

Thomas Jefferson University
Center City Campus Physician
Assistant Program

Student Handbook

Class of 2028

**THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY CENTER CITY CAMPUS
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Thomas Jefferson University Physician Assistant Program, Center City Campus! This handbook includes policies and procedures followed by the program, including our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to the program and your future profession. All references to the PA program in this handbook specifically apply to the PA program on the Center City Campus.

This Student Handbook serves to share certain resources, policies, and procedures that may be useful to you during your graduate studies in the PA Program in the Jefferson College of Health Professions, Center City Campus. In some cases, it will refer you to other documents, such as [the Thomas Jefferson University Handbook and Academic Catalog](#) and/or the, Jefferson College of Health Professions [Student Handbook](#) that contain more detailed information. The policies in this handbook apply to all students throughout both didactic coursework and while on clinical rotations representing Jefferson and the PA program. The faculty is committed to providing you with an excellent education and directing you to the resources you need to become a well-prepared and capable health professional. It is the responsibility of the student to read and understand this handbook, as well as College and University policies. The TJU PA Program – Center City reserves the right to amend, modify, rescind, or implement any policies, procedures, regulations, fees, conditions and courses described herein as circumstances may require without prior notice to persons who might thereby be affected. The provisions of this handbook are not and may not be regarded as contractual between or among the College, its students or its employees or agents.

The TJU PA Program – Center City extends sincere best wishes for your success in the Physician Assistant Program. Welcome to the Jefferson family!

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<https://www.jefferson.edu/academics/colleges-schools-institutes/health->

[professions/departments-programs/health-science-clinical-practice/degrees-programs/graduate/ms-center-city.html](https://www.tj.edu/professions/departments-programs/health-science-clinical-practice/degrees-programs/graduate/ms-center-city.html)

Mission, Goals & Objectives

Thomas Jefferson University [Mission, Vision, and Values](#)

Mission:

We Improve Lives.

Thomas Jefferson University is a national leader in professional education, preparing students for the future of work, while also engaging in groundbreaking research and creative discovery. Dedicated to inclusive and experiential learning, Jefferson fosters transdisciplinary collaboration, embraces social responsibility, and celebrates the value of diverse identities and perspectives.

Vision:

Reimagining health, education, and discovery to create unparalleled value.

Values:

Put people first
Do the right thing
Pursue excellence

Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:

Jefferson holds itself accountable, at every level of the organization, to nurture an environment of inclusion and respect, by valuing the uniqueness of every individual, celebrating and reflecting the rich diversity of its communities, and taking meaningful action to cultivate an environment of fairness, belonging, and opportunity.

Physician Assistant Program Mission

The mission of the Jefferson Physician Assistant Program (Center City) is to educate and graduate kind, competent and diverse primary care clinicians that are dedicated to lifelong learning and service.

Physician Assistant Program Goals

- To graduate strong, competent and knowledgeable entry-level medical providers.
- To mentor our students to become effective team members and colleagues within a collaborative, interprofessional health care team.
- To recruit diverse student cohorts to help cultivate a representative and inclusive health care workforce.
- To create opportunities for our students that foster the ideals of service and lifelong learning.
- To develop and empower faculty to pursue leadership, scholarship, advancement and professional fulfillment.

Program-Defined Competencies

The graduate of the Thomas Jefferson University Center City Physician Assistant Program is expected to have achieved the following competencies.

Medical Knowledge

1. Describe the pathophysiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis methods, and treatment of common disease processes.
2. Formulate a differential diagnosis and display critical thinking skills in the context of a clinical presentation.
3. Detail certain diagnostic and therapeutic modalities and the indications thereof.
4. Outline the mechanism of action, indications, contraindications, side effects and interactions for common pharmacologic agents.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

1. Accurately obtain and document a patient history and physical exam.
2. Establish rapport and effectively convey medical information to patients.
3. Recognize barriers and navigate challenging conversations with patients with compassion and sensitivity.

Person-centered Care

1. Acquire a comprehensive or focused patient history and physical as indicated in the context of the clinical presentation.
2. Order and interpret appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.
3. Integrate information from history, physical examination, socioeconomic and environmental factors and diagnostic data to develop patient care plans.
4. To provide education across the continuum of wellness, prevention and management of health and disease.
5. Understand professional limitations and provide appropriate referral and transition of care where necessary.

Interprofessional Collaboration

1. Communicate and collaborate effectively with other health care professionals to provide high-quality, patient-centered care.
2. Recognize when referral and collaboration is appropriate during a patient encounter/course.

Professionalism and Ethics

1. Approach the practice of medicine consistently with integrity, compassion and respect for all patients, families and other health care professionals.
2. Discuss and consistently adhere to the standards of care.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to accountability and responsibility in providing patient care.

Practice-based Learning and Quality Improvement

1. Solicit feedback and self-reflect to recognize and address knowledge deficiencies and practice limits.
2. Utilize current technology and evidence-based principles in patient management.

Society and Population Health

1. Recognize and navigate the factors that affect patient and population wellness including but

not limited to social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Technical Standards – Center City PA Program

Technical standards are the fundamental abilities that are required for students to complete their degree. These standards are determined by the competency, proficiency and/or skill standards set forth by accrediting and professional organizations appropriate to each program and apply to classroom, laboratory and clinical/fieldwork environments. Students are allowed reasonable accommodation.

The technical standards for admission set forth by the Department of Health Science & Clinical Practice (HSCP) establish the essential qualities that are considered necessary for students admitted to this program to achieve the knowledge, skills and levels of competency stipulated for graduation. All students admitted to this program are expected to demonstrate the attributes and meet the expectations listed below. These Technical Standards are required for admission and also must be maintained throughout a student's progress through the Physician Assistant Program. In the event that, during training, a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodations, then the student may be asked to leave the program.

Students must possess aptitude, ability, and skills in the following areas:

1. General
2. Observation
3. Communication
4. Motor coordination and function
5. Conceptualization, integration, and quantization
6. Behavioral and social skills, abilities, and aptitudes
7. Professionalism

General: The student is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, taste, and smell so that data received by the senses may be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. A student must also possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, vibration, position equilibrium, and movement that are important to the student's ability to gather significant information needed to effectively evaluate patients.

Observation: The student must have sufficient capacity to accurately observe and participate in the lecture hall, the laboratory, and with patients at a distance and close at hand, including non-verbal and verbal signals, to assess health and illness alterations in the outpatient and inpatient clinical settings. Inherent in the observational process is the use of the senses to elicit information through procedures regularly required in physical examination, such as inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation.

Communication: The student must communicate effectively verbally and non-verbally to elicit information; describe changes in mood, activity, posture; and perceive non-verbal communications from patients and others. Each student must have the ability to read and write, comprehend and speak the English language to facilitate communication with patients, their family members, and other professionals in health care settings where written medical records, verbal presentations, and patient counseling and instruction are integral to effective medical practice and patient care. The student must

communicate effectively verbally and in writing with instructors and other students in the classroom setting, as well.

Motor coordination and function: The student must be able to perform gross and fine motor movements with sufficient coordination needed to perform complete physical examinations utilizing the techniques of inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A student must develop the psychomotor skills reasonably needed to perform or assist with procedures, treatments, administration of medication, management and operation of diagnostic and therapeutic medical equipment utilized in the general and emergent care of patients required in practice as a physician assistant. The student must be able to maintain consciousness and equilibrium; have sufficient levels of postural control, neuromuscular control, and eye-to-hand coordination; and to possess the physical and mental stamina to meet the demands associated with extended periods of sitting, standing, moving, and physical exertion required for satisfactory performance in the clinical and classroom settings.

Conceptualization, integration, and quantization: The student must be able to develop and refine problem-solving skills that are crucial to practice as a physician assistant. Problem solving involves the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures; to measure, calculate reason, analyze, and synthesize objective and subjective data; and to make decisions that reflect consistent and thoughtful deliberation and sound clinical judgment. A student must have the capacity to read and comprehend medical literature. Each student must demonstrate mastery of these skills and the ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the medical literature to formulate sound judgment in patient assessment and diagnostic and therapeutic planning.

Behavioral and social skills, abilities, and aptitudes: Flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, effective interpersonal skills, and concern for others are personal attributes required of those in physician assistant practice. Personal comfort and acceptance of the role of a dependent practitioner functioning under supervision is essential for training and practice as a physician assistant. The student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of the student's intellectual abilities; the exercise of good judgment; the prompt completion of all responsibilities in the classroom setting, as well as those in the clinical setting attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients; and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other members of the health care team. Each student must have the emotional stability required to exercise stable, sound judgment and to complete assessment and interventional activities. The ability to establish rapport and maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds is critical for practice as a physician assistant. The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing loads and still function effectively under stress; adapt to changing environments; display flexibility; graciously accept constructive criticism; manage difficult interpersonal relationships during training; and learn to function cooperatively and efficiently in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice.

Professionalism: A candidate/student must consistently display honesty, integrity, respect for self and others, tolerance, caring, fairness, and dedication to their patients, peers, PA faculty and staff, Jefferson faculty and staff, the community and the PA profession. In compliance with Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and applicable federal and state laws, Thomas Jefferson University ensures people with disabilities will have an equal opportunity to participate in its programs and activities. Students who believe they require accommodations to meet program objectives and technical standards should contact Student Accessibility Services as early as possible. All accommodation requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in a timely fashion.

Disability Accommodations – Center City PA Program

Thomas Jefferson University is committed to providing equal education opportunities to all students, including students with disabilities, in accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Thomas Jefferson University will provide reasonable accommodations to all qualified individuals with disabilities to allow equal access and full participation to all University sponsored activities and programs. For more information on disability accommodations, click [here](#). To request an accommodation, please contact the Department Chair and [Accessibility Services](#) in the Office of Academic & Career Success. All requests for reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids, academic adjustments, and services will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in a timely fashion.

Once admitted to the Thomas Jefferson University Physician Assistant Studies Program, in the Department of Health Science & Clinical Practice, all students will be measured by the same academic standards. Regardless of disability and reasonable accommodation, a student must pass all courses at an acceptable level and master all essential clinical competencies.

Admission Standards & Program Outline

Medical education requires that the accumulation of scientific knowledge be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition and competency of skills and professional attitudes and behavior. It is in the care of the patients that the physician assistant learns the application of scientific knowledge and skills. It is impossible to consider changes in medical education without considering their impact on patients who are an integral part of the educational process. The faculty has immediate responsibilities to students and patients and ultimately responsibilities to society to graduate the best possible physician assistants. As a member of this program, you will be expected to contribute your talents, learning abilities and energy to foster a professional learning and working environment for you, your classmates, and the PA faculty.

Admission standards for a physician assistant program must be rigorous, and admission to the Thomas Jefferson University Physician Assistant Program – Center City Campus will be extended only to those who are best qualified. The [Admissions Information link](#) on our website provides our specific and current admission standards, deadlines and other information. Students who apply and are admitted to the DHSc/PA program can not withdraw from the DHSc program and then progress into the PA curriculum. For DHSc/PA students, the DHSc coursework in the first year must be successfully completed in order to begin the PA curriculum.

