty members with close family ties to enrolled students should disclose such relationships to the department chair (program director) or dean as soon as they become aware of them. Due to the potential or perceived conflicts of interest associated with the grading or evaluation of immediate family members, students should not enroll in a course where an immediate family member is the faculty member of record if an alternative course or section fits within the student's degree plan. If this is not possible and a faculty member has an immediate family member enrolled in their course, they should recuse themselves from grading and evaluating that student's work. Another qualified faculty member can be designated for this purpose, and the name of that faculty member (with their agreement) should be submitted to the dean of the school where the course is taught before the end of the add/drop period for the semester.

Alternatively, the faculty member may employ blind grading, and the dean or department chair (program director) reviews the grading for the entire class.

Specific to the BCPA program, at the beginning of the didactic phase, the BCPA Program Director will notify the cohort to which the student is enrolled, faculty, and staff of the following:

- "The BCPA program believes in maintaining a sense of belonging and reasonable transparency with its students and team members. This is to notify you that an immediate family member of one of our faculty is enrolled in your cohort. The program will adhere to Professional Responsibility when Teaching Immediate Family Members policy. The student's name will not be disclosed due to FERPA. Should you have any questions regarding this notification, please contact the BCPA Program Director or the Dean of the CSEHS."

By signing this document, I attest to:

- If Berry College implements a similar/related policy, I will adhere to those policies.
- My understanding of the above and my agreement to adhere to the policies and procedures.
- My understanding is that not following the above policies and procedures may result in consequences per the BCPA Code of Conduct, BCPA Technical Standards, and/or Berry College Faculty Handbook as they apply to the student and/or faculty member.

PA Program Matriculation Requirements

Completion of Outstanding Conditional Acceptance Requirements

All conditionally accepted students must complete all outstanding requirements and provide official documentation as required to the PA Program prior to matriculation, or the conditional acceptance will be forfeited. The student may reapply during the next cycle.

Background Check and Comprehensive Drug Screening Test Requirements

- Regular drug testing at many organizations is a requirement of individual institutions, state laws and regulations, and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). Individuals working in health care facilities often must consent to and, through drug testing, be cleared to work. Furthermore, facility privileges, licenses, and/or certifications for

health care providers may be revoked, limited, suspended, or denied for habituation or addiction to alcohol or drugs or being impaired by alcohol or drugs in clinical practice.

- Criminal background checks at many organizations are required by individual institutions, state laws and regulations, and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). Individuals working in health care facilities often must consent to and, through criminal background investigations, be cleared to work.
- Students must pass a national background check and a comprehensive drug screening before matriculation. Berry College PA Program will provide specific information regarding the company, deadlines, and instructions on how to complete these requirements.
- As many clinical sites require a background check and drug screen within the previous 12 months or less, students will be required to complete an annual national background check and drug screen until completion of the program.
- Additionally, some clinical sites may require an additional site-specific background check and drug screen regardless of the checks and screens completed for the Program.
- A failed background check or drug screen may preclude participation in the didactic and clinical phases of training.
- A prior criminal background could restrict the ability of students to participate in certain clinical experiences, sit for the national examination, and/or obtain national certification and/or professional state licensure. This may delay the completion of required courses, thus delaying graduation. It is the student's responsibility to assess potential conflicts with professional licensure.
- All background checks, medical screening exams, and drug screens are completed at the student's expense.
- Students should notify the Program Director if they are convicted of or may be convicted of a felony or misdemeanor while in the program or have a pending criminal case.

Drug Screening Tests: Students may need to be tested multiple times, depending on the requirements of their assigned clinical site. Students may also be randomly drug tested by the program or a clinical site.
- If a student takes a prescription medication that may cause a positive test result/, the student must discuss this with the testing center and receive proper documentation to show the test is acceptable.
- Regardless of evolving state laws pertaining to medical and recreational use of marijuana, students need to be aware that it is against federal law to possess or use marijuana. Use of THC is not permitted in the PA Program. Use of THC is not permitted by most health facilities.
- A student whose test results in a Negative Dilute or an insufficient sample may be required to retest as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours. The costs of any retesting are the responsibility of the student. Multiple retests resulting in a negative dilute may be considered a failed/positive test.
- Students who refuse to submit to any required drug test will be dismissed from the PA program.

Positive/ Failed Drug Screening Tests:
- Students who do not pass the required drug test may face disciplinary action, including academic probation, interim suspension, or dismissal from the program.

- Students who receive a positive test that is not a result of a prescribed medication (excluding THC/marijuana) will be reviewed by the Student Progression committee. Any consequences and/or recommendations will be communicated to the student by the Program Director in writing.
- Prior to making a final decision that may adversely affect the student, the Program Director will inform the student of their rights.
- The student has the right to review the information reported by the testing vendor for accuracy and completeness and to request that the vendor verify that the drug screen results are correct.
- In situations involving an alleged PA Program Code of Conduct violation, the student will be referred to PA Student Progression Committee.

Suspicion of Use
- The use of drugs or alcohol is not permitted or tolerated in any classroom, laboratory, or clinical education environment.
- If there is suspicion of impairment that is related to drugs or alcohol on campus, a student may be immediately removed from the environment by faculty, security, local police, or a Berry representative and placed on interim suspension. The student will be required to submit a drug screen immediately. Safe transportation to a testing site is the financial responsibility of the student.
- If there is suspicion of impairment in the clinical environment, the student is subject to the policies of that institution for the process and reporting of drug testing. Upon notification of the academic program, the student may be placed on interim suspension.
- In any situation of a positive test, identified by a program mandated drug screen or by a clinical site, the program will follow the process as outlined for positive tests.

Health Insurance Requirement
- Health insurance is required of all students in the PA program and must be secured prior to the first day of class and must be continued throughout the program.
- Students are required to maintain proof of insurance in EXXAT.
- Students are encouraged to check for competitive insurance policies and rates via the federal government's official ACA website - healthcare.gov (the student may be eligible to enroll out of the typical enrollment period), the healthcare.org general health insurance marketplace website, and local healthcare insurance vendors. Additionally, students are encouraged to check with the local medical practices and urgent care facilities to see which insurance is accepted by those facilities.

Immunization & Health Examination Requirements (A3.07a)
The PA program adheres to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Recommended Vaccines for Healthcare Workers. All students must provide documentation that these immunizations and Tb testing have been completed before matriculation and maintain immunizations and annual Tb testing documentation throughout their training.

Additionally, students must complete and provide documentation of a health examination clearance to participate in the PA program. The PA Program Health Examination Clearance Form will be shared with matriculants by the program manager upon acceptance of their admissions offer.

Exceptions to the above will be considered on a case-by-case basis, only with documentation from a medical provider, and must be discussed prior to matriculation. Due to the policies and procedures of clinical sites, personal/religious reasons for declining immunizations will not be considered due to requirements for clinical rotation placements. The PA Program is not in control, nor does it have input into clinical institutions' policies, procedures, and protocols. It is important to understand that participating in some clinical experiences may be prohibited without completion of immunization requirements, even for valid medical and/or personal/religious reasons, resulting in the Program's inability to place students at clinical sites and potentially resulting in a significant delay in graduation. The PA program cannot guarantee timely placement under these circumstances. For this reason, the Program requires students to discuss such issues before matriculation.

Student Malpractice Insurance Requirements
All students are required to carry their own PA-student liability/malpractice insurance with a minimum per-incident limit of $1,000,000 and an aggregate limit of $3,000,000 for the entirety of time within the PA program.
- Enrolled students can presently receive their malpractice insurance at no cost via the AAPA-endorsed insurance carrier, CMF Group. https://www.cmfgroup.com/student-professional-liability-insurance/physician-assistant-student-liability-insurance/.

Academic Policies & Procedures
The program's acceptable performance standards are communicated to students in writing via this handbook, course syllabi, and on the PA Program website. All PA program policies apply to all students, faculty, and staff, regardless of location. Policies listed and detailed on the PA Program web pages and in the PA Program Student Handbook are subject to change. *The student must regularly review the policies to ensure they are familiar with the most updated and relevant policies and procedures.*

Policies and Requirements for Promotion & Graduation (A3.15a, b)
The PA program is a 24-month, "lock-step" program with 127 credit hours. To progress to the next semester, a student must satisfactorily complete all academic requirements for the preceding semester, including successfully completing all remediation plans. If a student is placed on academic probation at any time during or at the conclusion of a semester, he/she/they must meet the criteria for good academic standing by the end of the subsequent semester to progress through the program. At the conclusion of each semester, the PA Student Progression Committee performs a holistic review of each student's performance in order to make recommendations for continuation to the subsequent semester. These recommendations are made to the Program Director who has authority to approve the recommendations. In order for a student to progress from the pre-clinical/didactic phase into the clinical phase, they must also be recommended for continuation by the PA Student Progression Committee and approved by the Program Director.

To maintain good academic standing the following must be met:
- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or above.
- Achieve a "Satisfactory" or letter grade of "C" (70.00%) or better in all pre-clinical/didactic and clinical phase courses as stipulated within each course syllabus.
- Exhibit professional behaviors consistent with clinical practice as a PA as documented in the PA Program Student Handbook.

- Display the ability to meet the Technical Standards of the Program (outlined in this Handbook).

To successfully complete the Pre-clinical Phase of the Program and enter the Clinical Phase, the student must:
- Achieve good academic standing, as described above, before starting the Clinical Phase.
- Pass the Didactic Seminar Summative Examination with a score of at least 70%
- Pay tuition/fees in full.
- Submit documentation of an ability to meet the program's technical standards (signed by the student).
- Completion of the Authorization for Release of Records and Information Form.
- Submit documentation of required screenings/immunization updates and any clinical site-specific additional clearances to Exxat.
- Hold current American Heart Association Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support certifications, not to expire during the clinical phase.
- Maintenance of a functional cellphone, cell service, and Wi-Fi. It is the student's responsibility to update the PA program with any phone number changes.
- Be recommended for progression by the PA Student Progression Committee.

For a student to graduate from the PA program, the student must:
- Be in good academic standing, as described above.
- Demonstrate entry-level competence as a physician associate per the Program Learning Competencies (Learning Outcomes), assessed through the Summative Program Evaluation, taken within four months of graduation.
- Be recommended for graduation by the PA Student Progression Committee and approved by the Program Director.
- Have all tuition and fees paid in full.

The College reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for unsatisfactory academic performance, academic integrity policy, or conduct detrimental to the College, to the welfare of patients, or to the welfare of other students, faculty, or staff. The Program also reserves the right to dismiss a student if it is determined that a student's conduct is not consistent with the professional behavior of a future Physician Associate. Failure to maintain good academic standing may result in dismissal from the program. In addition, a student who does not pay all tuition and fees by the due date may be dismissed from the Program.

Expectations and Grading

At the graduate level, the letter grade A signifies work of distinction, and the letter grade B represents good quality work. *Any grade below a B* is considered a performance that puts a *student at risk* of not progressing through the Program successfully. Students earning a letter grade of C in any course in the PA curriculum will be identified as at risk of not maintaining satisfactory academic progress in the PA program. Satisfactory academic progress denotes earning a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher throughout all semesters of the PA program. A student identified as "at risk" will receive academic coaching and remediation as deemed appropriate by the PA Program Director, Director of Clinical Education for the clinical phase, and/or Director of Didactic Education for the didactic phase.