The education of a Thomas Jefferson University PA Program – Center City student includes:

Didactic Phase (15 months)

- PA professional education – classroom and online instruction and clinical training/observation, laboratory and small group learning activities
- Didactic Comprehensive Examination (DCE)
- Standardized patient activities
- [Health Mentors Program](#)
- [TeamSAFE training](#)
- BCLS / ACLS course and exam

Clinical Phase (12 months)

- PA professional education – clinical training under the supervision of a physician and/or PA/NP
- Classroom and online education
- Summative Evaluation, including writing examination, standardized patient activities, and clinical skills assessment
- Graduate Project

Life-Long Learning

- Continuing medical education - learning following the formal PA education

Graduation from the Thomas Jefferson University PA Program – Center City certifies that the individual has acquired competencies over a broad knowledge base and skills essential for supervised entry-level medical or surgical practice. Students should possess the physical and mental potential for becoming generally trained physician assistants. The foundation of knowledge in the biomedical sciences must include, but is not limited to, all of the major disciplines of the biological and behavioral sciences. Biochemistry, Pharmacology, Microbiology, Immunology, Physiology, Anatomy, and Laboratory Medicine are the traditional fields of the biomedical sciences, which, along with appropriate elements of the behavioral sciences, are considered essential for the education of the physician assistant. These must be taught in sufficient depth and breadth to ensure that there is a fundamental knowledge base for ongoing continuing medical education.

The curriculum requires the study of both mental and physical disease, as well as preventive medicine and the socioeconomic aspects of health and disease, in both well and ill populations. Instruction includes exposure to inpatient, outpatient, acute, and emergent care settings and provides students with knowledge of and experience with preventive and chronic disease management for patients across the lifespan. Achievement of comprehensive cognitive and skills knowledge in both the didactic and clinical phase prepares the graduate as an entry-level physician assistant.

It is a responsibility of the faculty to ensure that each student is provided with an opportunity to observe and to participate in the expert care of patients with a broad spectrum of disease in each of the major disciplines of medicine. Students will complete clinical rotations in internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery, behavioral medicine, women's health, emergency medicine, primary care, and one elective.

Because the certification as a physician assistant signifies that the holder is a physician assistant

prepared for entry-level practice of primary care within a variety of clinical settings, it follows that graduates must have the knowledge, skills, and ability to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. The continued competence of the physician assistant in future years will require that every student utilize the fundamentals of both basic medical sciences and clinical knowledge so that they will be able to evaluate and understand current literature and advances in basic medical sciences including their application to clinical medicine.

Additionally, a document has been prepared by the four organizations that represent the physician assistant profession: the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant ([ARC-PA](#)), the body that accredits PA educational programs; the Physician Assistant Education Association ([PAEA](#)), the membership association for PA educators; the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants ([NCCPA](#)), the body that certifies graduate physician assistants; and the American Academy of Physician Associates ([AAPA](#)), the national membership association representing all PAs. This document, *Competencies for the Physician Associate Profession*, which is linked in Appendix 4, is a foundation from which each of those four organizations, other PA organizations and individual physician assistants themselves can chart a course for advancing the competencies of the PA profession. This document is a way to communicate to the PA profession and the public a set of competencies that all physician assistants regardless of specialty or setting are expected to acquire and maintain throughout their careers. This document serves as a map for the individual PA, the physician-PA team and organizations that are committed to promoting the development and maintenance of these professional competencies among physician assistants. Included with the document is a self-evaluation tool that physician assistants can use to evaluate their knowledge and skills throughout their careers.

Background Checks, Clearances, Fingerprinting & Drug Testing for TJU PA Program – Center City

All Physician Assistant students who are offered admission to Jefferson are required to have a criminal background check and child abuse clearance. In addition, Physician Assistant students who are offered admission to Jefferson are required to be fingerprinted and undergo a drug test. The Office of Admissions will provide you with the appropriate information to complete these pre-matriculation requirements as needed. If an arrest and/or conviction of a misdemeanor or felony occurs while the student is enrolled in the physician assistant program, the student is obligated to notify the program immediately. Criminal records, fraudulent application statements, history of drug abuse and/or positive drug screening are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and may nullify admission to the program. Students will be required to repeat these clearances prior to starting the clinical year. Certain clinical sites may require additional clearances. Students are responsible for the cost of all clearances.

Clinical rotation and fieldwork sites that require a criminal background check, child abuse clearance and/or fingerprinting may deny a student's participation in the clinical experience, rotation or fieldwork because of a felony or misdemeanor conviction or a record of child abuse. Clinical sites may also deny participation in clinical experiences for other reasons, such as failure of a required drug test, or inability to produce an appropriate health clearance. As participation in clinical experiences, rotations or fieldwork is a required part of the curriculum and a requirement for graduation, denial of participation by a clinical site may result in the delay of graduation or the ineligibility to graduate from the program.

Regardless of whether or not a student graduates from Jefferson, individuals who have been

convicted of a felony or misdemeanor may be denied certification or licensure as a health professional. Information regarding individual eligibility may be obtained from the appropriate credentialing bodies.

Program Curriculum

The Program reserves the right to change curriculum offerings and sequence, with as much notification to students as possible. Case-based learning is used throughout the TJU PA Program curriculum as a means of fostering attitudes and skills essential to critical thinking and life-long learning.

Didactic Phase/Year 1

Pre-Fall Semester

Advanced Human Anatomy	5.0 credits
Introduction to Clinical Assessment	2.0 credits
Introduction to Professional Practice	1.0 credit
Legal and Ethical Aspects of Medicine	1.0 credit
Evidence Based Medicine and Population Health	1.0 credit
Total	10.0 Credits

Fall Semester

Physical Diagnosis I	1.0 Credits
Clinical Medicine I	5.0 Credits
Clinical Skills I	1.5 Credits
Pharmacology and Clinical Therapeutics I	3.0 Credits
Physiology and Pathophysiology I	2.5 Credits
Behavioral Sciences	2.0 Credits
Health Promotions & Disease Prevention	1.0 Credits
Total	16.0 Credits

Spring Semester

Physical Diagnosis II	2.0 Credits
Clinical Medicine II	3.0 Credits
Clinical Medicine III	4.0 Credits
Clinical Skills II	3.0 Credits
Pharmacology and Clinical Therapeutics II	2.0 Credits
Physiology and Pathophysiology II	2.5 Credits
Introduction to Healthcare Quality & Safety	3.0 Credits
Total	19.5 Credits

Summer Semester

Physical Diagnosis III	1.0 Credits
Clinical Medicine IV	4.0 Credits
Clinical Skills III	1.0 Credits
Pharmacology and Clinical Therapeutics III	1.5 Credits

Physiology and Pathophysiology III	1.5 Credits
Special Topics in Medicine	6.0 Credits
Total	15.0 Credits

During the didactic phase, students will receive orientation sessions to the clinical year. Upon completion of the didactic phase, students move into The Clinical Phase comprised of 12-months of supervised clinical rotations as well as continuing coursework. Students will complete eight clinical rotations, each five weeks in duration, which will be assigned in any order. Students should be aware that a number of clinical sites may be scheduled at some distance from the campus. This is necessary to provide a range of diverse learning experiences and ensure availability and quality of clinical rotation sites. Students are responsible for all financial costs associated with the clinical year, including transportation and living expenses. **The Thomas Jefferson University PA Program – Center City assigns and approves all clinical rotations.**

Clinical Phase/Year 2

Fall Semester

Clinical Rotation 1*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 2*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 3*	5.0 Credits
Healthcare I	1.0 Credits
Total	16 Credits

Spring Semester

Clinical Rotation 4*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 5*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 6*	5.0 Credits
Graduate Project I	0.5 Credits
Healthcare II	1.0 Credit
Total	16.5 Credits

Summer Semester

Clinical Rotation 7*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 8*	5.0 Credits
Graduate Project II	0.5 Credits
Summative Evaluation Course	0.0 Credits
Total	10.5 Credits

***Rotations:** These clinical rotations provide a brief but focused clinical experience in medical disciplines. The minimum required experience in these disciplines is:

Internal Medicine	5 weeks
Emergency Medicine	5 weeks
Women's Health	5 weeks
Behavioral Medicine	5 weeks
Surgery	5 weeks
Primary Care	5 weeks
Pediatrics	5 weeks
Elective	5 weeks

Total Year 1 Credits	60.5
Total Year 2 Credits	43
Total Program Credits	103.5

Student Support Services

It is important that all students achieve their potential and to this end, the University provides several support services which are open to all TJU students. A number of services are available for students in the PA Program. It is recommended that all students review the following websites to learn about campus resources:

Office of Academic & Career Success

Includes academic support services, student writing center, accessibility services to facilitate medical and disability accommodations, Title IX. etc.:

<https://www.jefferson.edu/university/academic-affairs/schools/student-affairs.html>

Student Counseling Center – Center City

<https://www.jefferson.edu/life-at-jefferson/health-wellness/counseling-center.html>

Campus Life

Includes student housing, international student information, fitness and recreation, health and wellness, student life and engagement, career development, clubs & organizations, safety on campus, etc.:

<https://www.jefferson.edu/life-at-jefferson.html>

Commuter Services

Provides transportation and parking assistance to students:

<https://www.jefferson.edu/life-at-jefferson/student-resources-services/commuter-services.html>

Office of Financial Aid

<https://www.jefferson.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid/financial-aid-office.html>

Office of the Registrar

<https://www.jefferson.edu/registrar.html>

Tuition and Refunds

Information about tuition and fees, including updates, is available on the website and updated at least once a year. Refunds of tuition and fees at Thomas Jefferson University are determined by the timing of a student's withdrawal, dismissal, or approved leave of absence, with the amount refunded based on the week of the academic term in which this occurs.

The information regarding both fees and refunds for tuition are readily available to students on the TJU webpages below:

- Tuition/Fees: <https://www.jefferson.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid/tuition-information.html>
- Refunds: <https://www.jefferson.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid/financial-aid-office/policies/tuition-and-university-fees-refund.html>

Policies & Procedures

Students are expected to maintain good academic standing, to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity in all academic and professional manners, to uphold the policies and procedures of Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson College of Health Professions, and the TJU Physician Assistant Program – Center City that are currently in effect. As a member of the TJU community, students are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in [the Thomas Jefferson University Handbook and Academic Catalog](#), [JCHP Student Handbook](#), and this Handbook.

Violations of University, College, or Program policies and/or procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

Health Insurance

Policies require that all Physician Assistant (PA) students carry major medical health insurance during their education at TJU. Students may indicate that they wish to maintain coverage through a parent, spouse or a private plan for the medical health insurance portion of this plan. The student is **required** to show proof of coverage annually at the beginning of each academic year, and if changes are made, they must be reported immediately to the program. An [insurance plan](#) is made available for purchase to all students through the University. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this information is updated with the University and Program each year. Any lapse in coverage may lead to missing coursework, including clinical rotation time, and may lead to deceleration, delayed graduation, or dismissal from the Program.

Students will be required to carry an accidental exposures/needlestick insurance plan prior to the start of their clinical year which the program will purchase. Details will be provided prior to the clinical year.

Prematriculation & Ongoing Health Status Requirements

Prior to entering the program students are required to have documentation of their current health status

by way of a health exam with their provider or at [Jefferson Occupational Health Network \(JOHN\)](#). It is the student's responsibility to notify JOHN of any changes in their medical condition and update their records.

It is a requirement of the University that all students meet the [minimum vaccine recommendations as determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and TJU requirements. Students are required to demonstrate proof of immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, and Hepatitis B by laboratory evidence prior to starting any experiential learning or clinical rotation. These records are kept by JOHN. However, a clinical site may request a copy of this at any time, and the student will be required to provide documentation of this. The program does not keep this information on file and is not able to provide this to the site. Additionally, students are required to show proof of annual influenza and Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis).

The (TB) Mantoux test, including chest x-ray and counseling, or the IGRA blood test, when applicable, is required prior to starting the PA Program and it is to be repeated annually. TB testing may be required more frequently according to clinical site requirements. The students are responsible for maintaining this testing.

The following immunizations and laboratory tests are required prior to matriculation into the TJU Department of Physician Assistant Studies:

• Hepatitis B Recombinant Vaccine	Documentation of 3 vaccine series and/or serologic evidence of immunity
• Influenza Vaccine	Required annually
• Measles, Mumps & Rubella Vaccine	Documentation of 2 vaccine series and/or serologic evidence of immunity
• Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis	Documentation of 3 vaccine series, and Tdap booster within 10 years
• Varicella	Documentation of immunization or disease history
• Tuberculin Skin Test Or, IGRA blood test	Required annually. The initial test must be the two-step test, and a singular test is required annually when in clinical rotations. If positive test, must have no evidence of active disease on chest x-ray

A request for a copy of the student's immunization records and TB testing may be made prior to starting or during any clinical rotations. These records are to be submitted by the student to the clinical sites as needed.

See *Admission Standards*. Prior to matriculation and to beginning clinical rotations, students will be required to complete the following in addition to the testing described above: criminal background

check, fingerprinting, drug screening, and child abuse clearance. **Criminal records, fraudulent application statements, history of drug abuse or positive drug screening are grounds for immediate program dismissal and may nullify admission to the program.**

Occasionally, some clinical sites and/or hospitals will have additional requirements. For example, some clinical sites may require documentation of latex allergy testing or a statement that the student is not allergic to latex products. Students are responsible for fulfilling these requirements and any cost associated with testing.

Students who fail to provide acceptable documentation of the above ***will not be permitted*** to have any patient interactions sponsored by the University. This can result in the students receiving an incomplete grade and/or a delay in graduation.

Compliance with Universal Precautions

The Thomas Jefferson University Center City PA Program recognizes that as students interact with patients as part of their clinical training, they will encounter the risk of exposure to infectious diseases. Safety is an important objective for the student and for patients. During the didactic phase of the program, each student receives training in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Administration on Universal Precautions and learns appropriate methods of handling blood, tissues and bodily fluids as well as dealing with the management of communicable diseases. As part of professional development, each student is responsible for incorporating these precautionary measures into the daily routine while taking care of patients throughout the clinical year. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies and procedures for employing these precautions at each of the rotation sites to which the student is assigned. All students will participate in clinical affiliation requirements for safety and quality assurance compliance at the direction of the clinical affiliation personnel.

Accidental Exposure Policy

Students who are exposed to patients' blood or body fluids during the course of their clinical rotations should report to JOHN as soon as possible after exposure. If the exposure occurs after normal working hours, the student should report to Jefferson's Emergency Department. JOHN follows the Public Health Service's Guidelines for Exposure to HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B. If a student is on a rotation outside of Jefferson, they are advised to contact JOHN for direction and guidance. Students unable to return to JOHN or to Jefferson's Emergency Department should be seen in the closest emergency department. Care for this visit is charged to the student's insurance. Students are responsible for all costs not covered by their insurance. Further information regarding Jefferson's exposure protocol may be viewed on the [JOHN Website](#) or by visiting the [Occupational Exposures](#) website.

Malpractice Insurance

All students are required to carry medical [malpractice insurance](#). The required malpractice insurance is supplied by Thomas Jefferson University for all approved clinical assignments, and evidence of this will be provided to the clinical sites. This policy is valid only when students are participating in program-assigned clinical experiences and does not cover students for outside or independent clinical work, experiences,

etc.

CPR/ACLS Certification

All students in the PA Program must present proof of child and adult CPR/BLS (Basic Life Support) certification upon entry into the program and must maintain current CPR certification from the American Heart Association at the Healthcare Provider level. The TJU PA Program will only accept BLS certification obtained through a verified course.

Students will complete Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training through the program. Any student who does not successfully complete this training will be required to complete the Advanced Cardiac Life Support training at their own expense prior to the start of their clinical year.

HIPAA Compliance & Confidentiality

Prior to entrance into the clinical year, all students are trained in the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#) medical privacy regulations. Students will not be permitted to begin the clinical year without HIPAA training. Students must demonstrate continuous compliance with these regulations throughout the clinical year. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.

Students, preceptors, and patients trust the program and the students with important information relating to their lives, practices, and medical problems. The physician assistant profession requires that you maintain confidentiality with all protected health information and patient matters, and it is the program's responsibility to safeguard the information. This professional behavior earns respect and trust of the people with whom the program and you will be serving and treating.

When you matriculate into the PA Program you have an obligation to maintain confidentiality, even after you leave the program. Any violation of confidentiality seriously affects the PA Program's reputation and effectiveness. Casual remarks may be misinterpreted and repeated, so please learn to develop the personal discipline needed to maintain confidentiality.

Communication

The TJU PA Program – Center City, requires students to access information and schedules via e-mail and/or Canvas. An e-mail account is set up for you through the University and **you are required to use the University e-mail address for all communication** and should check your e-mail daily. Failure to check your e-mail will not be accepted as a reason for missed communication. PA classrooms are equipped with wireless capability.

It is the student's responsibility to check TJU email daily and respond within 24 business hours throughout the didactic year and each clinical rotation experience. This allows you to stay informed and obtain any important information from the PA Program faculty/staff or University administration. Failure to respond within 24 business hours is a violation of professional conduct and may result in a professionalism citation at the discretion of the Program Director and/or the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC).

Email Guidelines

- TJU accounts must be used. (Please do not use the email function on Canvas)
- The University does not forward TJU e-mail to personal e-mail accounts.

All students, faculty and staff of Thomas Jefferson University are subject to all applicable federal, state, and international computer laws. Unprofessional behavior on the computer systems will not be tolerated and could result in dismissal from the program.

Unauthorized duplication of software is a Federal crime. Penalties include fines and jail terms. Violation will result in dismissal from Thomas Jefferson University and the TJU PA Program.

PA Program Student Records

Questions regarding your records should be directed to the Program Director. Files on students are maintained by the following departments:

1. The PA Program - official application, didactic and clinical academic performance, student advising and academic counseling, disciplinary actions, malpractice and healthcare insurance documentation, and health, drug screen, criminal background check, child abuse screening, fingerprinting & immunization verification.*
2. The Registrar's Office – official transcripts.
3. Jefferson Occupational Health Network (JOHN)* – history and physical exam records, immunization records.

*Confidential health records are maintained in JOHN and cannot be accessed by the PA Program faculty and staff. JOHN will notify the program that the student has satisfied the medical record and health screening requirements of the program each year. With the permission of the student, the program will maintain vaccination records and TB testing results. The program will have access to the results of student drug screening, child abuse screening, fingerprinting, and criminal background check results. These results, as well as vaccination records, TB testing results, and verification of medical records and health screening requirements are stored, maintained, and accessed via the [American DataBank](#) / [Complio](#) system.

It is the responsibility of the student to keep their records current. If you have a change in any of the following items, please be sure to **notify the program immediately and update your student information in BannerWeb**:

1. Legal Name
2. Home address
3. Phone number
4. Emergency contact
5. Medical insurance information

The student must keep all information up to date with the appropriate University offices on an annual basis. Failure to keep these current may lead to suspension of email, Canvas, Banner, and Exam-Soft access, and may result in the inability to access courses, leading to deceleration and/or delayed graduation.

Confidentiality of Student Records

The student's record is the property of the University but may be released upon formal request of the student. The records of the student are held in trust by the University and are maintained in a confidential manner. For more information on FERPA and the students' rights to their records, please refer to the University Policy on [Student Record Access and Confidentiality](#).

Any student interested in granting a third-party access to their educational records must reach out to the Program Director to request a FERPA release form. The form must be fully completed and provided to the Program Director. The Program Director will have the form submitted to the Jefferson College of Health Professions Dean's Office for review and approval.

PA Program Office Hours & Contact Information

The PA Program office hours are 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday.

Phone #: 215-503-0106

Fax #: 215-503-0315

Classroom Hours

Regular class hours are generally M-F, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, but there will be some early morning, evening, and/or weekend classes. You will be given as much notice as possible for such assignments so that you can make arrangements to attend.

Class times and locations are estimates and are subject to change AT ANY TIME during the program. The program will make every reasonable attempt to notify students of changes as soon as possible. During the Clinical Phase students are expected to be with their preceptor in the clinic, hospital, and/or on-call as directed by the preceptor.

Faculty Office Hours

Faculty office hours are available by appointment. Students should contact faculty via email or phone to set up meetings. Faculty offices are located on the sixth floor of the Edison Building (130 S. 9th Street, Philadelphia, PA).

Use of Electronic Communication Devices

In order to respect the learning environment of classmates and faculty, students should turn off all personal electronic devices while participating in class-related activities. The use of laptops or technology other than for instructional use is inappropriate. Any student who violates this policy repeatedly and/or becomes disruptive to the learning environment, will receive a professionalism citation.

Identification

Students are required to display their Thomas Jefferson University ID badge at all times. In addition, students are required to obtain a name tag from the University Bookstore website:

<https://jefferson.centraluniforms.com/product/name-pin-4/>, with the PA-S or physician assistant student designation. Name tag and waist length white coat must be worn during all practical examinations, standardized patient activities and all clinical activities. TJU ID badges should be worn as appropriate in the clinical setting- i.e., TJU or affiliate clinical sites. It is your responsibility if you have lost your badge and/or name tag to pay for the cost of replacement. Replacements may be obtained

from the Photo ID center located in the Medical Office Building (MOB) at 1100 Walnut Street, Suite 102 (to the left before lobby entrance).

Dress Code & Personal Appearance

The intent of the dress code is to allow the student maximum freedom in class as long as such freedom does not interrupt the educational process. Students are expected to present themselves in a professional manner. Personal hygiene is of the utmost importance and the student is expected to be clean and well-groomed at all times. All clothing must be clean, not ripped or torn, and with appropriate coverage.

The public respects health care professionals largely due to their expertise, education, and performance. The Program believes that professional appearance and dress helps to maintain this respect.

Dress Code – Anatomy Lecture/Lab:

- Refer to Anatomy Professors for guidance
- No hats can be worn at any time.
- Scrubs are permitted in both lecture and lab.
- The student's body will be adequately covered.
- Shoes must be closed toe. No perforated, mesh, or shoes with holes are permitted (i.e., Crocs™)

Dress Code – Classroom Attire during Didactic Setting:

- Students must dress in a business casual manner at all program activities (jeans without holes are permitted).
- Athletic attire is not appropriate.
- The student's body will be adequately covered.

Dress Code – Physical Diagnosis and Clinical Skills Lab Attire:

- A short-sleeve tee shirt and shorts are ideal attire in all labs.
- Under-attire in physical exam lab must be appropriate for specific examinations.
- Some examinations may require students to disrobe partially but gowns and drapes will be provided. Students will practice draping and examining around/with surgical gowns to facilitate modesty during the exam.