Grading System	
Percentage	Letter grade
90.00% or above	A
80.00 – 89.99%	B
70.00 – 79.99%	C
60.00 – 69.99%	D
<60.00%	F

The letter grade D or F represents work below the standard expected for a graduate student. To satisfactorily complete a course, the student must earn a grade of "C" (70.00%) or better. The student is responsible for seeking assistance if she/he/they is having trouble meeting course expectations. Failure to pass a class with a "C" or better average will result in dismissal from the Program. Grades will be rounded to the nearest hundredth or second decimal place.

Cheating

Given the high stakes nature of a PA program and inherent trust placed on medical clinicians by their patients and communities cheating has greater ramifications. The Berry PA program encourages all students to seek help from a PA program faculty or staff member if they are contemplating cheating. Seeking help will not result in negative consequences if cheating has not yet taken place. The Berry PA program strives to support its students. Students are not limited to their coaches for support and may go to any BCPA team member for early intervention.

Cheating will not be tolerated and is in violation of the Berry PA Program Code of Conduct and Technical Standards. Students caught cheating will receive a zero "0%" on the assignment or assessment on which they cheated. Students will then be immediately referred to the Student Progression Committee for further review and consequences up to and including expulsion.

BCPA Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Students may not use artificial intelligence (AI) tools or applications during the program unless explicitly permitted in the course syllabus. AI tools (e.g., Copilot, DALL-E) may be incorporated into coursework only when they align with specific learning objectives and are clearly outlined in the syllabus and assignment instructions. If AI use is permitted, guidelines for appropriate usage and attribution will be provided. Any unauthorized use of AI tools is a violation of the Berry PA Program Code of Conduct and will be addressed through BCPA's Student Progressions Committee.

Assessment Policies

Testing dates and assignment deadlines are absolute. Whenever possible, programmatic exams and assessments will be conducted on a Monday. Course Directors with oversight from the DDE or DCE set

deadlines for papers, written and practical examinations. Students are expected to understand and be responsible for the following PA Program policies related to academic assessments.

Exam Tardiness
Students will not be permitted to enter the classroom to take an exam after another student has completed the exam and left the classroom. The time allocated for assessments will not be extended if a student arrives late. If the student believes that the tardiness resulted from an unforeseen event, the student has two choices:
1. Proceed to the testing site and complete the assessment in the remaining time allotted if no student has yet finished the exam and left the classroom.
2. Inform the Course Director as soon as possible about their tardiness to determine whether it constitutes excused. See missed exam policy.

Missed Exam Policy
- If a student misses a scheduled examination due to an unanticipated emergent life event, the student or his/her/their designee is required to notify the Program promptly. The Course Director, in conjunction with the Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education and/or Program Director, will determine accommodations for a make-up examination.
- If a student misses a scheduled examination due to an illness, the student is required to notify the Program promptly.
  - If the student has documentation from a healthcare provider confirming a recent visit, the Course Director, in conjunction with the Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education and/or Program Director, will determine accommodations to be made regarding a make-up examination.
  - In the event of an illness or other obstacle that precludes a student from taking an exam that is not formally documented by a healthcare professional, this will be classified as an unexcused absence. The course director, in conjunction with the Director of Didactic Education, Director of Clinical Education and/or the Program Director, will determine when a make-up examination will be administered.
- In the event of an unexcused absence for an exam, a make-up exam may be allowed. In this event, the highest score the student can earn is 70.00%, minimum passing.
- Only one make-up examination for an unexcused missed exam will be granted during the pre-clinical/didactic phase. Any additional unexcused missed exams will result in a 0 (zero) grade.

During Assessments
Students will not be permitted into the examination room until cleared by a faculty or staff member for entry.

As the student enters the room, they must leave personal items along the perimeter of the classroom (e.g., backpacks, purses, hats, etc.) at least five minutes before the official exam start time and before sitting at their exam space. All phones, smartwatches, etc., should be in silent mode. Student pockets must be emptied. Students cannot access their materials — including phones — until an exam proctor releases them to leave the examination room. It is at the exam proctor/course director's discretion to assign student seating during assessments.

During an assessment, only approved assessment materials (individual marker board, erasable marker, and if necessary, an approved calculator) and computers are permitted on student desks. All other items (e.g., privacy screens, cell phones, graphing calculators, and other electronic devices,

including smartwatches, wallets, purses, notebooks, paper, and textbooks) are prohibited. Proctors will supply scratch paper, pens, tissue, and noise-reducing headphones if the student requests. Most assessments, other than practical exams, will be administered on a computer. Students browsing the web or looking at other resources during an assessment will violate the Berry PA Program Code of Conduct as stated in this handbook. Reproduction of assessment items in any manner (i.e., written, verbal, or electronic) for the purpose of sharing or distribution is cheating and is also a violation of the Berry PA Program Code of Conduct.

Restroom breaks will be permitted at the discretion of the exam proctor only if an assessment exceeds 90 minutes. Only one student will be allowed to use the restroom at a time. Proctors reserve the right to accompany any student who leaves the assessment room for a restroom break.

Failure to abide by the above policies and procedures during assessments may result in a range of consequences, from the student being asked to leave the assessment room with a recorded zero to being presented to the Student Progression Committee.

Importantly, if a student is contemplating cheating on an assessment, we strongly recommend that they reach out to a PA program faculty member, PA leadership, or their faculty coach for help. PA faculty understand the demands of PA education and can help to support the student before a breach in our code of conduct occurs, resulting in a negative consequence for the student. Self-evaluation and asking for help are a strength. Student resources such as the Ladd Center (counseling center) and Academic Success Center are also available.

Late Assignments
There will be a 10% deduction each day from the final grade for any late assignment for the first 3 (three) calendar days unless otherwise specified in a course syllabus (i.e., required due dates tied to course completion). Assignments will not be accepted after that and will be graded as a 0 (zero). There may be instances when extensions are predetermined, given a student's formal documentation of accommodations from the Academic Success Center. In these cases, the same deductions described in this section will apply with consideration to the extended due date.

Academic Coaches
All PA students are assigned an academic coach from matriculation to graduation. Academic coaches are PA program principal faculty. They will meet with students to monitor their progress and to recommend resources if they are experiencing academic or personal difficulties (importantly, students do not need referral from program faculty to receive services for college resources such as those offered by the Academic Success Center). Students will be required to meet with their coach at least once per semester, then as needed or if referred. Coaches and students must complete a shared student encounter form. Students who fail to maintain program academic requirements are subject to probation or dismissal.

Grade Appeals
When a student disagrees with a course director over a course grade where the academic integrity of the student is not in question, the student should first discuss the concern with the course director to resolve the difference. Concerns must be related to mathematical calculation or reporting error only. If resolution does not occur, either party may refer the concern to the PA Program Director, who will determine whether a calculation or reporting error occurred. If an error occurred, the Program Director will facilitate a correction in collaboration with the course director. PA faculty members, including the

Program Director, will not change grades for any other reason. The program's policy is not to offer extra credit to improve grades.

Remediation, Probation, and Deceleration (A3.15c)

Remediation

Student progress is monitored and documented in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills that place the student "at risk." Remediation is the program-defined and applied process for addressing deficiencies in a student's knowledge and skills, such that correcting these deficiencies is measurable and can be documented. Remediation provides students with opportunities to correct unsatisfactory performance and meet established learning outcomes.

Students must complete the PA Program Remediation Effort & Outcome Form and submit it to the course director. The course director can develop a remediation plan in consultation with the DDE or DCE. The student's faculty coach will be updated regularly by the course director. Remediation plans are individualized for each student for a given deficiency. The development of the plans will be in a consistent manner. Each plan clearly documents the nature of the deficiency, the remediation plan, the timeline for monitoring and completing the remediation (to include re-assessment) and expected outcomes.

Remediation activities may include, but are not limited to:
- Reading and study assignments
- Written self-reflection exercises
- Written response to selected exam items with reference citations
- Individual skills-training or faculty-led tutoring.
- Substituting one or more elective rotation(s) for a rotation(s) in a faculty-designated medical discipline

Please see **Appendix 1** for the program's remediation flowchart, which outlines the remediation processes.

Students must sign the remediation plan acknowledging the steps and timeline for completing the plan. The student is responsible for documenting the remediation efforts with oversight by the course director. Documentation must detail the completed learning activities, and faculty must assess and document the student's ability to meet the learning outcome(s) within the designated time frame as outlined on the plan.
- Each remediation plan is part of the student's academic record and is stored in the student's file.
- For any given remediation plan, the course director confirms successful remediation.
- Failure to fulfill all terms of the remediation plan may result in adverse actions, including placement on academic probation or dismissal from the program as determined by the PA SPC.
- Successful completion of a remediation does not alter course grades unless specified in the course syllabus.

Examination Retake Policy

Course specific retake policies can be found in course syllabi. Course assignment and exam retakes are at the mutual discretion of the course director and Director of Didactic/Director of Clinical Education.

In consideration of timely student progression and end-of-semester time constraints while ensuring student competency, the following policy relates to final end-of-semester didactic assessments/examinations. No *retakes* will be allowed for any end-of-semester final examinations during the didactic year. Students will be *required* to use strength and opportunity reports or evaluated rubrics to develop a self-remediation plan, utilizing the programmatic remediation form, for all final examinations scoring less than 80.00% during the didactic year. Students will be required to meet with their faculty coach within the first two weeks of the following semester to review the outcome of their self-remediation/s.

Academic Probation
Academic probation is a status designated by the PA Student Progression Committee (SPC) when a student fails to meet one or more of the established academic standards of the PA Program as outlined in this Handbook. Academic probation includes behavior and professionalism violations in addition to academic requirements related to the PA Program and Viking Code of Student Conduct and technical standards. The SPC will review student progress on a semesterly basis and then, as needed, for other occurrences. The SPC will notify the Program Director of their decisions. Any student placed on probation will be advised of that action in writing by the Chair of the SPC. The deficiencies will be outlined, and the student will be required to acknowledge receipt of this communication. In addition, the student will be advised as to what course of action will be available to them to remedy those deficiencies.

Any student meeting the criteria for academic probation for two consecutive semesters will undergo a holistic academic record review by the PA SPC and may be dismissed from the program.

Any of the following will result in a student being referred to the PA SPC for consideration of academic and/or professional probation:
- Earning an end-of-semester cumulative GPA below 3.00
- Cumulative GPA below 3.00
- Course grade less than C
- Unsuccessful completion of a remediation plan (based on performance or expanding beyond the established timeframe)
- Failure to uphold the PA Program, Berry Graduate Academic Integrity and Viking Code of Student Conduct
- Failure of one or more components of the Summative Evaluation (Summative Course) on the first attempt
- Failure of ONE (1) or more End-of-Rotation (EOR) exams (See the Clinical Phase section for more information)

The program reserves the right to consider students for academic probation for occurrences that are not listed above if there are concerns about the student meeting the academic standards, including those outlined in the PA Program and Viking Code of Student Conduct. Probation may be disclosed in any final verifications of training, employment letters, state licensing applications and any letters of reference from the PA Program.