Dress Code – Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) and Practical Examinations:

- Students should follow the dress code for clinical settings for any standardized patient activity and for any practical examinations when the student is in the role of the PA-S.
- Students should have their Jefferson ID badge and their name tag that clearly indicates their role as a student.
- Students should wear a clean short white lab coat.

Appearance projects a professional image representing the student, the profession and the University. Students improperly attired can expect to receive a verbal warning from a clinical preceptor or any faculty/staff member. Repeated infractions will result in a professionalism citation, and/or a meeting with the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee.

Dress Code – Clinical Setting (ER, long-term care, inpatient, outpatient, other clinical phase

rotations/clerkships, etc.):

It is the responsibility of the student to dress appropriately during any function involving patient care or contact during the clinical setting. Patient care areas are defined as any setting in which patients are examined, evaluated or rendered care by any means, including both inpatient and outpatient settings. Dress code/regulations are subject to change based upon environmental conditions.

- The student will adhere to the dress policies of the clinical site to which they are assigned.
- The student must always look professional.
- The student will dress in a conservative fashion.
- The student will wear a clean and pressed, white waist-length lab coat at all times, except when patient safety would be affected (i.e. in an operating room).
- The student will always wear their program-issued name tag, designating them as a PA student.
- The student will wear their Thomas Jefferson University ID badge as appropriate.
- The student's body will be adequately covered. Inappropriate skin exposure includes the torso, abdomen/midsection, back, shoulders, thighs, and cleavage.
- Inappropriate clinical clothing includes but is not limited to camisoles, tank tops, t-shirts, anything denim, sweatshirts, belly/crop shirts, mini-skirts, anything transparent or see-through, yoga pants, and any stained, ripped, torn or casual clothing.
- The student's clothing must always be clean and pressed.
- Shoes must be closed-toed and without holes.
- Nails should not be artificial and should be short (based on clinical facility policy)
- Jewelry should be minimal.
- The student should attempt to conceal any tattoos.
- Cologne/perfume is not appropriate in the clinic.
- Hair should be clean. Students with long hair should keep their hair pulled back from their face.
- Facial hair should be neatly trimmed and must comply with clinical site policy.

Appearance projects a professional image representing the student, the profession and the University. Students improperly attired can expect to receive a verbal warning from a clinical preceptor or faculty/staff member. Students may be sent home from their clinical rotation site if the preceptor deems their attire inappropriate for the clinical setting. This would result in an unexcused absence from the rotation. A second infraction will result in a professionalism citation, and/or a meeting with the Program Director and/or Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC).

Attendance

Attendance at all program learning activities is required for all students to ensure access to content experts and faculty. Attendance is mandatory unless otherwise indicated by the course director or the course syllabus. Students are responsible for all materials and information presented in lectures. Students should note that while the Program records the majority of lectures, technology problems do sometimes occur. The presence and quality of recordings are not guaranteed. Students are responsible for requesting any recorded lectures, obtaining notes from peers, or meeting with faculty to review any missed materials in the event that an excused absence is granted.

Excused Absence

Class participation is defined in the individual course syllabi. A student absence is defined as missing a class/lecture/lab/group activity or the inability to meet the minimum criteria for participation set forth in the syllabus. Any student who is absent from a required activity must notify the appropriate course or

clinical director in advance, via email to submit a request for an excused absence. For an anticipated absence, a student is required to notify the Program and submit documentation at least 2 weeks prior to their absence. For an unanticipated absence, notice must be provided within 24 hours of your absence. As adult learners, students are responsible for any content missed while absent.

One excused absence must be for qualified reason. Excused absences may include but are not limited to illness of self or immediate family member, death of the student's immediate family, documented failure of normal or auxiliary means of transportation, an approved personal event including but not limited to marriage or childbirth. Where applicable and necessary, such in the case of illness, a note from a health care provider may be required at the discretion of the course director. One excused absence will be permitted for each semester in the didactic year as approved by the appropriate faculty and Program Director.

Extended Absence:

Absences of PA Program students due to illness of short duration (less than 3 days) will require email notification to the following:

Didactic Year: PA Program Director, the Director of Didactic Education, and the appropriate course directors/instructors directly.

Clinical Year: PA Program Director, the Clinical Coordinators and Clinical Preceptor(s) directly.

Return from an extended illness (more than 3 days) or repeated (more than 2 per semester) absences due to illness must be coordinated through the TJU PA Program administration and will require notification of instructors and/or Clinical Preceptors. Any such absences may require medical clearance through JOHN (as specified in the JCHP Illness/Injury policy) and/or specific make-up work as designated by the program and/or clinical preceptors.

In the clinical year, absence of three days or more may require the rotation to be repeated and the student to meet with the Program Director and/or appear before the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC). This may result in deceleration in the program and delayed graduation. Students are responsible for the cost of any repeated rotations and coursework.

For an extended illness, a leave of absence will be considered. All possible efforts will be made by the administration and faculty to provide a means of remediating deficiencies incurred. The student is responsible for learning any missed material and for arranging with the instructor to complete the assignments.

Unexcused Absence

An "unexcused absence" is any absence that does not meet the criteria for excused absence as outlined above and/or approved by the Program Director. The consequences of unexcused absences will be determined by the appropriate course or clinical director in conjunction with the Program Director and may result in a grade deduction or failure and/or professionalism warning or citation. An unexcused absence from a didactic year exam or quiz will result in the student completing the assessment for a maximum grade of 70. An unexcused absence from a clinical year exam will result in the student failing the exam. The student may be allowed to complete a reassessment for a maximum grade of 70 at the discretion of the Program.

Should a student fail to meet professional responsibilities because of consistent lack of attendance or lateness, they may receive a course grade deduction or failure, professionalism warning or citation, and/or be placed on academic probation by the Program Director. A pattern of unexcused absences,

lateness or early departure from clinical rotation activities could also result in dismissal from Thomas Jefferson University for unprofessional conduct.

Leave of Absence

The Thomas Jefferson University Physician Assistant Program – Center City follows Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson College of Health Professions policies related to a leave of absence for the program.

A leave of absence from the TJU Physician Assistant Program - Center City may be granted by the Program Director for a specific period of time, not to exceed one academic year, if deemed necessary for medical or personal reasons. Requests for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Program Director. The Program Director can assist the student in identifying the most appropriate process for the leave of absence. If applicable, students should also contact TJU Financial Aid and the Office of Residential Life to understand any potential implications of taking a leave of absence.

After consultation with the Program Director, students seeking a **medical leave of absence (medical LOA)** must meet with Jefferson Occupational Health Network (JOHN) staff and meet the criteria for the LOA established by JOHN. The student must contact JOHN to start this process, after consultation with the Program Director. Students must work with the Program Director to coordinate their leave and return from a medical leave of absence. The process for returning includes an evaluation by JOHN, along with meeting with the Program Director, to determine requirements for the student's return, which may include repeating coursework, successful completion of examinations or assignments, or auditing courses. The terms of the student return are ultimately at the discretion of the Program.

Students seeking a **personal leave of absence (personal LOA)** must meet and discuss with the Program Director and must be in good academic standing at the time of the request. Return to the program will be determined individually and may require repeat coursework, completion of examinations or assignments, or auditing courses. Students returning to the program must meet with the Program Director prior to return. The terms of the student return are ultimately at the discretion of the Program.

Students taking a leave of absence will decelerate in the Program curriculum, resulting in possible delayed graduation. Students will be responsible for any/all costs incurred for repeating coursework and/or examinations. Please also see the *Time Restriction* section of this handbook.

Jury Duty – Immediately upon receiving a notice for jury duty, the student must provide the program with a copy of the notice. The Program Director will provide you with a letter documenting your position and standing in the program for the court to assist with excusing you from jury duty. Absence for jury duty does not require a leave of absence; however, any work missed due to jury duty will be the responsibility of the student.

Military - If you are called to serve as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, United States Coast Guard, and/or National Health Service Corps and are a student in the program, you are eligible for readmission following your term of service. The procedure is as follows:

1. You must show your orders to the PA Program as soon as you receive them.
2. Upon your return, you must show verification of satisfactory completion of your active-duty service.

Emergency Contact

Should a student be difficult to reach in an emergency, the student should direct the person needing to contact him or her to telephone the Program Office at (215) 503-0106. In cases of emergency, the program staff will make every effort to locate a student to transmit requested emergency information during regular hours. During the clinical phase, students must give their preceptors and/or clinical site current contact number(s) and should request a direct number for both the preceptor and site.

[Contact information for the program faculty and staff](#) can be found at the beginning of this manual as well as on the program website.

Emergency Preparedness

Thomas Jefferson University has taken steps to support our campus community during times of heightened concern. The Department of Emergency Management has established an emergency plan that includes emergency procedures for all university buildings and occupants, as well as information that would be helpful in the event of an emergency. Students are encouraged to visit the [Emergency Preparedness site](#).

JeffALERT Emergency Notification System

With JeffALERT, the University can send simultaneous alerts in minutes through text messaging, voicemail, and email to numerous devices. Students must keep their contact information current so that they can be properly notified during an emergency. For detailed information about the JeffALERT Emergency Notification System, please visit their [website](#).

Inclement Weather

During the Didactic Phase, students will adhere to the Thomas Jefferson University Inclement Weather Policy. Clinical Phase students will follow the policies of the clinical rotation site regarding attendance during inclement weather. Students, faculty, and staff will be notified of TJU and TJUH weather emergencies via the JeffALERT system and the University website. A toll-free Jefferson hotline (1-800-858-8806) will provide a recorded message with weather-related information.

Students assigned to clinical rotations outside of the Philadelphia area are expected to follow the policies regarding weather-related closings and are responsible for exercising their own judgment concerning whether road conditions are safe enough for travel to the clinical site. The student is advised to begin by discussing the inclement weather policy for the assigned rotation site with the preceptor at the time of initial orientation. If the student decides against attending a clinical site because of inclement weather, the student must call both their clinical preceptor and the Program's Clinical Coordinator.

Clinical Phase Student Travel, Transportation & Housing

Jefferson Physician Assistant students complete clinical rotations at program assigned training sites, which are located throughout Pennsylvania and across the United States. Students may be required to relocate during the clinical phase. All students are responsible for their own housing, transportation, living expenses, and any associated costs (i.e., vehicle registration, parking fees, gas, and insurance) regardless of the location of the assigned clinical site. Reliable housing and transportation are required to meet all clinical education requirements and helps to ensure compliance with scheduling requirements.

Outside Employment

The Thomas Jefferson University PA Program is an extremely intense and rigorous academic program. The program expects that your position here is your primary responsibility, and that any outside activity must not interfere with your ability to accomplish your requirements as a PA student.

The Thomas Jefferson University Center City PA Program **STRONGLY DISCOURAGES** any employment during any part of the program. Employment responsibilities cannot interfere with the educational process or clinical learning experience. Leniency will not be granted to any student who incurs academic sanctions as a consequence of personal priority setting and/or poor time management during any part of the program.

Use of Students as Staff

The PA Program will not use students as a substitute for faculty, clinical or administrative staff. Clinical rotations should be an educational experience for the physician assistant student. While students should try to contribute as team members on clinical rotations they should not substitute for regular clinical or administrative staff. If a situation arises where an individual is asked to perform in a role other than that of a student or to substitute for a staff member, the student should contact the program immediately for guidance.