Return to Non-probationary Status
In collaboration with the PA Program Director, the PA SPC will remove a student from probation under the following circumstances:

- Earning a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher the next consecutive semester (if applicable) AND
- Meeting the terms as outlined in the student's academic probation letter.

Deceleration

ARC-PA defines deceleration as "the loss of a student from the entering cohort who remains matriculated in the physician assistant program."

In consideration of the rigor of PA education, the Berry PA Program has established robust coaching and remediation policies and procedures. Additionally, PA students have access to program and campus resources.

Due to the nature of the curriculum and academic demands, the Berry PA Program does not offer a part-time option to students. Similarly, it does not offer a reduced educational (course) load. All PA students must take the required course load in its entirety each semester and take the courses in the order in the "lock-step" progression throughout the program. The Berry College PA program does not offer academic deceleration as a component of academic intervention or remediation.

A previously enrolled student who did not complete the PA program must reapply. The application will be treated in the same manner as all other applications. In this instance, the applicant will not be considered for advanced placement, regardless of the student's previous time in the program.

Withdrawal, Leave of Absence and Dismissal (A3.15d)

Withdrawal

Students who have decided to withdraw from the PA program must first meet with their faculty coach and the PA Program Director. Please refer to the Viking Code Handbook for additional information under "Withdrawal from College." Students must withdraw from the entire program and cannot withdraw from individual courses. If a student wishes to withdraw from the Berry PA Program, they should notify the PA Program Director, who will provide them with next steps in the Berry College withdrawal process including:

- The completion of forms from the Dean of Academic Services.
- Meet with their faculty coach.
- Meet with the PA Program Director.
- Meet with the Student-business Office.

Should the student wish to re-enroll, they must reapply. The application will be treated in the same manner as all other applications. In this instance, the applicant will not be considered for advanced placement, regardless of the student's previous time in the program.

Leave of Absence & Approved Absence

The plan of study is designed to be completed in 24 months of continuous study and must be completed in no more than 36 months from the date of initial matriculation. The time limitation to Leave of Absence or Approved Absences reflects the nature of course progression in a cohort program, the importance of timely acquisition of knowledge, and the scaffolding of learning. The necessity for an absence request should be limited to medical issues and/or extreme hardship. Any and all missed work and assessments must be completed as required for completion of coursework, program progression, and/or graduation requirements.

Given the pace of the curriculum, students in the didactic phase of the program may take up to a two-week Approved Absence (with the Program Director's approval) without the need to withdraw from courses. If a student requires a longer absence in the didactic phase, the student will be required to withdraw from coursework and may apply for readmission. Readmission is at the sole discretion of the PA Program Admissions Committee. No advanced standing will be granted if the student is readmitted.

During the clinical phase of the program, students may take one consecutive LOA for a duration of up to twelve (12) months (with the exception that if the student was granted an Approved Absence in the didactic phase, this time is deducted). If a clinical phase student needs time away from the program that extends beyond 12 months, the student must withdraw from the program and will be eligible to apply for readmission. Readmission is at the sole discretion of the PA Program Admissions Committee. No advanced standing will be granted if the student is readmitted. A formal written request for an Approved Absence or LOA must be submitted to the Program Director. Either type of absence cannot be given for academic reasons (i.e., to keep a student from failing). **Please note that this policy and procedure supersedes the Viking Code Handbook and Graduate Academic Catalog.**

Dismissal
Any of the following will result in a student being referred to the PA SPC for consideration of dismissal from the program:
- Earned course grade of less than 70.00%/C.
- Earned GPA of less than 3.00 for two consecutive semesters.
- Cumulative GPA of less than 3.00 at the end of the pre-clinical/didactic phase
- Failure of one or more components of the Summative Program Evaluation on the second attempt.
- Failure to uphold the PA Program and Viking Code of Student Conduct.
- Failure to meet the program's Technical Standards as written in this Handbook.

The program reserves the right to consider students for dismissal for occurrences that are not listed above if there are concerns about the student meeting the academic standards, including those outlined in the PA Program Code of Student Conduct. **Please note that this policy and procedure supersedes the Graduate Academic Catalog and Viking Code Handbook—Involuntary Withdrawal from the College policy and procedure.**

Student Grievances and Appeal (A3.15g)
Decisions regarding violations of academic integrity, academic probation, and dismissal made by the PA Program Student Progression Committee (SPC) can be appealed, in writing, to the PA Program Director and Dean of Charter School of Education & Health Sciences.

A student who chooses to appeal the decision of the PA Program Student Progression Committee (SPC) must present the appeal in writing to the PA Program Director and CSEHS Dean within two (2) days of the SPC's notification to the student of the committee's decision. Written statements from both the student and the Chair of the SPC are obtained prior to the Program Director and Dean's consideration. After reviewing all available pertinent information, the Program Director will notify the PA SPC and student of the appeal decision within 14 days of receiving the involved parties' written statements. This decision is final and cannot be appealed. It is at the determination of the PA program SPC if the student may continue with ongoing course work or be given a mandatory leave of absence while a case is on

appeal. **Please note that this policy and procedure supersedes the Viking Code Handbook and Academic Appeal Process in the Graduate Academic Catalog.**

- Berry Student Complaint Policy **(adapted from Graduate Academic Catalog)**
  As an institution committed to students and open dialogue surrounding issues of concern to students, the college has implemented several policies to ensure student concerns are responded to quickly and fairly.

  In addition to these policies, Berry College has a formal Student Complaint Policy. That policy is used in cases where there is no published policy/appeals process or in cases where a student has exhausted the published policy/ appeals process. This policy is designed:
    o To ensure consistency in the handling of complaints,
    o To provide a process for students to appeal when they believe the college did not follow a written process/policy,
    o To provide a process for the resolution of complaints where no written process/policy exists,
    o To track formal complaints and their resolution as required by federal regulation, and
    o To help students learn how to advocate for themselves through formal processes.

  Before filing a Student Complaint:
  Berry PA Program has written appeals and grievances processes delineated in this handbook. In all cases, students should complete these processes prior to lodging a written complaint.

  Filing a Student Complaint:
    1. All formal written complaints must be filed using the online Student Complaint Form, which may be accessed on VikingWeb, Student tab, under Forms and Reports. The Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs or the Dean of Academic Services are available to assist any student needing help submitting a complaint.
    2. All Student Complaint Forms and supporting documentation submitted through the online system will be routed to the appropriate vice president for review and investigation. Complaints not designated for a specific vice president will be sent to the chief of staff who will review the complaint and respond or forward it as necessary to the appropriate vice president for review and investigation. The vice president investigating the complaint may request additional documentation and personal visits with students, faculty, staff, and administrators.
    3. The appropriate vice president will respond to the complainant and strive to resolve the complaint within ten business days. The student will receive written communication of the resolution of the complaint.
    4. A student may appeal the decision of a vice president or chief of staff directly to the president by letter delivered to the office. The president will respond to the student in writing, normally within ten business days of receipt of the complaint. The decision of the president is final.
    5. All student complaints will be kept on file for four years.

Attendance

Becoming a PA is more than taking tests. Becoming a PA necessitates interaction, engagement, and collaboration in learning activities. To ensure that the student gets the most out of the student's

education, the PA program faculty assesses each student's engagement with the coursework and learning activities. If attendance and participation expectations are not met, this may result in disciplinary measures, including but not limited to warnings, academic probation, or dismissal. Excessive absences from required in-person activities in one or more classes may result in failure of courses and dismissal from the program. This policy is designed to ensure that the student receives the training they need to be a successful PA.

Given the nature of the Berry PA Program curriculum this program is residential and as such mandatory in-person attendance is required for all classes and activities. Classes and assessments are conducted in such a way that they cannot be reasonably completed through any online or virtual portal. PA students are expected to be in attendance for all didactic and clinical activities. The PA Program's block schedule specifically includes time when students are not involved in class, lab, or other required activities such that, if needed, students can attend outside appointments (e.g., medical appointments).

Other than posted holidays, semester breaks, personal days, and when released from the program, students should expect to be present on campus from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday through Friday, during their didactic phase and call back weeks in the clinical phase. Additionally, there may be a need for evening hours and occasional Saturday hours. Students are expected to arrive for all required learning activities on time, which means arriving at least five minutes prior to the start of the session.

During the clinical phase of the program, students should expect to be on-site with their preceptor during typical practice hours for the preceptor and site. This may include weekends, evenings, and holidays. The preceptor dictates the clinical rotation schedule. Students are not permitted to request changes. Should a student need to request time off/absence, please refer to the Absence Policy section of this Handbook. The Berry College holidays do not apply during the clinical phase of the PA program. Students should refer to their SCPE course syllabus for further information.

Request for Personal/Sick Time Off
Didactic Phase:
If a student needs to miss any portion of a required learning activity, he/she/they must notify the appropriate Course Director before the start of class. All course activities are required. Failure to attend violates the PA Program Code of Conduct unless the absence is excused. Repeated unexcused absences will be referred to the SPC and may lead to academic probation or dismissal from the program. Students will score a 0 (zero) on any graded activities that were completed during an unexcused absence.

The student must present appropriate documentation to the Course Director to be granted an excused absence. In the event of an absence, the student should contact the Course Director as soon as possible. The student is responsible for all work missed during an absence. Opportunities to make up missed points in the form of class activities and quizzes will be at the discretion of each Course Director.

The following are considered excused absences:
- Personal illness or injury. For an excused absence, valid and complete written documentation (i.e., a note from a physician or other qualifying medical professional) will be required as supporting documentation. However, no protected health information or confidential medical information is required to be submitted or documented.

- A personal emergency or emergency in the student's immediate family (i.e., parent, grandparent, guardian, spouse, child, or sibling of the student), including death, hospitalization, or another emergency.
- Attendance at a professional meeting provided that the Course Director has pre-approved the absence.
- Students can contact the Office of the Registrar for documentation to provide to the court to request a postponement of Jury Duty.
- Religious observance accommodations will be considered. Each student must individually submit a request to the Program Director for absences due to religious observances by the first day of each semester. The Program Director will inform the Course Directors of the request, and the student will be informed if the accommodation will be granted and the terms of such accommodation that will be provided. The student must work with the Course Directors to minimize educational disruptions and schedule make-up activities.
- Severe weather (This section applies to clinical phase students during Call Back Weeks.)
  - If the College cancels classes or other services, notifications will be sent via email, and the College's webpage. Otherwise, please assume the College is open and classes are in session.
  - Individual faculty can make decisions about the need to cancel a particular class or shift to REMOTE if the campus remains open. A faculty member will notify their students directly if they cancel a class or move it to remote.
  - Students are not expected to place travel for class attendance above their own individual health and safety. Students who are unable to attend class for safety reasons should not be penalized.
  - It is the student's responsibility to contact the course-director or faculty coach prior to missing class.

Clinical Phase Attendance and Time Off

During the clinical phase of the PA Program, students must attend all scheduled courses, exams, and clinical rotation activities. It is the PA Program policy that students are expected to actively participate in all supervised clinical practice experience hours set by the preceptor and/or clinical site. This time may include daytime business, evening, overnight, weekend, and holiday hours and supervised call time. The rotations are full time, and students are to be available seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day for the assignment of hours to be worked. Students should expect to attend clinical days as assigned by the preceptor and be present, on average, at least 40-50 hours per week. Students must not alter their rotation start/stop date. **College holidays do not apply to the clinical phase**.

Attendance at all scheduled shifts is mandatory. Students are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes early to each of their scheduled shifts. Repeated tardiness reflects a lack of professionalism and is considered unprofessional.

The PA Program generally does not permit absences for any reason other than personal illness or a family emergency. Students are not permitted time off to study for exams or to seek employment, except as noted later in this section. **Any length of absence (an hour, ½ day, full day) must be reported to the Director of Clinical Education immediately.**

If a preceptor unexpectedly needs to be away from the clinical site for any period of time outside of his or her normal schedule, the student must immediately notify the PA Program so alternate arrangements may be made. **Failure to notify the PA Program may result in the student receiving an unexcused**

absence. An unexcused absence may result in the loss of a personal day (described below). When a PA student is participating in a clinical rotation he or she must be adequately supervised at all times. A licensed medical provider (MD, DO, PA, NP) must be on site and evaluate every patient seen by the student. See the Supervision Policy of the PA Program Handbook for additional information.

Unexcused absence is grounds for failure of a rotation or clinical phase didactic course. Every unexcused absence and/or habitual tardiness will be reviewed by the DCE and/or Program Director. Students exhibiting such behavior patterns may be brought to the PA Student Progression Committee (SPC) for academic review. Action by the SPC may include giving the student a formal warning, placing the student on academic probation, or student dismissal from the program.

For Clinical Rotation absences due to:
1. *Personal illness or family emergency*: The student MUST email the Course Director and DCE (if not the same as the Course Director) AND call the rotation site/preceptor before starting assigned clinic time on each day of an absence. Failure to notify both the program and the rotation site/preceptor will result in an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence will result in the loss of a personal day. In the event of an absence, additional coursework or clinical time may be assigned at the discretion of the Course Director. Extended absence, even if excused, may require a Leave of Absence (LOA) from the Program, which will alter the student's anticipated graduation date and incur extra tuition expenses. For additional information, please refer to the Leave of Absence section of the PA Program Student Handbook.
2. *Personal Days – Two (2)*: Students may request a total of two personal days for use during the entire clinical phase. A personal day may not be requested for the first day of a rotation. Students cannot take the day before or after a legal holiday as a personal day. Students must complete the Request for Rotation Absence Form and submit it to the DCE via email no later than 30 days prior to the requested day off. Personal days may be taken in ½ day increments. The DCE must approve All personal day requests before the absence.

Outside of unforeseen personal illness or family emergency, the student may not plan any absence unless the PA Program DCE or Program Director approves in advance. **The student should not, under any circumstances, directly ask a preceptor for permission for an absence for any reason.**

Students may request to be excused for religious holy days; however, these dates must be discussed and approved by the DCE and/or Program Director prior to the beginning of the clinical phase.

Process to Contact Program Representative Regarding Emergencies
Regardless of location or activity, the student should seek immediate medical attention or help in an emergency.

If a student has an emergency or urgent need, the student is required to reach out to the Director of Didactic Education (DDE) or designated individual if in the didactic phase of the program, or Director of Clinical Education (DCE) or designated faculty member if in the clinical or summative phase of the program. Students should reach out to the designated individual within 24 hours and, if not, as soon as safely able.

In such cases, the student should send an email to the designated individual as follows:

- In the subject line of the email type "EMERGENCY" or "URGENT NEED."
- In the body of the email:
  - Concisely describe the concern or incident without specifically stating any sensitive personal or medical information
  - List a phone number where the student may be contacted (the designated individual will attempt to contact the student at this number).

The student is still required to submit the Berry PA Student Incident/Injury Report Form and/or Absence Request Form(s). Forms and further information can be located in Exxat.

Clinical Site Policies (A3.01)

Students should be aware that a Clinical Affiliation agreement exists between clinical sites and the Berry College PA Program. These agreements may specify that certain program policies will be superseded by those at the clinical site. During initial site visits with clinical preceptors, the Berry PA Program requests the following:

The site understands that their Agency is responsible for orienting students, before direct patient care, to the following information: (1) the Agency's Exposure Control Plan for blood-borne pathogens and how students can obtain a copy of the written plan; (2) Agency rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; (3) Applicable work schedule and on-call schedule.

Should a preceptor or site fail to orient a student, the student should reach out to the Director of Clinical Education as soon as possible for assistance.

Student Supervision

Appropriate supervision is fundamental to the role of a PA student. The PA student cannot legally or ethically provide patient care without appropriate supervision. While participating in clinical training experiences, PA students will obtain supervision from a preceptor of record [PA, physician, or other licensed healthcare professional] designated by the Program. Information regarding the designated preceptor of record at clinical training sites can be found in Exxat. Preceptors of record may designate, when appropriate, alternate preceptors to aid in the students learning experience while meeting learning outcomes.

If a circumstance arises in which a student is asked or expected to perform clinical procedures or to deliver patient care services without adequate or appropriate supervision, the student must politely but firmly decline and immediately contact the Director of Clinical Education (DCE). The student may face termination as a PA student if the student fails to exercise common sense regarding the welfare of the patients the student encounters during the student's clinical training.

To protect the student's personal and professional integrity and to avoid potential legal liability, do not perform any patient care activity if:
- The authorized preceptor or his/her/their designee is not on the immediate premises
- The student has not received adequate instruction and/or is not proficient in skill or knowledgeable about the care the student is asked to deliver
- The student has reason to believe that such care or procedure may be harmful to the patient
- There is inadequate supervision available at the time the student is expected to carry out the assignment

• The care or procedure is self-initiated (i.e., the PA student assumes or decides that a particular service or procedure should be performed)
• The activity is beyond the scope of the student's role as a PA student

When in doubt, contact the Berry PA DCE.

Student Solicitation of Clinical Sites and Preceptors (A3.03)

PA students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors.

Students may recommend sites and preceptors to the Director of Clinical Education. The program's clinical team or designee will review and evaluate student-recommended sites and preceptors for educational suitability. It is at the PA Program's sole discretion to approve clinical sites and preceptors for use as supervised clinical practice experiences for individual students. For further information, please contact the Director of Clinical Education.

Confidentiality/HIPAA

The PA Program reinforces the federal regulations regarding patient confidentiality as described in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Students receive HIPAA training as part of the program, and the training records are maintained in their student files in Exxat. PA students must understand the following regarding confidentiality:
• A PA student will hold in confidence all personal patient information and agency information entrusted to them as per HIPAA guidelines
• Confidential clinical information (written or oral) given to a PA student is considered privileged within the content of the learning site and the enrolled course.
• All PA students are required to sign a confidentiality statement at the time of enrollment in the program.
  o The student is expected to comply with the terms of the statement throughout the program. Failure to comply with the confidentiality policy represents unethical conduct for a PA student. These actions may lead to failure of the course in which the incident occurs or even dismissal from the program.
• Students are expressively prohibited from taking photographs or videos of patients without proper preceptor and patient consent. Distribution of photographs, video, or discussion of patient encounters (even without patient identifying information) via e-mail or social websites is considered a significant violation of HIPAA standards and program policies. It is grounds for referral to the PA SPC and dismissal from the program. Any student with questions regarding implementing HIPAA standards or other patient confidentiality matters should immediately contact DCE for guidance.

The American Academy of Physician Associate's Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession is a foundational document for the PA profession and can be accessed here: 16-EthicalConduct.pdf (aapa.org)

Clinical Rotation Site Visits & Evaluation

The program must complete initial and ongoing evaluations of all sites and preceptors used for SCPEs, to ensure students are able to fulfill program learning outcomes. The PA program clinical team will conduct initial site visits and confirm preceptor orientation to learning outcomes during the first student's rotation.

For ongoing evaluation, a faculty member will perform a site visit during the first rotation at new clinical rotation sites with the student and preceptor. It is program policy that each student will have a minimum of one site visit by program faculty in the clinical phase of training. SCPE sites may be monitored more frequently as deemed necessary.

For all site visits where students will be present, the DCE or other designated faculty/staff will contact the student by email, giving instructions on arranging the site visit. Generally, the student will be provided with several dates and times for the visit; the student is responsible for arranging and coordinating the visit with their SCPE preceptor, matching one of the recommended dates and times provided by the DCE.

Additionally, students will be required to complete two evaluations per SCPE for their preceptor of record and the clinical site. This data will be used as part of the program's ongoing self-assessment and evaluation of clinical sites and preceptors. Students must demonstrate professionalism in this process and provide constructive feedback.

Use of Exxat System

All students are required to use the web-based Exxat database, evaluation, and tracking system throughout their time in the PA program. Students will be required to maintain student forms, immunizations, health clearance, background checks, drug screens, and other required documents through this system to remain in compliance with the PA program and clinical site requirements. Orientation to the Exxat system will be provided to all students upon matriculation to the program and again during the clinical phase boot camp prior to beginning their clinical rotations.

Specific to the clinical phase, the Exxat system will ensure students are meeting program expectations and are able to acquire the competencies needed for clinical practice. Clinical patient encounter data will be collected via Exxat and will include, but not be limited to, preceptor and site information, student logging of patient encounters, time logs, student evaluation of the site and preceptor, site visits, and graded and ungraded preceptor evaluation of the student. Student logging of all patient encounters via Exxat will allow for prompt review and evaluation of students' progress toward meeting the SCPE objectives. The monitoring of this system will allow the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) and other faculty members to review, analyze, and document student and preceptor experiences and concerns.

Student failure to maintain required Exxat documentation may result in a referral to the SPC.

Student Documentation Guidelines for Patient Records

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines permit students to document a patient encounter. The preceptor must personally verify the documentation components of the E/M services rather than re-document, as long as this is consistent with state and institutional policies.

As stated in the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations on documentation by students fact sheet: "The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is revising the Medicare Claims Processing Manual, Chapter 12, Section 100.1.1, to update policy on Evaluation and Management (E/M) documentation to allow the teaching physician to verify in the medical record any student documentation of components of E/M services, rather than re-documenting the work. Students may document services in the medical record. However, the teaching physician must verify all student

documentation or findings in the medical record, including history, physical exam, and/or medical decision-making. The teaching physician must personally perform (or re-perform) the physical exam and medical decision-making activities of the E/M service being billed, but may verify any student documentation of them in the medical record, rather than re-documenting this work."

CMS Webpage: https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/Downloads/MM10412.pdf

AMA Webpage: https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/medicare-medicaid/student-documentation-must-teaching-physicians-re-document

PAEA Webpage: https://paeaonline.org/resources/public-resources/paea-news/cms-finalizes-student-documentation-proposal

When a PA student is unable to document in a chart, it is advisable to document the patient encounter on a separate piece of paper so that the student can continue practicing their documentation skills and obtain feedback from the preceptor.

SCPE Selection and Placement

All programs are held to specific educational standards set forth by our accrediting body, the ARC-PA, to ensure that all students receive quality supervised clinical practice experiences appropriate for the PA student. Given this, the PA Program must follow specific time-consuming and detailed processes for recruiting, securing, vetting, and maintaining SCPE sites and preceptors.

Because of concerns regarding SCPE appropriateness, safety, and monitoring, the ARC-PA does not permit an accredited program to require students to develop their own sites/experiences. In such circumstances, the Director of Clinical Education must evaluate that site, ensuring that the clinical site and preceptor are of the same caliber as the Program's other sites/preceptors. For this reason, and the amount of time and energy required to evaluate such sites, the Program is not in the position to evaluate all recommended sites or preceptors.