Academic Advisors

A faculty advisor is assigned to each student during the first year and will be your academic advisor throughout the program. You are expected to visit with your advisor at least once per semester. Students should contact their academic advisor to set up these meetings and establish a preferred method of communication, i.e., email or phone. Students may be required to meet with the faculty advisor, Program Director, or course director/liaison more frequently at the request of the above parties. *It is the responsibility of the student to contact their advisor for appointments.* Please do not hesitate to contact your advisor with any questions. The Program's core faculty members function as our students' academic advisors, but they are also available to assist you in finding the right individual (outside the program, if necessary) to assist you with any problem that could affect your academic progress. In accordance with accreditation standards, faculty advisors are not permitted to provide physical, medical or mental health counseling to students and will refer students to appropriate providers, whether primary providers or counseling services through the [Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#).

Student Society

All students are encouraged to become active members of the Thomas Jefferson University Physician Assistant Student Society ([TJUPASS](#)). The faculty encourages each student to become an active student member of both the [American Academy of Physician Associates \(AAPA\)](#) and the [Pennsylvania Society of Physician Associates \(PSPA\)](#). Membership dues for both the AAPA and PSPA are included in student fees.

Pi Alpha National Honor Society for Physician Assistants

Physician assistant students who have excelled academically and in research, publishing, community/professional service, or leadership activities are eligible for nomination by the program for membership. Academic excellence is defined as having a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale at the time of nomination. Demonstrated excellence in research, publishing, community/professional service, or leadership activities is to be weighted in addition to GPA. GPA alone is not an indication for induction. The total number of nominees elected shall not exceed fifteen

percent of the total number in the class expected to graduate. <https://paeaonline.org/pi-alpha-honor-society/>

Community Involvement

As a member of the TJU PA Program, you are an ambassador for our program to the University, our clinical sites, our patients, and the public at large. The impression that the PA Program and you as individuals make will be determined by your actions. This in turn will determine others' interest and willingness to work with our program. Always be courteous and respectful and take pride in your work as you communicate with administration, faculty, students, staff, preceptors, patients and the public at large.

The PA Program encourages and supports your participation in service activities that contribute to the community. Please work with your student society to involve your entire class in community-based projects. You are encouraged to work with fellow University students as well as fellow physician assistant students at other local PA programs.

Professional Conduct

The TJU PA Program –Center City upholds the Thomas Jefferson University Community Standards, and the [Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession](https://www.jefferson.edu/university/academic-affairs/schools/student-affairs/student-handbooks/university-policies/code-of-conduct.html). The TJU Community Standards are found at <https://www.jefferson.edu/university/academic-affairs/schools/student-affairs/student-handbooks/university-policies/code-of-conduct.html>.

As a healthcare provider, the professional relationship between the provider and the patient requires a dedication to responsibility and accountability to your patients and the community alike. As a student, you will earn the trust of your patients and instill confidence in your ability to be a steward of the patient's health. It is important to understand that it is an honor and a privilege to be a physician assistant. The TJU PA Program – Center City promotes learning, personal responsibility, self-discipline, respect for others and self in an atmosphere of mutual respect. You are expected to adhere to professional decorum in all activities related to this program.

As professionals, students are responsible for attendance, completion of all program documentation, preparedness, handling of program resources and equipment, participation, and ultimately their performance in the PA Program.

During the didactic phase of the program, professionalism is assessed on a daily basis formally and informally by the program faculty and your peers. Within each course, professionalism is assessed via the professionalism rubric below which is embedded in each syllabus.

Professionalism Rubric				
	Meets Expectation for Professional Behavior	Partially Meets the Expectation for Professional Behavior	Does Not Meet the Expectation for Professional Behavior	
	1	0.99 (-0.01)	0.98 (-0.02)	
Attendance	Attends all classes and/or clinical assignments or has received approved	One unexcused absence from class and/or clinical assignment.	More than one unexcused absence from class and/or clinical assignments.	

	excused absences.			
Punctuality and Attentiveness in Class	Consistently arrives a few minutes prior to the start of lecture/class. Stays for entire class. Careful not to distract others during class (i.e. socializing during lecture).	Arrives just in time or 1-5 minutes late for class. Occasionally disruptive during class (i.e. socializing during lecture, use of unapproved electronic device).	Arrives >5 minutes late for class. Often disruptive and distracting in class (i.e. socializing during lecture, use of unapproved electronic device).	
Assignment Completion	Completes all course assignments in a timely manner without the need for reminders.	Must be reminded to complete course assignments.	Disregards requests for completion of course assignments.	
Communications	Communicates with a professional tone through email, phone and/or in-person interactions.	One inappropriate correspondence via email, phone and/or in-person interactions. One or more delayed responses to emails.	More than one inappropriate correspondence via email, phone and/or in-person interactions. More than two delayed email responses or no response.	
Demeanor	Always respectful of others, including faculty, staff and students in dress, behavior and/or attitude. Responds openly to constructive feedback. Exemplifies dependability, honesty and trustworthiness.	Usually respectful of others, including faculty, staff and students in dress, behavior and/or attitude. Does not accept constructive feedback well. Asks for exceptions to class/program/university policies.	Disrespectful to faculty, staff or students in dress, behavior and/or attitude. Demonstrates dishonest or untrustworthy behavior. At times argumentative with constructive feedback is given. Demands exceptions to class/program/university policies.	

In the clinical phase, professionalism is evaluated by faculty, preceptors and staff of the TJU PA program. Any faculty, preceptor, or staff who witnesses unprofessional conduct will document it and submit it to the Program Director and may be referred to the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC). Violations of professional conduct could result in a professionalism warning or citation. Students who receive one or more professionalism citations may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program. Students may also be referred to the University Community Standards disciplinary process. Regardless of formal complaint, warning or citation, if a preceptor gives the student a failing grade for the professional portion of the final evaluation, the student will fail the rotation and therefore the course and be subject to dismissal.

Student Grievance Procedure

All members of the Thomas Jefferson University Community have the right to express concerns when they perceive that they have been treated in a manner not consistent with the standards of conduct at the University. The PA Program follows the TJU and JCHP Student Grievance Procedures for both academic and non-academic grievances. See the [JCHP handbook](#) and the [TJU Grievance Procedures](#) for more details.

Please note, the student grievance procedure is not intended for grade appeals or dismissal due to unsafe clinical practice. These issues are addressed by the [Grade Appeal Protocol](#) in the TJU Student Handbook.

Respectful Interactions

Respectful interactions are required of all students. Respectful behavior is characterized by being considerate, courteous, professional, and maintaining confidentiality of patient information. While participating in any college-related activities (e.g., coursework, clinical experiences, volunteer work, etc.), it is expected that all students and faculty and staff affiliated with TJU PA Program, will act in a manner that is guided by a respect for other students, staff, faculty, patients and healthcare practitioners who may have differences that include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Religious beliefs and practices
- Socioeconomic status
- Ethnicity/Language
- Racial background
- Gender / Gender identity
- Nontraditional medical beliefs and practices
- Sexual orientation
- Physical/emotional disabilities
- Intellectual capabilities

The TJU Center City PA Program will not tolerate incivility by any member of the University community. Examples of incivility include rude, sarcastic, obscene, disruptive or disrespectful behavior, threats, or damage to property. In general, any uncivil behavior, or behavior that significantly disrupts teaching, research, administrative, or student functions, will be referred to the Program Director and/or the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC). For more serious violations, the Program Director may refer the matter to the University Community Standards disciplinary process.

Title IX and Harassment

Thomas Jefferson University prohibits harassment of any kind, including verbal, visual, written, or physical conduct that demeans, threatens, or interferes with a person's educational experience. This includes all forms of sex discrimination and sex-based harassment, such as unwelcome sexual comments or jokes, stalking, sexual assault, domestic or dating violence, and other unwelcome sex-based conduct that limits a student's ability to participate in the program. The University responds promptly to reports, offers supportive measures, and strictly prohibits retaliation, including intimidation or threats, against anyone who reports or participates in the Title IX process. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to report concerns to the University's [Title IX Office](#), which will provide information about rights, resources, and available options. The University also fulfills its safety obligations under the Clery Act by providing written notification of rights and ensuring confidentiality in public disclosures. Other types of violations, harassment, and misconduct should be reported to the appropriate administrators and the [Behavioral Intervention Team](#).

Process for Addressing Issues and Concerns within the Program

Didactic Phase

1. If it is a question or concern about a class, you should talk with the course director/liaison first.
2. If your course director/liaison cannot help you resolve the matter, you should then speak to the Director of Didactic Education who will consider the problem and attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If the situation needs further review or you do not feel that the question/problem has been addressed, it should then be presented to the Program Director.
4. If you still feel the problem has not been appropriately addressed, it should be presented to the Department Chair.

Clinical Phase

1. If it is a question or concern that involves your clinical rotation, you should talk with the preceptor first.
2. If your preceptor cannot help you resolve the matter, you should then speak to the Clinical Coordinator who will consider the problem and attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If the situation needs further review or you do not feel that the question/problem has been addressed, it should then be presented to the Program Director.
4. If you still feel the problem has not been appropriately addressed, it should be presented to the Department Chair.

Do not allow small problems to turn into large problems, address those issues immediately so that the issue can be resolved quickly.

Student Evaluation

During both the didactic year and the clinical year, you will be evaluated by various mechanisms including, but not limited to, class participation, written examinations, practical examinations, oral examinations, and professional behavior. Final grades for each course are established by the individual course director/liaison and will be outlined in the course syllabus you will receive at the onset of each course.

Grading Criteria and Grade Appeal Protocol

At the close of an academic term, each instructor assigns a letter grade indicating the quality of a student's work in the course.

The following is the grading system used in the TJU Center City Physician Assistant Program for the calculation of the grade point average (GPA). **Any course grade below a C- or 70% is considered a failure and will result in dismissal from the Program.** Under extraordinary circumstances, students may appeal for consideration of course remediation. The opportunity for course remediation may be offered only once during one's time in the program and will be considered on an individual basis for students with extenuating circumstances. A student may remediate only one course while in the program. A second course failure triggers automatic dismissal from the Program.

Students pursuing an appeal for remediation will need to communicate this intent, in writing, to the Program Director within three (3) business days of posting of the final course grade to Canvas. Students may be required to meet with the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC)

during the appeal process. Any and all costs of course remediation or repeat examinations/practicals will be the student's responsibility. In the event of a successful appeal process, students participating in course remediation may have to decelerate from their current cohort, resulting in delayed completion of program requirements and delayed graduation.

PA Program Grading Criteria Final Course Grades

Letter Grade	Numeric Value	Quality Points	Letter Grade	Numeric Value	Quality Points
A	93-100	4.0	C+	77-79.99	2.3
A-	90-92.99	3.7	C	73-76.99	2.0
B+	87-89.99	3.3	C-	70-72.99	1.7
B	83-86.99	3.0	F	Below 70	0.0
B-	80-82.99	2.7	WF		0.0

Refer to individual course syllabi for specific grading elements within each course. Individual graded activities will be rounded to the nearest 2 decimal points. **Final course grades are not rounded.** This policy supersedes any individual PAST class syllabus.

If a student wants to challenge a final course grade, then the grade appeal policy and procedure affords recourse to a student who has evidence that an inaccurate final grade has been awarded under specific conditions. See [Grade Appeal Protocol](#) in TJU Handbook.