Students' assignments at SCPE sites occur through a computerized selection and matching process within Exxat. Prior to the start of SCPEs, all students will have an opportunity to preference rotations, sites, or preceptors. Preceptors and sites provided to the students will have completed the program's review and approval process. Once students have entered their preferences, the Exxat system will be initiated to match students to SCPE sites. This system attempts to place all students within most of their selected and desired clinical rotation areas. This system intends to fairly and evenly place students at rotation sites without individual favoritism, attempting to maximize student choices and needs.

In addition to the above, the following policies apply to SCPEs:
- The PA program secures all SCPE preceptors and sites for students.
- Students cannot develop their own SCPEs.
- However, students can recommend a specific clinical rotation site to the DCE, who will then consider the site's merits and decide to explore the site for incorporation into the Program SCPEs. This is a time-consuming process for the Program and the DCE, and, as such, students need to understand that not all recommendations will be pursued or explored beyond the initial evaluation of the site's merits.

- The DCE and Program Director reserve the right to make specific placements as needed.
- Decisions by the Program or DCE regarding SCPEs and placement at SCPEs are final and cannot be appealed.
- Students may request hardship accommodation with the DCE (e.g., family issue, medical issue).
    - Students need to understand that requesting accommodation does not guarantee accommodations.
    - The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) will make every attempt to accommodate reasonable requests for accommodations; however, students need to understand that, if implemented, some accommodations may result in a delay in graduation.
    - For example, if a student, for medical reasons, states they cannot drive more than 10 minutes for clinical rotation experiences, the DCE will attempt to secure all SCPEs within that range - but supplying the required rotations within a limited range may prevent the student from completing the required eight rotations within the normal time span resulting in a delay of graduation.
- Unless initiated by the Director of Clinical Education, students are not permitted to switch rotations with another student.
- Students may **request to change their Elective rotation one time**. The request must be made in writing to the DCE **by January 1ˢᵗ of their clinical year**. No guarantees can be made regarding the change, as the site and preceptor must agree to the change.

Student Attire

Professional attire helps create a positive first impression and instills confidence in patients. It conveys competence, expertise, and a sense of reliability, which is crucial for establishing trust between healthcare providers and patients. As such the Berry PA Program has established the following student attire policy. These requirements help to reduce the risk of harm, exposure and infection.

Clinical supervisors, preceptors, or PA faculty reserves the right to temporarily dismiss any student who is not appropriately attired from a clinical or educational site. That action may result in requiring further professional, developmental training for the student, and it may also interfere with successfully completing the rotation, graduating on time or completing the program altogether.

Campus Setting: As expected in clinical practice, business casual is required. Clothing should be clean and neat, allowing for freedom of movement without inappropriate exposure to fully permit the student to participate in all educational activities. In addition, students should follow these guidelines:
- Hair should be neat, clean, and of a professional style that stays out of the face and does not come into contact with patients when providing simulated or actual patient care. Beards and/or mustaches must be kept well-groomed and clean and permit effective seal for a respirator.
- Head coverings: Hats, caps, and other head coverings are not permitted except for medical or religious purposes.
- Fingernails should be no longer than ¼ inch in length, so they do not interfere with performing physical examinations.
- Neither slippers nor pajamas are permitted.
- Tops that expose the torso or are low-cut at the neck are not permitted. Logos on shirts (including sweatshirts) cannot contain profanity, political messaging, or explicit images.
- Shorts/skirts must be long enough to extend past the fingertips of the wearer's fully extended arm.

- All clothes must be without holes or rips.
- For labs and simulations: The OSHA occupational foot protection standard requires the use of protective footwear when employees are working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects or objects piercing the sole and where there is a possibility of the employee's feet being exposed to hazards. Shoes must be close-toed; no sandals, flip-flops, crocs with holes, or high heels are permitted.

Lab and Clinical (Rotation) Settings: In addition to the requirements listed above, the following policies will be in effect:
- Scrubs may only be worn when directed to do so by the preceptor.
- Hospital-issued scrubs should be donned and returned the same day; students should not attempt to launder and reuse personally.
- Fingernails should be no longer than ¼ inch in length. Nail polish is prohibited. Artificial nails are not permitted in clinical settings.
- False eyelashes are prohibited.
- A clean white waist-length laboratory coat, with a PA program-issued patch and college-issued name badge, is to always be worn in the clinical setting unless otherwise specified by the clinical site and preceptor.
- The OSHA occupational foot protection standard requires the use of protective footwear when employees work in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, or objects piercing the sole, and where the employee's feet may be exposed to hazards. Shoes must be close-toed; no sandals, flip-flops, crocs with holes, or high heels are permitted.
- Clinical sites may require the removal of jewelry/piercings, natural hair colors, and the covering up of tattoos.
- Strong perfumes, colognes, oils, lotions, and/or aftershave lotions should not be worn.
- Clinical sites may have additional appearance and attire policies. Please communicate with the student's preceptor and DCE with any questions.

Student Identification (A3.06)

According to the American Academy of Physician Associates, PAs should continue to use "physician assistant" or "PA" as their official legal title in a professional capacity, particularly in clinical settings and with patients, until the jurisdiction governing their licensure and practice has formally adopted the title of "physician associate."

While Berry College PA Program is using the most current professional nomenclature, we will require Berry PA students to identify as PA or physician *assistant* students while on clinical rotations in states that have not formally adopted the new terminology. Additionally, we recommend they continue to refer to themselves as "physician assistants" or "PAs" and follow AAPA recommendations upon graduation. For further information: https://www.aapa.org/title-change/

The Berry Physician Associate (PA) Program is seeking accreditation from The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). This is the only US accreditation organization for physician assistant/associate programs. Upon successfully completing the Berry PA Program, students will be eligible to take the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) PA National Certifying Examination (PANCE), the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States.

Oregon is the first and only state to formally adopt the name change as of June 6th, 2024.

During didactic phase activities, PA students must be identifiable by:
- Wearing the Berry College student ID and lanyard at all times when on campus.

During any clinical encounters in the didactic and clinical phases of training, PA students must have visible identification that indicates they are a Berry PA Student or physician assistant student. Such identification includes:
- Wearing the program-issued short white lab coat with student name.
- Wearing the program-issued name tag that clearly identifies themselves as Berry PA student **and** wearing their facility-issued identification badge when supplied by clinical sites.
- Students are prohibited from wearing their branded scrubs or white coats, College identification badges, or name tags in non-program-approved activities.
- Students are not permitted to identify themselves as Berry PA students in non-program-approved activities.

Student Services Timely Access and Referral (A3.10)

The PA Program is committed to the success and well-being of all students and recognizes the importance of timely access to services addressing personal issues that may impact progress in the PA program. To expedite access to services, students do NOT need the prior approval of the PA faculty to access the below services. Students do need to provide documentation (without personal health information) to the program for any missed classroom/exam time as per the attendance and missed exam policies outlined in this Handbook.

Medical Emergencies
In the case of an urgent or emergent medical need, students should pursue medical services emergently regardless of program activities. Although faculty are not permitted to provide healthcare to students, they may assist students in the case of a true emergency. In case of a medical emergency, please call 911. Students should notify the program leadership (Program Director, Director of Didactic Education, or Director of Clinical Education) as soon as possible regarding an emergency.

Berry Health Center (Ladd Center)
Currently enrolled students can make an appointment online through their Medicat Patient Portal or by calling the Health Center at 706.236.2267. Same-day appointments are often available. Walk-in availability cannot be guaranteed.

It is strongly recommended that students with chronic conditions seek a community provider. The Health Center and PA Program can assist students with making local connections for health care.

If the student has an emergency or the student needs help aftercare hours, please call campus police at 706-236-2262 or call 911.

Berry Counseling Center (Ladd Center)
The Berry Counseling Center is available to support students are available weekdays from 8 am-5 pm and can be reached at 706.236.2259 if the student needs to make an appointment.

Anyone in the Berry Community, including faculty and staff, can utilize the resource Thriving Campus to find mental health resources off campus if needed.

It is strongly recommended that students with chronic conditions seek a community provider. The Counseling Center and PA Program can assist students with making local connections for mental health care.

Academic and Student Services (A1.04)

Academic Success Center

Berry PA students have access to the Academic Success Center. While PA Program faculty coaches are readily available to support students, we recognize that additional resources may be needed. Students should reach out to the Academic Success Center to support their needs when needed.

The Berry Academic Success Center includes the accessibility and accommodations resources. If students or admissions candidates have a documented need for accommodations, we strongly recommend contacting the Academic Success Center as soon as possible. Importantly, admissions candidates **should not** notify the PA program of any disability while still in the admissions process. Instead, they should confidently contact the Academic Success Center with any questions.

Reasonable accommodation will be offered for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Accessibility Resources Office in the Academic Success Center evaluates all requests for academic accommodation at Berry College. Fulfilling the technical standards with reasonable accommodation does not guarantee that a graduate of the program will be able to fulfill the technical standards for employment, residency/fellowship, or certifying board. Candidates with disabilities are encouraged to contact the program and Accessibility Resources Office in the Academic Success Center early to discuss accommodation needs.

Compliance with technical standards will be assessed regularly throughout the Program. Students must verify that they meet these Technical Standards before or at the time of matriculation to the Berry PA Program and maintain them during their time as a Berry PA student. Students are obligated to alert the PA Program in a timely fashion of any change in their ability to meet the Technical Standards. Students are subject to dismissal if they do not remain in compliance with the minimum Technical Standards of the Berry PA Program during the entire course of study if they do not participate fully in all aspects of PA training, or if they do not meet minimum competencies for entry-level practice (with or without reasonable accommodation).

Office of Belonging and Community Engagement

The Office of Belonging and Community Engagement serves the campus in envisioning and implementing Berry's Culture of belonging in a sustainable way. In addition to educational opportunities and training, the office supports students by providing identity-based student organizations, community programming, resiliency strategies, bias report and response procedures, and student advocacy.

Memorial Library

The Memorial Library is conveniently located on campus and available to Berry PA students with both on-campus and online resources. The Library provides a suite of services and resources to help students access and use the library and learning/information resources in person and remotely.

- Off-campus access is supported by OpenAthens. Students can authenticate using their Berry College credentials to access electronic content (databases, journals, eBooks) from anywhere.
- Dedicated library space for print materials, including materials on reserve for student use.
- Dedicated study spaces, including spaces that support collaborative group study as well as individual quiet study.
- Professional staff to assist with general requests, such as borrowing materials and first-tier references.
- Academic librarians to assist with reference and research questions, including help with specific assignments and recommendations for resources. Students can walk in and ask for help or "Schedule an Appointment" from the library home page. In addition to providing reference assistance during the day, academic librarians provide online night reference until 9 PM.

Student Financial Services
The Student Financial Services Center hopes to provide guidance to the student in creating a financial plan for attending Berry College.

The Cage Center
The Cage Athletic and Recreation Center is a focal point of student activity on Berry's 27,000-acre campus. The 131,000-square-foot facility houses a performance arena that seats nearly 2,000 for varsity athletics, a natatorium with observation seating, an expansive fitness center, racquetball courts, and an indoor walk/jog track, among its many amenities.

Students will have access to numerous athletic, intramural and fitness programs offered within the facility, which enrich the lifestyles of our campus community.

Security & Safety (A1.02g & A3.08a)
Students, faculty, and staff are required to review material on personal safety and security on the Berry College website Campus Police page. Information can be found here regarding campus security and safety, including but not limited to medical emergencies, protection, Berry Alert, and the annual Cleary Act report.

The PA Program will provide appropriate training to students regarding Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards prior to beginning SCPEs. The clinical preceptor shall ensure that students have access and orientation to the facility's rules, regulations, policies, and procedures with which the students are expected to comply, including the Facility's OSHA, personal and workplace security, and personal safety policies and procedures, and shall address all appropriate safety measures for all students on site. The clinical preceptor will be responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure students' personal safety and security during the SCPE. This is clearly communicated to preceptors and agreed upon in a signed Preceptor Agreement obtained prior to the SCPEs. (A3.08a)

Specific to Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs), newly developed sites are evaluated for safety on a minimum of three occasions: (a) by program faculty prior to establishing clinical rotations via the SCPES Site Visit Evaluation form; (b) by students, via the mid- and end-of-rotation Student Evaluation of Clinical Rotation Site form; (c) by program faculty when performing monitoring site visits via the Monitoring Site Visit form. For established sites with active student placements, a minimum of one site visit per year is required to ensure the appropriateness and safety of the site. Students will not be placed

or permitted to continue experiences at sites with any identified safety concerns until those issues are rectified.

Inherent Risk Assumed

Choosing the path of medicine is a noble and self-sacrificing calling. Students should accept responsibility for their decision to enter a profession and professional training program that has inherent risk to their personal health and safety while performing their duties, responsibilities, and training in this role of caring for other human beings. The Berry PA student accepts this risk by enrolling in this PA Program.

Universal Precautions

Students are responsible for following OSHA Guidelines for universal precautions at the clinical rotation site, including the use of gloves, care and disposal of sharp objects, use of protective eyewear, protective clothing, and other precautionary measures. (A3.08a)

Transportation Policies

Specifically for student safety and security, and unless in an emergency or critical situation, faculty (e.g., principal faculty and instructional faculty, clinical preceptors and/or clinical site staff) are not permitted to transport students.

Exposure, Accident Reporting and Medical Care (A3.08b-c)

The student must notify their course director (didactic phase) or preceptor (clinical phase) immediately if a student believes they have been exposed to an infectious disease or has been involved in an accident, they should seek medical care immediately and consult their primary medical provider as soon as possible for guidance and assistance, as well as appropriate treatment and care. Ultimately, the student is responsible for initiating care after exposure to possible pathogens. All costs related to medical care are the student's sole responsibility. Please refer to the absence policy for any and all time missed programmatic courses and/or activities.

The student must notify their Director of Didactic Education (didactic phase) or Director of Clinical Education, Preceptor (clinical phase) and facility employee health (if available) must be notified of any exposure/possible exposure or accident within 24 hours of the incident. The student and faculty member must complete the Student Incident/Injury Report Form located in Exxat.

Procedures after possible exposure to blood-borne pathogen(s) or needle stick:
The following outlines the procedure to follow in the event of possible exposure to blood-borne pathogen(s) or a needle stick occurs:
- Act as quickly as possible.
- Wash the site of exposure thoroughly with soap and water (or water only for mucous membranes).
- Notify the preceptor of the exposure AND, if applicable, the nursing supervisor who should request source-person clinical information and blood work (e.g., HBsAg, HCV antibody, HIV) unless HIV, HBV, and HCV status is already known.
- The site may require the student to complete an incident report.
  - Do NOT fill out a workman's comp or employee health claim
- It is very important to report all exposures and get follow-up care promptly.

- This follow-up care begins by the student going to the nearest emergency department.
- After being seen emergently by a healthcare professional, follow up with the student's primary care provider is recommended to determine if the student needs post-exposure prophylaxis. If the student does not have a PCP, contact the Health Center at Berry College for a referral at 706.236.2267.
- Notify the PA Program (by contacting the Director of Clinical Education or Program Director) as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours.
- After medical care has been addressed, the student and faculty member must complete the PA Student Incident/Injury Report Form for documentation purposes as part of the student's record.

Financial responsibility: For any exposure or injuries that may occur as part of training in the PA Program, please note that the payment for medical evaluation, treatment, and care is the sole responsibility of the student and their insurance carrier.

Program participation following exposure: Following an accidental exposure or needlestick injury, the PA Program Director will determine on an individual basis if the student can continue participation in PA Program activities.

Faculty as Healthcare Providers to Students (A3.09)

The Berry PA Program faculty members (principal faculty, medical director, area clinical education director, and program director) may not serve as healthcare providers to students while enrolled in the PA program. The PA Program faculty can assist in referring students to a health care provider in the community and provide supportive measures in case of emergencies but cannot serve directly as the student's health care provider.

Additionally, students have access to the Health Center on campus: https://berry.edu/student-life/life-on-campus/health-center/.

Clinical Students Evaluation of Faculty/Staff as Patients

If students are completing clinical activities in facilities that Berry PA faculty and staff may utilize for their own medical care, at no time are students permitted to participate in the care of the faculty or staff person/s, including but not limited to accessing the individual's medical record or participating in discussions regarding the individual's medical care. Students are responsible for immediately notifying their clinical preceptor(s) once they become aware of such a conflict.

Student Employment Policies

Working for the PA Program (A3.04, A3.05)

PA students cannot be required to work for the PA program, nor can they serve as instructional faculty, clinical, or administrative staff.

PA students may have extensive clinical backgrounds but are never allowed to substitute for or function as instructional faculty (preceptors) or clinical staff (e.g., nursing, technologist). Students with specific prior knowledge, experiences, and skills may share their knowledge and skills in didactic and hands-on

learning sessions with direct faculty oversight; however, such students are not to be the primary instructor or instructor of record for any curriculum component.

Student Employment (A3.15e)
Because of the pace and rigor of the Berry PA Program, students are strongly discouraged from working while in the program. PA education is considered among the most difficult graduate education experiences in the United States. Students who are employed during enrollment may struggle significantly and jeopardize their academic success.

Students who are employed or are considering employment should make this known to their academic coach. Students working and finding themselves in academic difficulty will be advised to consider terminating that work. Coursework and all required program activities will not be changed to conform to student employment. The student's education must remain the student's primary responsibility when balancing work and school.

Allegation of Student Mistreatment Policy (A3.15f)
The Berry PA Program is dedicated to maintaining a positive environment in which students can pursue educational and professional activities in an inclusive and respectful culture. Mistreatment is considered destructive of the principles that guide the program's mission, values, and goals. The PA Program defines mistreatment as a student being treated unfairly or used in a capacity that is not considered reasonable. When assessing behavior that might represent mistreatment, students are expected to consider the conditions, circumstances, and environment surrounding such behavior.

Procedure: When mistreatment is believed to have occurred, the initial step is to report the concern. All members of the program are encouraged to report incidents of mistreatment. Those who wish to report a concern are advised to seek out any faculty member in the PA Program, including either the Program Director or Medical Director, to discuss an allegation of mistreatment. Informal resolution will be the initial step in attempting to resolve concerns of mistreatment. Students who experience mistreatment on a clinical rotation should reach out to the Director of Clinical Education immediately. If attempts at informal resolution are not successful, the student(s) can submit a formal complaint to any of the following:
- Lindsey Taylor, Vice President of Student Affairs, ltaylor@berry.edu
- Alan Hughes, Dean of CSEHS, rhughes@berry.edu
- Lindsay Norman, Title IX Coordinator, lnorman@berry.edu
- Wayne Phipps, Human Resource Director, wphipps@berry.edu

Student Grievances: Harassment (A1.02j)
Title IX is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Title IX prohibits use of federal money to support sex discrimination in education programs and provides individuals effective protection against such practices. Title IX applies, with a few specific exceptions, to all aspects of federally funded education programs and activities. In addition to traditional education institutions such as colleges, universities, and elementary and secondary schools, Title IX also applies to any education or training program operated by a recipient of federal financial assistance.

Consistent with Title IX, as well as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and any related federal, state, and local laws, Berry prohibits all unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of sex,

gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation in any employment decision, education program or educational activity. This policy applies to all members of the Berry Community. *As required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Berry does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in its educational, extracurricular, athletic or other programs and activities, or in the context of admissions or employment at the College.*

As part of its commitment to maintaining a community free of discrimination, and in compliance with Title IX's mandate, Berry will address allegations of sexual misconduct or harassment in a timely and effective way, provide resources as needed for affected persons (Reporters, Complainants, Respondents and third parties within the Berry Community), and not tolerate retaliation against any person who reports sex/gender discrimination or sexual misconduct.

Any individual designated by Berry to have the duty to report alleged sex/gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and/or retaliation (known as a "Mandatory Reporter") and who fails to report such conduct may be subjected to sanctions by Berry.

Title IX Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

Inquiries about the application of Title IX, and any PA student who believes they have experienced or witnessed any incident of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, are encouraged to contact Berry's Title IX Coordinator, Lindsey Taylor. Additional information can be found on Berry's website: https://berry.edu/student-life/dean-of-students/title-ix/

Inquiries about the application of Title IX also can be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Student Participation in Leadership and Program Committees

We take great pride in our students and provide students with opportunities to participate in the Program Committees.

Student Officer Roles

The PA Program has several student officer roles. Class officers are elected by their classmates during the first week of the second semester of the didactic phase of the program and remain in those roles until graduation. Roles are cohort-specific (i.e., each cohort will have different class officers). Students can voluntarily resign from leadership/committee and mentorship roles at any time. Students placed on academic probation may be removed from leadership/committee and mentorship roles at the discretion of the Student Progression Committee. Students placed on academic probation for behavioral or professionalism reasons are considered automatically removed from leadership/committee and mentorship roles as of the date they are placed in such status. If a student resigns or is removed from a leadership/committee role, class elections will be reconducted. The Program has the following class officer roles:

- Class President
  - Presides over monthly meetings.
  - Sets the meetings' agendas and submits them to the secretary for copies and distribution.
  - Coordinates activities of the membership and keeps members informed of the activities.
- Class Vice President

- o Assists the president, presides in their absence, and informs the membership of various student issues and activities.
- Class Secretary
    - o Maintains all records of the student society.
    - o Records minutes of meetings
    - o Notifies members of upcoming meetings
    - o Carries on the general correspondence of the student society.
    - o Responsible for distribution of the agenda and other items for the meeting
- Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative
    - o Distributes all Student Academy information to the program.
    - o The AOR representative will also serve as a point of contact for the SAAAPA Board of Directors and the regional chair.
    - o The AOR representative will become the House of Delegates representative in the clinical phase.
- Georgia Association of PAs Representative
    - o Distributes all GAPA Student information to the program.
- Class Historian
    - o Keep a photographic record of the cohort's journey from matriculation to graduation.
    - o Assist in the development of a Cohort 'yearbook.'
    - o Share photos with the Program for publishing on the website and in brochures.
- Belonging Chair
    - o Serves as the liaison between the Student Academy and the student society regarding belonging issues affecting their classmates as future colleagues and health care providers.
    - o The elected individual need not be a minority but must have a strong interest in supporting and promoting the education of students on issues of belonging.
    - o Collaborates with the PA Program Belonging & Community Engagement Committee faculty Chair.