Course & Instructor Evaluations

The TJU Center City PA Program requires that each student complete course and instructor evaluations. This is a responsibility which should be taken seriously. Constructive suggestions are beneficial and aid the faculty in designing course materials for your successful learning. Please be respectful when providing comments and feedback in your written course evaluations. These evaluations will be completed online and anonymously. Course evaluations will be submitted at the conclusion of each course.

Testing Policies

The policy and procedures for test administration are:

1. Attendance at all examinations is mandatory. Students are expected to take examinations at the time designated. Each student is responsible for arriving on time for all examinations.
2. Students arriving late, or after any test taker has left the room for any reason, may be permitted to take the examination at the discretion of the course director or test proctor. If the student is not allowed to take the exam because of lateness, make-up examinations may incur a penalty and result in a grade deduction. Any sanctions related to lateness for an exam are at the discretion of the course director.
3. If a late student is admitted to the exam, the original end time will not be adjusted for the late student.
4. In the event of an illness or personal crisis, the student should make every effort to contact the course director and PA Office (215-503-0106), BEFORE the beginning of the examination.
5. If a student misses an examination due to an excused illness or personal crisis, a make-up exam will be offered to the student on a date to be determined at the discretion of the course director.

6. All personal belongings, including purses, book bags, coats, hats, etc. must be placed in the front of the room prior to the start of the exam.
7. Students are not permitted to wear hats, caps, hoodies, or other headgear. Exceptions can be made for clothing worn for religious purposes.
8. Students will not have any material at their desk during the exam, other than an iPad, dry-erase board, marker, and a drink (in clear containers without a label). Food is not allowed during an examination.
9. No technology can be present during the exam (except for iPad and analog watch), including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartwatches, fitness trackers, etc.
10. All electronic devices (other than the iPad) must be powered down and placed at the front of the room during examinations.
11. Each student is responsible for properly marking the answers on their iPads or on the answer sheet.
12. Students must not communicate with each other in any way.
13. At the end of the exam, the student must show the proctor the confirmation screen on their iPad and both sides of their clean whiteboard.
14. Students may go to the restroom one at a time. No extra time will be allotted to complete the exam.
15. Students must leave the exam room and not reenter after they have completed the exam.
16. Students MUST adhere to the instructions of the proctor and as delineated in the handbook, syllabus, etc.
17. Failure to comply with any of the above requirements may result in a penalty, including but not limited to a professionalism citation.
18. Any questions or discrepancies regarding an exam should be addressed via the challenge/learning opportunity process.
19. Changes in test scores, review session content, and process are at the discretion of the course director.

Didactic Phase Examination Validation and Challenge/Learning Opportunity Policy

Following each examination given during the didactic phase of the program, the course director will perform a post-hoc analysis on each exam item or question. Based upon the results, points or credit may be returned for individual items.

Challenging exam items and questions is allowed for the reason of addressing exam item miss-keys, ambiguities and discrepancies between what was taught and what was evaluated. For items challenged by the students, the process must go through a specific course or class liaison. The class may challenge up to 10% of the items on each exam with a minimum of a 10% class consensus. This challenge process exists to make certain that the assessment process is fair and address discrepancies and mistakes only. The test challenge process is a privilege and does not exist to facilitate higher student scores. It is at the discretion of the course director to withdraw this privilege at any time if he/she feels that it is being misappropriated.

Test Remediation

During the didactic phase of the program, students who receive a grade below 70% on an individual exam may be required to complete remediation activities as determined by the course director/liaison. However, remediation activities will not impact exam grade. Remediation is for the purpose of enhancing student knowledge of course materials and to increase success in the course. Completion of all remediation activities related to due dates, meetings, point deductions for failure to complete, etc. is at the discretion of the course director.

During the clinical phase, students who receive a grade below 70% on an end-of-rotation (EOR) exam will be required to remediate and pass another end-of-rotation exam in the same discipline to achieve a passing grade for the rotation/course. In this case, regardless of the grade on the remediated EOR exam, the maximum grade the student can achieve for the course is a C. Likewise, failure of an EOR

practical also must be remediated and passed for the student to progress and pass the course. Failure of a second end-of-rotation exam or practical will result in course failure and dismissal from the program. For clinical rotations that require students to complete an EOR and a practical, any student fails both the EOR exam and practical for an individual rotation on the first attempt, will receive a failing grade for the course. A student may fail only one EOR exam during the clinical phase and remediate the exam. A failed EOR exam in a second rotation/course triggers failure of that rotation.

The Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee

The Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC or 'the Committee') is comprised of faculty members from the PA Program and representatives from other programs and/or colleges in the University. This committee is charged with and monitors all PA students academically and professionally in accordance with the PA Program Student Handbook, the Clinical Education Manual, and University policies, where applicable.

The committee reviews the cases of students who meet the criteria for failure of academic or professional progress, conduct violations, probation, or dismissal. The APSRC may review student records and discuss student records with appropriate faculty members and/or preceptors to determine an appropriate course of action for students experiencing academic and/or professional conduct difficulties in the program. The APSRC may request the appearance of the student during an APSRC meeting. The committee, at its discretion, can recommend remedial or corrective actions, probation, or dismissal. It can also recommend the repetition of modules, courses, clinical rotations, semesters, academic years, and other requirements deemed essential. Recommendations are made on an individual basis after considering all pertinent circumstances in each case. The committee's recommendation is sent to and considered for approval by the Program Director. The Program Director may return the recommendations to the APSRC for reconsideration. Once a final decision is made, the Program Director issues a letter of decision to the student regarding the student's status in the program as well as the specific plan of action developed by the APSRC.

Academic Performance Standards

Students enrolled in the TJU Center City PA Program must achieve the following minimum requirements to remain in good academic standing within the PA program:

- a minimum CURRENT and CUMULATIVE grade point average (GPA) of 3.0
- a minimum grade in all didactic and clinical coursework of C-
 - Please Note: While a grade of C- or better is considered a passing grade in the PA curriculum, grades earned below a B (B-, C+, C, C-) will make it more difficult to remain in good academic standing and achieve the minimum required 3.0 cumulative GPA to progress in the curriculum and meet graduation eligibility requirements. Students should consult with their academic advisor regarding academic progress.
- Any student whose current or cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation.

GPA Calculations for Those Previously Enrolled in Other Jefferson Programs

For any student previously enrolled in another TJU degree program who is admitted to a second degree program at TJU, their cumulative GPA for the second program is computed only on the grades earned in courses taken within that program. This applies to dual DHSc/MSPAS degree students; the course grades and GPA attained during the DHSc portion of the student's education will not be part of the GPA

calculation while in the PA program. Academic standing while in the PA program will be based solely on the grades and GPA attained within the PA program only.

Probation/Returning to Good Academic Standing

Students enrolled in the PA program who do not achieve the minimum required 3.0 current and cumulative grade point averages will be placed on academic probation for one semester.

At the end of the probationary period:

1. The student achieves the minimum current and cumulative grade point average and is reinstated in good standing, or
2. The student fails to achieve the minimum grade point average at the end of the probationary period and is dismissed from the College for academic underachievement, or
3. In ***extraordinary cases***, where the student has made significant progress toward achieving the minimum grade point average, the Program Director, in consultation with the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee, may recommend granting one additional probationary semester. If at the conclusion of the extended probationary semester, the current or cumulative grade point average is still below the minimum 3.0 the student is dismissed for academic underachievement.

A student may only be placed on academic probation twice throughout the curriculum. Any circumstance warranting probation for a third time will result in program dismissal.

DHSc/PA dual degree students that are on probation are not permitted to matriculate into the PA program to earn their PA degree until after they have returned to good academic standing within the DHSc program and are no longer on probation. This may cause a delay in progression into the PA program. If a DHSc/PA dual degree student fails to return to good academic standing and ultimately is dismissed from the DHSc program, the student is not permitted to matriculate into the PA program to earn their PA degree.

Reasons for Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the Program for the following reasons:

1. Failure of a course (i.e., final course grade below C-).
2. In the event of course remediation, a second final course grade earned below a C-.
3. Inability to achieve the minimum current or cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of a probationary period.
4. Falling below the minimum current and cumulative GPA standard after two prior probationary periods.
5. Failure to meet all promotion/progression criteria.
6. Violation of professionalism standards, academic integrity or TJU community standards.

Readmission after Dismissal

Petition for readmission must be initiated within one year of dismissal.

A student may petition for readmission after being academically dismissed from the Program when they can demonstrate extenuating circumstances that directly resulted in their inability to be academically successful.

To initiate the readmission process, you must notify the Program Director via email of your interest in

reapplying and write a formal readmission petition letter by a prescribed deadline. This letter and supporting evidence will be reviewed by the HSCP Department Chair and two other leaders from the department/JCHP. They will determine whether the petitioning student has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate extenuating circumstances that directly resulted in their inability to be academically successful. This decision is final.

If it is determined that extenuating circumstances existed, the completed Re-Admission Petition Form and supporting evidence will be forwarded to the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC) who will review and evaluate this and other pertinent information and academic records to make a recommendation of acceptance or denial for readmission. You may be required to meet with the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee before a recommendation is made.

In the case of readmission, the Program will determine any and all requirements you must meet upon readmission. You will be held responsible for fulfilling these criteria of academic performance established with the Program, in addition to the overall program and College requirements for achieving good academic standing.

All readmitted students are subject to the academic and curricular requirements in place at the time of readmission. Additionally, the Program will determine start terms for the readmitted students based on the student's plan of study; readmitted students cannot assume that they will start in the next immediate term after readmission has been granted. In most cases, a readmitted student will be treated as a newly admitted student and therefore, begin the curriculum anew.

Students who have not been enrolled within JCHP for more than one year must reapply for admission through the Office of Admissions and CASPA. Students re-admitted for the failure of a didactic course must pass the course on the second attempt. Failure to do so will result in dismissal.

Please note:

This policy does not apply to students who are dismissed for professional reasons.

Special Program Requirements

Students will not be permitted to enter clinical rotations until all prerequisite academic courses are successfully completed and the student has a cGPA of 3.0. Failure to achieve a cumulative GPA of ≥ 3.0 at the end of the didactic phase could result in delayed progression into the clinical phase and/or dismissal from the program. The dates of the clinical rotations are subject to the availability of placements. Rotation dates will be different for students with a delayed clinical start than those who immediately progress and may result in a delayed graduation.

It is the expectation that each student will conduct himself or herself in a manner compatible with the University Community Standards, available at <https://www.jefferson.edu/life-at-jefferson/handbooks/rights-responsibilities/community-standards.html>

Students should reference the College of Health Professions Student Handbook and Thomas Jefferson University Student Handbook and Catalog for additional policies and procedures on academic regulations such as promotion, withdrawal, grade appeal protocol and criteria for graduation.

Time Restrictions Policy

Students must complete the PA program within 4 years of matriculation. This time period includes any leave of absence and deceleration. Any student who does not meet graduation requirements within 4 years of matriculation will be administratively withdrawn from the program.

Course Remediation Policy

The Thomas Jefferson University Center City PA Program is academically intense and challenging. Most PA students will accomplish this highly integrated and compact curriculum maintaining a high degree of academic excellence. However, some students who may ultimately become quality PAs may not be suited to this intense curriculum given their individual skills and/or special situations.