Standing Committees with Student Membership*:

In addition to student officer roles, the Program also includes student members on the following Program- specific committees. Students will participate in a limited capacity:
- Admissions Committee
- Curriculum and Research Committee
- Belonging and Community Engagement Committee
- Policy and Procedure Committee
- Student Activities Committee

 *Student participation is at the discretion of the Program Director. Importantly, students will not be allowed to participate in committee activities that would breach FERPA or other confidential information.

Admissions Committee

    Charge - The role of the Admissions Committee is as follows:
- o To evaluate entry criteria and admissions processes for appropriateness, effectiveness, and compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards
- o To formulate evidence-based admissions selection processes that attempt to best select student candidates based on background qualifications, motivations, intentions, and

individual goals, which promote success in the program and future practice as Physician Associates.
- o To review applications within CASPA, answer applicant questions, and make recommendations at each program faculty meeting regarding interview invitation decisions.
- o To develop, implement, and evaluate student candidate interview sessions.
- o To ensure, when possible, student and alums involvement with the Admissions Committee processes.
- o To ensure that the program information, advertisements, and website accurately reflect entry criteria, student candidate selection preferences, and competitiveness guidelines per the program mission and ARC-PA accreditation standards.
- o To review and evaluate the Program's compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards as outlined in the Program's Accreditation Compliance Spreadsheet.
- **Membership:** The committee consists of two or more principal or instructional faculty and/or staff and two student members, elected by their class as noted in the program Student Handbook and, when possible, one or more alum members. The student and alums member role are to review and provide input on admissions rubrics and processes for candidate selection and participate, when possible, on student candidate interview day processes.
  - o Student members' participation in student candidate interview days includes attending the student candidate presentation sessions, providing campus tours, speaking to student candidates about the program, and recruiting classmates to participate in student candidate interview sessions. At no time are students permitted to see the candidate files or be privy to personal, financial, or academic information of candidates - unless that information is freely and voluntarily (i.e., without request) disclosed by candidates.
  - o Faculty and alumni members of the Admissions Committee are appointed by the Program Director. Student members of the Admissions Committee are appointed by class election as noted in the program Student Handbook.
- **Chair:** The Program Director appoints the committee Chair, who is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at each Program faculty meeting.
- **Meeting frequency:** The committee will meet no less than once every semester.

Curriculum Committee
- **Charge -** The Curriculum Committee is charged with:
  - o Assisting in the design, mapping, and monitoring of a didactic and clinical education curriculum and course evaluations that are consistent with the program goals, values, and learning outcomes and the program-specific mission, all in concert with the ARC-PA accreditation standards. Specifically, the committee:
  - o Gathers data from course directors regarding student course/faculty evaluations, and data from the course evaluations, student performance in the academic course, faculty member's self-assessment of the course effectiveness, and feedback from the Curriculum Committee are analyzed as part of the continuous review process of the Curriculum Committee.
  - o Gathers data related to student performance in clinical education phase courses; data may be mined from rotation logs, outcomes on rotation exams, clinical site visits, and preceptor and student evaluation of clinical sites on a continuous basis. Topics the Clinical Education Committee encounters requiring full faculty discussion and action will

be referred to the general faculty meeting through direct communication with the Program Director.

- o To review and evaluate the Program's compliance to ARC-PA accreditation standards as outlined in the Program's Accreditation Compliance Spreadsheet.
- **Membership:** The committee is comprised of two principal faculty and two student members, elected by their class and, when possible, one or more alumni members. At no time should non-faculty members ever be privy to student-specific information (e.g., grades, academic standing).
- **Chair:** The Program Director appoints the committee Chair, who is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at each Program faculty meeting.
- **Meeting Frequency:** The committee will meet no less than once per semester.

PA Program Belonging and Community Engagement Committee
- **Charge** - The role of the Belonging and Community Engagement Committee is as follows:
  - o To oversee belonging and community engagement activities throughout the PA program.
  - o To recommend, develop, and implement activities to promote inclusion and diversity within the program and community.
  - o To recommend and develop policies for promoting belonging and community engagement within the PA Program.
- **Membership**: The committee consists of one to two principal faculty and/or staff and two student members elected by their class.
- **Chair**: The Program Director appoints the committee Chair, who is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at each program faculty meeting. The Chair of the committee will also serve as a member of the College level committee for the Office of Belonging and Community Engagement.
- **Meeting frequency**: The committee will meet no less than once per semester.

Policy and Procedure Committee
- **Charge** - The Policy and Procedure Committee is responsible for assisting in developing, implementing and evaluating program procedures, policies and activities, and student and preceptor handbooks. Specifically, the committee will:
  - o Establish an outline for initiation and review of policies and procedures.
  - o Make recommendations at the program faculty meetings to propose or revise any policy or procedure, with final approval by the Program Director and in accordance with College procedure.
  - o Annually review student and preceptor handbooks to ensure compliance with policies, including but not limited to ensuring the safety and welfare of the students and program compliance with ARC-PA standards.
  - o Review and evaluate the Program's compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards as outlined in the Program's Accreditation Compliance Spreadsheet.
- **Membership:** The committee consists of three members selected by the Program Director, two student members elected by their class, and, when possible, one or more alumni members.
- **Chair:** The Program Director appoints the Chair of the committee, who is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at each program faculty meeting.
- **Meeting Frequency:** The committee will meet no less than once per semester.

Student Activities Committee
- **Charge** - The role of the Student Activities Committee is as follows:
  - To oversee extracurricular student activities throughout the PA program.
  - To recommend, develop, and implement extracurricular student activities.
- **Membership:** The committee consists of one to two principal faculty and/or staff and two student members elected by their class.
- **Chair:** TheProgram Director appoints the committee Chair, who is responsible for acting as the faculty advisor to the PA Program SGA, coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at each Program faculty meeting.
- **Meeting frequency:** The committee will meet no less than once per semester.

Awards Committees (ad hoc)
- **Charge**:
  - Oversee the process for selection of student, faculty, and preceptor awards.
  - Encourage faculty and students to nominate individuals and submit materials in support of award applications.
  - Disseminate, when appropriate, announcements and criteria for awards.
- **Membership**: The committee is comprised of two or more principal or instructional faculty members, two or more student members elected by their class as noted in the program Student Handbook, and, when possible, one or more alumni members.
- **Chair**: The Program Director appoints the Chair of the committee, who is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at Program faculty meetings.

Program Committees without Student Membership
Student Progression Committee
- **Charge(s**):
  - Monitor student progress, including course examination results, SCPE evaluations, and remediation processes, delivery, and outcomes to assess if students are at risk for course failure or professionalism-related dismissal. The committee will serve the program in maximizing the opportunity for students to succeed in the program - academically, emotionally, and professionally including, when appropriate, referral for program-level and college-level academic support services, counseling, and any other services that may assist to enhance student success. When appropriate, the committee may invite students struggling with academics and/or professionalism to attend committee meetings. The committee makes recommendations regarding student progress to the Program Director and at program faculty meetings. When a student/s may be invited to attend a meeting, the meeting is by invitation only and closed to any other students or non-essential faculty and staff.
  - Evaluate students with academic standing issues and make recommendations to the Program Director and CSEHS Dean in accordance with program policies on progression.
  - Review and evaluate the Program's compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards as outlined in the Program's Accreditation Compliance Spreadsheet.

- **Membership**: The committee is comprised of two or three principal faculty members and the Program Manager. Members must be principal faculty and staff of the PA Program; students are never permitted to be members of the Student Progression Committee.
- **Chair**: The Program Director appoints the committee Chair, who is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, and reporting on the committee's activities at Program faculty meetings.
- **Meeting Frequency:** The committee will meet no less than once per semester and more frequently depending on student issues.

Program Assessment Committee
- **Charge(s):**
  - Gather, analyze, and interpret data on program effectiveness in meeting its mission and outcomes, alignment with the Program's specific goals and outcomes, the College's mission, and compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards. The Program Assessment Committee supports the inclusive and integrated self-assessment of the program's effectiveness, including the continual monitoring of the program and developing accreditation and self-study documents on an annual basis to ensure the program consistently meets ARC-PA accreditation standards.
  - Specifically, the committee will:
    - Develop, conduct, analyze, and interpret program evaluations, including, but not limited to, student, faculty, and staff surveys and evaluations.
    - Compile, analyze, and interpret program evaluation and self-assessment data.
    - Develop continuous program-analysis reports and an annual self-study report document.
    - Present data and make recommendations based on the interpretation of that data.
    - Review and evaluate the Program's compliance with ARC-PA accreditation standards as outlined in the Program's Accreditation Compliance Spreadsheet.
- **Membership**: The committee is comprised of the Program Director, the Director of Didactic Education, the Director of Clinical Education, and other principal faculty as needed. Additionally, if the medical director is not fulfilling the role of DDE or DCE, that individual will also serve as a committee member.
- **Chair**: The Chair of the committee is responsible for coordinating committee activities, ensuring minutes are taken for each session, reporting on the committee's activities at Program faculty meetings, and coordinating with other programmatic committees as necessary.
- **Meeting Frequency**: The committee will meet on no less than a once-per-semester basis. Meetings may take place during regular faculty meetings and the annual Faculty Retreat.

Faculty/Staff Search Committee (ad hoc)
- **Charge(s)**:
  - Assist in identifying potential applicants.
  - Review submitted applications and credentials and ensure applicants meet the minimum criteria for the position.
  - Conduct initial Zoom/virtual interviews with appropriate candidates.
  - Make recommendations to the CSEHS Dean regarding applicants' suitability for faculty/staff positions and, when appropriate schedule formal on-site candidate interview sessions.

- **Membership**: The committee comprises a minimum of three faculty members, two of whom must be principal faculty in the PA Program, and one may be an instructional faculty member in the PA Program or a principal faculty member in another graduate health sciences department.
- **Chair**: The Program Director or principal faculty member appointed by the Program Director serves as the committee chair and is responsible for coordinating committee activities, maintaining all related documentation/rubrics, and reporting on the committee's activities at Program faculty meetings.

Student Records

Student Access (A3.18)

PA students and other unauthorized persons will not have access to the academic records or other confidential information of other students or faculty. Under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, students have the right of access to official records maintained on them by Berry College. A student may request access to their records with a written request to the PA Program Director and the registrar. (A3.18) For further information regarding FERPA, please refer to the Viking Code Handbook: https://www.berry.edu/student-life/_assets/viking-code-handbook.pdf.

Release of Health Records (A3.19)

Each student must meet the PA program's health screening and immunization requirements before matriculation and entering the clinical phase of training. Student health records are confidential. Only designated PA Program faculty or staff will have access to records for immunization, PA student physical examination clearance form, and screening results, which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student.

This written consent allows the following:

- PA Program to release information regarding immunizations, tuberculosis screenings, drug screenings, and background checks via EXXAT with clinical sites.

Computer/Internet Access

A PC (not Macintosh/Apple) laptop computer with reliable internet access is required for the Program. Additional medical applications may be recommended as part of individual courses. Recommendations for minimum computer requirements are provided to students prior to matriculation. Minimum specifications will be kept up to date on the program website.