For the TJU Center City Physician Assistant Program, any course grade below a C- or 70% is considered a failure and will result in dismissal from the Program. Students may appeal for consideration of course remediation. The opportunity for course remediation may be offered only once during the 27-month program and will be considered on an individual basis for students with extenuating circumstances. The procedure is as follows:

1. Students pursuing an appeal for remediation will need to communicate this intent, in writing, to the Program Director within 3 business days of posting the final course grade to Canvas.
2. Students may be required to meet with the Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC) during the appeal process.
3. In the event of a successful appeal process, students participating in course remediation may need to decelerate from their current cohort to allow time for remediation, resulting in delayed completion of program requirements and delayed graduation. In the event that a clinical rotation course needs to be repeated, and the student successfully appealed for remediation, the timing of the repeat clinical rotation is dependent on the availability of the clinical site. Students should not assume that the course will be immediately available for repeat.
4. When offered, the method of remediation of a didactic course is to be determined by the course director and may take the form of a comprehensive examination, presentation, research paper, or any other form the course director deems appropriate. Remediation of a clinical phase course requires repeating the rotation and all EOR exams, practicals, and assignments.
5. The student will meet with the course director throughout the remediation period as needed by the student to review the material in need of remediation.
6. The student must obtain a minimum grade of 70% on the remediation activity to successfully remediate the failed course. The highest grade the student may obtain in the failed course after successful remediation is a "C-".
7. Unsuccessful remediation (scoring less than 70% on the assignment) of the course will result in automatic dismissal from the PA Program.
8. If the student does pass remediation, the initial grade will remain on the transcript and will factor into the calculation for the semester and cumulative GPA.
9. The student will be responsible for the full cost of any repeated and audited courses.

This policy is in effect for both the didactic and clinical phase of the program. Graduation from the program may be delayed depending on when and how the course is remediated. Students may only remediate one course (didactic or clinical) during the PA program. Any additional failing course and/or rotation will result in the automatic dismissal from the Thomas Jefferson University Center City PA

Program.

General Remediation Policy

Remediation decisions are governed by the specific course and test remediation policies found within this handbook. However, it is the charge of the Thomas Jefferson University Center City, PA Program to prepare its graduates for the PANCE exam and, most importantly, clinical practice. Regardless of exam or course failure, the program may decide based on the student's overall or current performance that remediation is necessary. For example, a student may not have failed any objective assessments but still earned consistently low performing exam or assignment scores, poor evaluations, low final course grades, or low cumulative GPA. In this case, the faculty may decide to create a remediation plan to address the student's knowledge deficits. While not directly attached to an assessment, this will be considered a graduation requirement for that student. Such guided remediations should not be viewed as punishment but rather as an early intervention to facilitate the students' future success.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity is the foundation of all Jefferson teaching, learning, and professional endeavors and is vital to advancing a culture of fairness, trust and respect. All members of the University community must maintain respect for the intellectual efforts of others and be honest in their own work, words, and ideas. The University Academic Integrity Policy can be found [here](#).

Promotion, Dismissal & Graduation

The ability of a physician assistant student to be promoted, to remain as a student in the TJU Center City PA Program, and to graduate from the TJU Center City Physician Assistant Program are the responsibilities of the PA faculty and student. The progress and promotion of each student throughout the curriculum requires continuous, satisfactory academic and professional behavior.

Requirements for Graduation

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Degree is granted to all students who have been recommended by the Program Director. In addition to the requirements set forth in the JCHP Student Handbook and the TJU Handbook and Catalog, students shall have successfully:

1. Completed the program course of study within 4 years of the date of matriculation,
2. Completed the required curriculum of the PA Program with a minimum grade of "C-" in all courses,
3. Attained a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher upon completion of all required coursework, and
4. Pass or complete all graduation requirements,
5. Completed the full, required curriculum of the DHSc program with the minimum grade and GPA requirements for the DHSc program (**DHSc/PA dual degree students only**).

Graduation requirements include but are not limited to (See Appendix 3):

- Standardized patient activities throughout the didactic and clinical year
- BLS /ACLS training and examination
- Team SAFE training
- Didactic comprehensive written examination

- Successful completion of all summative evaluation components, which will include the written summative exam, clinical skills testing, and a standardized patient activity. Other summative evaluation activities may be added at the discretion of the Program.

The successful completion of the above requirements demonstrates that the student has met the minimum requirements for graduation from the Thomas Jefferson University Center City Physician Assistant Program and is a candidate suitable to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE). Promotion and graduation are based on both academic and professional growth and development.

Students who fail to meet all promotion criteria will be dismissed from the Program. The student must demonstrate acceptable levels of maturity, integrity, and other attitudes and behaviors expected of health professionals. The student must be free of any impediments to licensure or to performance as a Physician Assistant. Failure to meet these requirements will jeopardize continued enrollment in the program or graduation from the program.

Comprehensive Examination & Summative Evaluation

Didactic Comprehensive Examination (DCE)

At the end of the Didactic Phase, students are required to complete a comprehensive exam, the Didactic Comprehensive Examination (DCE). All students must pass the comprehensive exam at the end of the didactic phase with a score of 70% or higher to proceed into the clinical phase of the program. Students who fail the examination will be required to remediate and will be given one additional attempt within four weeks after the initial results are released. Students in need of remediation will be required to meet with their advisor to develop a remediation plan. This may delay the start of the clinical year and lead to a delay in graduation and program completion dates. A second failure on this exam will result in dismissal from the program.

Summative Evaluation

Within four months of program completion, Clinical Phase students are required to successfully complete the Summative Evaluation. The Summative Evaluation includes but may not be limited to a comprehensive medical knowledge examination, an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) and a clinical skills written and practical examination. Students must pass the summative evaluation with a minimum grade of 70% or higher on the medical knowledge exam and the clinical skills practical exams, and all components of the OSCE to graduate from the program. The OSCE will include gathering a focused history, completing a focused physical exam, and completing an appropriate note. Should a student receive a failing grade on any of the components of the summative evaluation as outlined above, the student will be permitted one retake for each component(s) in which a failing grade was received. Should the student fail any component a second time, they will be dismissed from the program.

ACLS Training

All students are required to participate in and successfully complete ACLS training. This training occurs at the end of the didactic phase in preparation for clinical rotations. Students who do not successfully complete this training will be required to retake the course, at their own expense. Students who are unable to successfully remediate will not be allowed to progress into the clinical year.

TeamSAFE training

All students will participate in TeamSAFE training. This training is facilitated by Jefferson Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education and is based upon a national training program to increase communication and teamwork in the clinical setting to decrease errors and improve quality of care and patient safety. There is no grade for this training, however, this is a mandatory activity that all students are required to participate in and must complete in the assigned semester, usually during the Spring semester.

PACKRAT Examination

The Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating Assessment Test ([PACKRAT](#)) is a web-based examination used by the Program to aid students in self-analysis of their clinical knowledge. The examination is given at the end of the didactic and clinical years and provides an assessment of individual student strengths and weaknesses. The PACKRAT Examination will not contribute to a student's grade or progression in the Physician Assistant Program and is for self-assessment purposes only, however completion of PACKRAT I and II are graduation requirements.

NCCPA

[National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants \(NCCPA\)](#) is the credentialing organization for Physician Assistants. Students may access the web site for information about the certification process, licensing and credentialing, continuing medical education, etc. The TJU PA Program will discuss the process for taking the PANCE exam during the clinical phase of the program.

Clinical Phase

The Thomas Jefferson University-Center City Physician Assistant Program offers students a challenging course of study designed to prepare them for future roles as a Physician Assistant. The innovative curriculum leads to a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) degree. The curriculum is used to provide each student with the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to providing quality medical care, functioning as an effective member of the health care team, and serving in an advocacy role for people seeking medical care.

The clinical phase, spanning twelve months, represents the most challenging, rewarding, and at times frustrating portion of the journey toward becoming a physician assistant. Each preceptor involved in the students' clinical rotations receives a detailed outline of the goals and objectives for this phase. Opportunities for learning, skill enhancement, and professional identity development will be greater during the clinical phase than at any other point in the program. The responsibilities placed upon students, their preceptors, and their patients are significant; therefore, students must strive to take full advantage of every opportunity. Ultimately, both the students and the patients they serve will benefit from this commitment.

Although the temptation to take an easier path may be strong, doing so would constitute a disservice to preceptors, patients, and—most importantly—the students themselves. Students are encouraged to exercise discipline and challenge themselves academically in order to maximize the learning experiences available to them. Even routine clinical tasks hold potential for new learning. Each clinical encounter will be as successful as the student's level of engagement and preparation allows.

Throughout the clinical phase, students represent both the physician assistant profession and the Thomas Jefferson University Center City Physician Assistant Program. In many situations, a student may

be the first representative of the PA profession or the University that a patient or healthcare professional encounters. Students are therefore expected to present themselves as positive and professional ambassadors for both their field and the institution.

Clinical rotations provide advanced instruction in anatomy, pathophysiology, and clinical medicine, with a focus on disciplines traditionally encompassed by primary care, internal medicine, pediatrics, women's health, emergency medicine, surgery, and behavioral medicine. Training occurs across ambulatory, emergency, inpatient, outpatient, surgical, and long-term care settings. Through these experiences, physician assistant students learn to deliver healthcare services to diverse patient populations across the lifespan, addressing acute, chronic, preventive, and emergent medical and surgical conditions.

Clinical Curriculum

The clinical year involves in-depth exposure to patients in a variety of clinical settings. It is during this phase of the student's education that the student shapes and reinforces the skills described within the clinical role of the Physician Assistant. Completion of the student's clinical rotations phase of the curriculum provides application of the material learned during the didactic phase and helps prepare the student for entry level medical practice.

Students interview and examine patients, identify health care risks and problems, transmit patient information in verbal and written form to preceptors and other healthcare professionals, obtain specimens for diagnostic testing, participate in surgeries, monitor programs of evaluation and therapy, and discuss preventive healthcare behaviors with patients and families. The clinical year curriculum includes:

(Clinical Phase/Year 2)

Fall Semester

Clinical Rotation 1*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 2*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 3*	5.0 Credits
Healthcare I	1.0 Credit
Total 16 Credits	

Spring Semester

Clinical Rotation 4*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 5*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 6*	5.0 Credits
Graduate Project I	0.5 Credit
Healthcare II	1.0 Credit
Total 16.5 Credits	

Summer Semester

Clinical Rotation 7*	5.0 Credits
Clinical Rotation 8*	5.0 Credits
Graduate Project II	0.5 Credit
Summative Evaluation Course	0.0 Credit
Total 10.5 Credits	

Total Credits 43

**Core rotations vary from fall to summer semesters during the clinical year depending on preceptor availability.*

Responsibilities

Program Responsibilities

- The Program is responsible for assigning and approving all student clinical rotations.
- The Program will be responsible for assuring that during the clinical rotations each student keeps in force professional liability insurance covering students of the University for claims involving bodily injury, or death on account of alleged malpractice, professional negligence, failure to provide care, breach of contract, or other claim based upon failure to obtain informed consent for an operation or treatment.
- The Program will be responsible for assuring that during the clinical rotations, each student maintains major medical insurance as stipulated by the University.
- The Program will protect the students and their educational learning experience if it is deemed they are in danger or in an environment not conducive to learning.
- The Program will remove any student from a rotation at the request of the preceptor when it is deemed that the student's work, conduct, or health is considered unsafe or detrimental to patients or the practice site.
- The Program will remove any student from a rotation if there is a significant conflict between the student and preceptor that would deter from the rotation experience.
- The Program will coordinate the assignment of students with the preceptor and designate a faculty member(s) who shall act as a liaison and information resource for the preceptor.
- The Program will evaluate rotation sites to assess student progress and to address any preceptor and/or student issues.
- The Program will maintain communication with students while they are on rotations.
- The Program will determine the final course grades for students in the clinical year.

Preceptor Responsibilities

- The preceptor agrees to accept responsibility for the student and to provide careful supervision of the clinical activities of the student, ensuring the highest standards of patient care and safety, while providing a sound educational experience for the student.
- The preceptor agrees to promptly inform the Lead Clinical Coordinator or Program Director if significant problems of a personal or professional nature requiring faculty attention, knowledge, or consultation.
- The preceptor agrees to provide clinical hours for the student to attend and participate in clinical activities at the rotation site.
- The preceptor agrees to ensure the provision of quality medical care and agrees to monitor (to the point they deem necessary) the clinical performance of the student and to countersign all orders, chart entries, etc. as stipulated by state regulation and facility rules.
- The preceptor agrees to review the educational objectives to make reasonable efforts to assist the student in attaining the competencies and skills listed in the objectives.
- The preceptor agrees to take responsibility for introducing the student to personnel at the practice site and local medical facilities, informing these persons of the proposed student clinical

- activities and clarifying the role and responsibilities of the student.
- The preceptor agrees to evaluate the student's performance by providing verbal and written feedback to the student as the preceptor deems necessary.
- The preceptor agrees to arrange an alternate preceptor or to give an assignment to the student if they will not be able to precept the student for more than 2 days. If an alternate cannot be found, he/she should contact the Lead Clinical Coordinator immediately.
- The preceptor agrees not to use students as a substitute for regular clinical or administrative staff.
- The preceptor agrees to provide supervision of a student's clinical activities in the clinical/office setting, including but not limited to:
 - Histories, physical exams, laboratory/radiology tests, making assessment and treatment plans.
 - Case presentations or research projects as required by the preceptor.
 - Clinical procedures that are consistent with patient care.
- The preceptor agrees to provide supervision of the student's clinical activities in the hospital setting, including but not limited to:
 - Daily rounds: in-patient rounding, physical exams, recording progress notes and performing procedures that are consistent with patient care.
 - Assisting in surgery as directed by the preceptor.
 - Documentation (written/dictated) of admission/discharge summaries utilizing the established protocols.
- The preceptor agrees not to provide money or material goods to the student in return for their assistance in the medical care of patients.
- The preceptor agrees to allow student visits by faculty/staff or regional coordinators of the Thomas Jefferson University Center City Physician Assistant Program to assess the progress of students.
- The preceptor agrees to complete and return the mid-rotation evaluation forms and the end-of-rotation evaluation form as soon as possible. The final course grade for the student cannot be assigned until the Program receives this evaluation.
- The preceptor agrees to supervise the student within the preceptor's scope of practice.

Student Responsibilities

- The student will be easily identifiable as a Thomas Jefferson University Center City Physician Assistant Student and wear official student identification at all times.
- The student will contact the rotation site/preceptor for reporting instructions, site-specific standards, etc., unless otherwise notified by the Program faculty/staff.
- The student will adhere to the regulations and policies of the Thomas Jefferson University Center City PA Student Handbook.
- The student will be responsible for their own housing and transportation to and from all clinical site assignments.
- On the first day of the rotation, the student will inform the preceptor of the student's individual learning needs. This includes communicating the student's current level of competence and the level the student is expected to achieve in specific clinical requirements and clinical skills. The student and preceptor will also review the rotation objectives and the corresponding evaluation form together.
- The student will follow the rules and regulations of the hospital or other institutions in which

they rotate and agree to complete any additional training and/or testing required by the facilities.

- The student will be hardworking, conscientious and accountable.
- The student will be courteous, respectful and professional at all times.
- The student will be responsible for taking an active role in their clinical education.
- The student will demonstrate awareness of professional limitations and will only perform activities assigned by and under the supervision of their preceptor.
- The student will make all reasonable efforts to always maintain good relationships with patients, staff, and preceptors.
- The student will complete all assignments, patient tracking, and site/preceptor evaluations by the established deadlines as indicated in the course syllabi.
- The student is responsible for discussing with the preceptor a mid-rotation evaluation for each rotation.
- The student will never see, treat and discharge a patient without having the preceptor see the patient.
- The student shall handle all confidential information in a professional and ethical manner and in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws, including HIPAA laws and regulations.
- The student shall be permitted to document in designated portions of the hospital/facility patient's permanent medical record, in accordance with hospital/facility policy.
- It is the student's responsibility to complete all required documentation for each clinical rotation as required by the hospital/facility.
- If other screenings (drug/alcohol, additional PPD, child abuse or criminal background checks, etc.) are required by the clinical site (prior, during or after rotation), it is the student's responsibility to complete this, and to incur all expenses.
- The student may not make any contacts on their own without the consent of the Clinical Coordinator to set up rotations. It is the program's responsibility to assign clinical placements.
- If a student is removed from a rotation either by the Program or a request from a preceptor, the student will meet with the Program Director and may be required to appear before the Thomas Jefferson University Center City Physician Assistant Program Academic and Professional Standards Review Committee (APSRC) to address removal from the clinical rotation. As a result, the student may be dismissed from the program, or the graduation of the student may be delayed until other rotations can be found that are approved by the PA Program.
- Falsification of clinical rotation documents (including patient logs or timesheets) will result in dismissal from the PA Program.
- At any point in time, if the student feels unsafe in the clinical setting, or is being asked to do things they feel are inappropriate, they are to immediately contact the Clinical Coordinator or the Program Director.
- If the student is required to miss a clinical session due to PA Program activities, (i.e., on campus days, graduation activities, Health Mentors, etc.), the student will notify the preceptors at the start of the rotation.
- If the student needs to miss a clinical day, either for illness or other personal reasons, the student must contact the Clinical Coordinator, and copy the Program Director immediately, to request an absence and a change in schedule.
- Any absence from the clinical site of 3 or more days will require the student to make up the time missed.
- Students missing too much time in one rotation may need to apply for a leave of absence from the program until they are able to return to the program and clinical rotations. This may result in

repeating the entire rotation, leading to deceleration and possible delayed completion of the program and graduation. Students should work with the Lead Clinical Coordinator and Program Director to work out details of making up clinical sessions. Timing is dependent upon preceptor and site availability and may not occur immediately upon a student's return to the program.

Refer to the Clinical Year Manual for specific policies and procedures related to the clinical year and rotations.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equipment List

1. Otoscope/Ophthalmoscope Kit
2. Stethoscope (cardiology series – minimum required)
3. Sphygmomanometer (BP Cuff)
4. Reflex hammer
5. Tuning forks (128 cps & 512 cps)
6. Penlight
7. Flexible Tape measure (centimeters and inches)
8. Clinical Short, Waist-length White Jacket with Jefferson embroidery
9. Combination Pocket Snellen Rosenbaum eye chart with ruler (inches and centimeters)
10. Safety goggles for anatomy
11. Nametag (must be purchased from bookstore, and must have the official Thomas Jefferson University logo on it)

Appendix 2 – Program Required and Recommended Procedures and Skills

Required Exams, Skills and Procedures

These are defined as skills and procedures that the PA student would have observed and ideally performed as a minimum competency to become a graduate PA. Where possible the program provides experience with such procedures in a simulated manner. In cases where the procedure is not simulated, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain this experience which is tracked during his/her clinical rotations/clerkships.

Pelvic Exam	Venipuncture
Rectal Exam	Perform/interpret ABG
Testicular Exam	Routine Visual Screening
Breast Exam	Patient Education
Suturing/Laceration Repair	Slit-lamp examination
Incision and Drainage	Point-of-care ultrasound
Wound Care	Airway management
Venous Catheterization	Defibrillation/Cardioversion
Assist in Surgery/OR	Insert/Remove Urinary Catheter
Injections	Apply/Remove Cast/Splint

Administer Local Anesthesia

Sterile technique

Interpret Electrocardiogram

Recommended Skills and Procedures

These are defined as skills and procedures that the PA student is recommended to have observed or performed prior to graduation. It is also understood that some or many of these are uncommon and/or only performed in certain fields and contexts. Therefore, unless the program provides a simulated experience, performing or observing these skills and procedures is not a requisite of graduation.

Skin Biopsy/Lesion Removal/Cryotherapy

Papanicolaou smear

Perform Electrocardiogram

Bone Marrow Aspirations/Biopsy

Nebulizer treatments

Insert/Remove Chest Tubes

Developmental Screening Exams

Audiometry Screening

Removing Superficial FBs

Fetal Monitoring

Insert/Remove Birth Control Devices

Paracentesis/Thoracentesis

Arthrocentesis/Intra-articular Injection

Pulmonary Function Testing (PFT)

Lumbar Punctures

Assist in Cesarean Delivery

Newborn exam

Stress Testing

Arterial Catheterization (Cardiac or Peripheral)

Colposcopy

Central Line/Swan Ganz/PICC Line

Microscopy

Spirometry – interpretation

Nail Removal

Assist/Observe Vaginal Delivery

Endoscopy (EGD/Colon)

Auscultate Fetal Heart Sounds

Circumcision

Insert/Remove NG Tube

Joint Reduction

Appendix 3 – Graduation Requirements

Requirement	Minimum Passing Score	Completion Deadline
Successful completion of all didactic and clinical courses in the PA program	≥ C- on all individual courses, Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher	Within 4 years of matriculation
ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) training	Successful completion	Prior to Clinical Rotations
TeamSAFE training	Successful completion	
Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)	≥ 70%	These activities will occur at different points during the curriculum and deadlines will be variable.
Didactic Comprehensive Exam	≥ 70%; students who fail may be given one attempt to remediate and pass the exam	~Summer semester of didactic phase; remediation of this may result in a delay in starting clinical rotations
PACKRAT 2	Successful completion	Prior to graduation
PANCE Review Course	Successful completion	Prior to graduation
Summative Examinations/Evaluations	≥ 70% on all components. Students who fail may be given one attempt to remediate and pass the failed component(s).	These will occur at and/or toward the end of the clinical phase of the program and must occur within 4 months of graduation. Remediation may result in a delay in graduation date.
Remediation	Successful completion OR ≥70% where applicable	The deadline will be assigned and tailored to the specific deficiency, academic standing, and curricular timing.
*DHSc/PA dual degree students only Successful completion of all courses and curriculum requirements for the DHSc program	Achieve a B-/Pass grade in all required coursework and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher upon completion of all required coursework	Within 6 years of matriculation

Appendix 4 – Additional Resources

- [Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession](#)
- [Guideline for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession](#)

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Student Handbook

My signature below acknowledges receipt of the Thomas Jefferson University Physician Assistant Program – Center City Student Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for reading and abiding by the materials contained within the Thomas Jefferson University Center City PA Program Student Handbook, which contains important information needed during my student experiences at Thomas Jefferson University. Additionally, I understand that it is my responsibility to be familiar with and observe the policies and procedures of the Jefferson College of Health Professions and Thomas Jefferson University. I also understand that Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson College of Health Professions, and Thomas Jefferson University Department of Physician Assistant Studies reserve the right to amend or eliminate any information described herein as circumstances may require without prior notice to persons who might thereby be affected. I understand that the provisions of this handbook are not and may not be regarded as contractual between the University, College, or Department/Program and its students or employees.

X

Student Signature

Date

Printed Name