Recording of Lectures and Program Activities

Lectures/Program Activities cannot be recorded unless prior authorization has been secured from Student Academic Services for appropriate accommodation approval due to a documented diagnosis.

Social Media Standards

Adapted by the American Medical Association policy on Professionalism in the Use of Social Media. The Internet has created the ability for medical students and physicians to communicate and share information quickly and to reach large groups of people easily. Participating in social networking and other similar Internet opportunities can support ones' personal expression, enable individuals to have a professional presence online, and foster collegiality and camaraderie within a profession. Social networks, blogs, and other forms of communication online also create new challenges to the patient-

clinician relationship. PA students and health professionals should weigh a number of considerations when maintaining a presence online:

    a) Be cognizant of standards of patient privacy and confidentiality that must be maintained in all environments, including online, and refrain from posting identifiable patient information online.

    b) When using the Internet for social networking, use privacy settings to safeguard personal information and content to the extent possible, but also realize that privacy settings are not absolute and that once on the Internet, content is likely there permanently. Thus, routinely monitor the student's social media presence to ensure that content posted is accurate and appropriate.

    c) If interacting with patients on the Internet, PA students and clinicians must maintain appropriate boundaries of the patient-provider relationship in accordance with professional ethical guidelines just as they would in any other context.

    d) To maintain appropriate professional boundaries PA students and clinicians should consider separating personal and professional content online.

    e) When PA students see content posted by fellow PA students that appears unprofessional, they have a responsibility to bring that content to the attention of the PA program, so that he or she can remove it and/or take other appropriate actions.

    f) PA students and clinicians must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputations among patients and colleagues, may have consequences for their medical careers, and can undermine public trust in the medical profession.

The following pertains to the student's use of social media that directly relates to the educational process at Berry PA Program. The PA Program has a ZERO tolerance for violating the items below and will investigate complaints accordingly.

    • Students may be held personally liable for proprietary, defamatory, libelous material posted on social media.

    • Students are not to use social media during classes and may be asked to leave the classroom if they do so, at the discretion of the faculty member or instructor.

    • Students will face sanctions for posting material that is defamatory, profane, threatening, harassing, hateful or private information that is humiliating to patients and their families, students, hospital/clinical staff, clinical instructors, faculty, staff, or others.

    • Violating HIPAA policies may result in legal action against the student and dismissal from the program.

Communication with Faculty and Staff

Communication with faculty and staff is accomplished through meetings, assigned Berry College e-mail (which is the official means of communication), and telephone (including voicemail messages). Meetings should be arranged during posted office hours or by appointment. Students are expected to schedule meetings during non-class hours. Students can typically expect to receive a response to emails within 48 hours during typical business hours Eastern Standard Time (excluding weekends). Students are expected to respond to faculty and staff emails within 24 hours. For student emergencies, please see the section on Process to Contact Program Representative Regarding Emergencies and Security & Safety in this Handbook.

Communication with clinical sites, preceptors, and staff—students will be provided with contact information for their clinical sites and preceptors through Exxat. Students are expected to communicate professionally and timely with sites and preceptors as with Berry PA Program faculty and staff.

Professionalism and respectful communication are crucial in healthcare and academic settings, which students will encounter during clinical rotations. Berry PA students must refrain from using first names in all communication to establish a culture of professionalism with faculty, staff, preceptors, and clinical site staff/administrators. Until graduation, students are expected to address faculty, staff, preceptors, and clinical site staff/administrators using their titles (Dr., Mr., Ms., Prof., or preferred salutation), not first names. This policy prepares students for such interactions.

Effective and professional communication extends to evaluations completed by students, whether anonymous or not. Students are expected only to provide constructive, professional feedback. To do otherwise does not meet technical standards and will result in referral to the PA SPC. Students are welcome to communicate with PA leadership at any time should they have a concern they wish to address.

Transportation and Housing
Students are required to secure their own reliable transportation to all PA Program activities and coursework. Some of the clinical rotation experiences in the clinical phase may require travel to sites outside of the greater Rome area. Students are responsible for all costs associated with these clinical rotations, including but not limited to travel, parking, and living expenses.

Faculty/Staff Recommendations and References
For all requested recommendations and references, regardless of written or verbal form, students must complete and sign the appropriate College/School/Department release form before any such recommendations or references can be completed. A separate form must be completed for each written and/or verbal reference (Please refer to Exxat for a copy of the template).

Tuition Refunds and Procedures (A1.02k)
This policy applies to students who withdraw from the PA program and have followed all formal withdrawal policies and procedures for Berry College.

Students who withdraw from the College will receive tuition and fee credit based on the timing of their withdrawal as outlined in the Berry College Graduate Catalog. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for further information here under "Tuition and Fees: Refund of Charges": https://catalog.berry.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=855. Should the student have any questions, please contact the PA Program Director, who can assist the student.

Teaching Out Policy (A1.02h)
A decision to close an educational program, site, or the entire institution will only be made after thoughtful planning and careful consultation with all affected stakeholders and after thorough consideration of alternative actions and in compliance with the policies and procedures of the institution.

Should such a decision ever come under consideration, communication efforts will be devoted to fully

informing stakeholders about the conditions compelling consideration of a decision of such magnitude. All available non-privileged information relevant to the consideration will be shared during these communications. It should be noted that current students, faculty, and staff are most directly affected by such a decision. Prospective students, faculty, and staff are significantly affected as well. These stakeholders should receive timely and sensitive attention and involvement in such considerations. The final decision on such actions rests with Berry College's Administration and Board of Trustees.

If Berry College decides to close an educational program, site, or the entire institution, it must consider the following options:
1. The institution teaches out currently enrolled students, no longer admits students to programs, and terminates the program, the operations of a site, or an institution's operations after students have graduated. The institution will submit a teach-out plan to all applicable accrediting bodies for approval.
2. If the institution enters into a contractual teach-out agreement for another institution to teach out the educational programs or program, the teach-out agreement will be submitted to all applicable accrediting bodies for approval in advance.

Best practices in closing an educational program, site, or entire institution, as published by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges must be followed to make a good faith effort to assist affected students, faculty, and administrative and support staff so that they experience minimal disruption in pursuing their course of study or professional careers.

Admitting Students from Closing PA Programs

BCPA recognizes the challenges and stress associated with the closure of a PA program. For PA programs with which BCPA has an existing agreement or understanding regarding the closure of the PA program, students who meet the minimum BCPA admissions requirements will be guaranteed an interview for the next incoming cohort. However, acceptance into the BCPA program is not guaranteed.

Student Acknowledgement of Policies & Procedures (A3.02)

Berry College PA Program

The information contained in the Berry PA Student Handbook is an overview of current policies and procedures specific to the Berry College Physician Associate (PA) Program. It is designed to highlight and offer additional policies and procedures specific to the didactic and clinical phases of training; it is not designed to replace the policies and procedures as outlined in the College's Graduate Academic Catalog and College's Viking Code. Therefore, students are also expected to review and follow the Berry College policies covered in the College's Graduate Academic Catalog and Viking Code. **IMPORTANTLY: Should there be a discrepancy between the College's *and* PA Program's *policies*, the more rigorous policy will take precedence. Should there be a discrepancy between the College's *and* PA Program's *procedures*, the PA Program's will take precedence.**

The Berry College PA Student Handbook is published annually. While every effort is made to provide accurate and correct information at the time of publication, the Program reserves the right to change policies, calendar dates, and any statements in the Handbook. Students consent and agree that they shall be bound by any and all amended policies upon the effective date of any changes.

Importantly, this handbook is meant to provide guidance for students and faculty on the usual policies and procedures for day-to-day conduct in the PA Program. It does not represent an exhaustive list of all possibilities that might arise for students and faculty in the training and administration of the program. Unique situations may arise and will be handled in a manner that ensures fairness and mutual respect. All final decisions are at the discretion of the Program Director. Feel free to ask Berry College PA Program staff and faculty questions about the student handbook.

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate the student's receipt and acknowledgment of this material:
1. I understand that policies and procedures, in addition to this handbook, are published on the PA Program website. In the case of differences between published policies in this handbook and published policies on the web page, the Handbook should be considered to be the policy of record.
2. I have received a copy of and reviewed the Berry PA Student Handbook and agree to abide by the rules and policies contained therein.
3. I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in the Handbook are subject to change.
4. I understand that my matriculation is terminable by myself at any time, regardless of the length of my matriculation.
5. I understand that my matriculation may also be terminable for infraction of any policy or procedure in this material in accordance with the established policy or procedure for such matters.
6. I understand that by signing this document, I am verifying that I meet technical standards as written in this Handbook and will notify the Program Director immediately should this status change.
7. My signature below indicates that I understand the above statements.

_____   _____   _____
Student's Signature   **Student's Printed Name**   **Date**

Appendix 1

BCPA Remediation Flow Chart^

Didactic Phase: Grades released within 48 working hours*

Assessment grade of C (79.99%) or less (*Student must initiate the Remediation Effort & Outcome Form and communicate with CD within 48 hours Didactic & 24 hours Clinical*)*

Clinical Phase: Grades released within 24 working hours*

Legend
- CD: Course Director
- DDE: Director of Didactic Education
- DCE: Director of Clinical Education
- SPC: Student Progression Committee
- P&P: Policies & Procedures

Academic coaching and remediation (CD develops remediation plan in consultation with DDE or DCE/Faculty coach updated by CD)

Unsuccessful remediation

Remediation reassessment

CD confirms successful remediation

Referral to SPC

SPC case review

- Early intervention requires no specific trigger
- Remediation trigger: Less than 80% of assessment (no limit of remediations for separate assessments)
- Unsuccessful completion of remediation plan: Refer to SPC
- Course grade less than C: Refer to SPC
- Cumulative GPA below 3.0: Refer to SPC
- Any student meeting the criteria for academic probation for two consecutive semesters will undergo a holistic academic record review by the PA SPC and may be dismissed from the program
- *Deviations with grading timeline should be reviewed by the P&P Committee
- ^For information regarding retakes see Student Handbook -Examination Retake Policy

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Ref: BCPA Student HB p.27

BCPA Summative Course Remediation & Retake Flow Chart

Assessment grade of C (79.99%) or less (*Student must initiate the Remediation Effort & Outcome Form and communicate with CD within 24 hours*)

Summative Course: Grades released within 24 working hours

Assessment grade of A/B (80.00-99.99%) (*Student must initiate the Remediation Effort & Outcome Form and communicate with Faculty Coach within 48 hours*)

Assessment grade of 100% no further action needed

Academic coaching and remediation (CD develops remediation plan in consultation with DDE or DCE/Faculty Coach updated by CD)

First unsuccessful remediation attempt with assessment grade of C (79.99%) or less

Faculty Coach develops remediation plan with student with focus of "PANCE & Patient" Must complete prior to graduation

Assessment retake not required

Successful remediation with assessment grade of B (≥80.00%), no further action

Associated assessment retake

Second unsuccessful remediation with assessment grade of C (79.99%) or less

Referral to SPC

SPC case review

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BCPA Program Definitions

Family Members: For this handbook, 'family members' include spouses, domestic partners, children, siblings, parents, in-laws, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, step-children, or individuals living in the same household.