

MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

The following domains and competencies were developed by modifying content from the Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession¹. The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant 6th standards², Core Competencies for New PA Graduates³, and Entrustable Professional Activities⁴ also influenced the development of this document. All graduates of the program will demonstrate mastery of the competencies.

Location and Evaluation of the Program's Competencies

Didactic and clinical courses address all or some of the following six domains. Enriched pedagogical tools and clinical experiences provide fundamental and patient-specific instruction. Competency assessment occurs with multiple-choice examinations, individual and group educational activities, practical examinations, standardized patient encounters, clinical encounters, and preceptor evaluations. Final competency is assessed through the program's summative assessments.

Domain 1: Medical Knowledge

Competencies

- 1.1 Apply principles of evidence-based medicine
- 1.2 Distinguish pathophysiology or patient-specific factors for common medical and surgical conditions
- 1.3 Differentiate the clinical presentation and management of common medical and surgical conditions across healthcare settings and care levels
- 1.4 Indicate disease prevention and health promotion principles

Domain 2: Patient Care

Competencies

- 2.1 Provide patient-centered care as part of a healthcare team
- 2.2 Obtain an accurate patient history and physical examination
- 2.3 Discriminate appropriate differential diagnoses
- 2.4 Compare diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in a patient-centered approach
- 2.5 Perform procedures appropriate to the scope of practice
- 2.6 Implement health promotion and disease prevention interventions

Domain 3: Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

Competencies

- 3.1 Demonstrate appropriate self-reflection and critical curiosity.
- 3.2 Locate, appraise, and recognize how to integrate evidence from scientific studies into clinical practice
- 3.3 Recognize and address personal biases
- 3.4 Analyze and propose solutions for practice-based factors to improve patient care
- 3.5 Recognize and address gaps in medical knowledge

Domain 4: Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Competencies

- 4.1 Create and sustain an ethically sound therapeutic relationship with patients
- 4.2 Adapt communication style to the context of the interaction
- 4.3 Work effectively within a healthcare team
- 4.4 Demonstrate emotional stability, respect, and compassion during interactions and in communication

- 4.5 Effectively relay accurate and adequate clinical information (verbal and written)
- 4.6 Provide patient education in accordance with health literacy levels

Domain 5: Professionalism

Competencies

- 5.1 Demonstrate effective leadership skills
- 5.2 Demonstrate professional interactions with physicians and other healthcare providers
- 5.3 Demonstrate commitment to ethical behavior
- 5.4 Demonstrate sensitivity to patients' culture, age, gender, abilities, and autonomy
- 5.5 Recognize healthy behaviors to achieve work-life balance to avoid provider burnout
- 5.6 Recognize legal and regulatory requirements for PA practice
- 5.7 Demonstrate personal, professional, and intellectual integrity

Domain 6: Systems-based Practice

Competencies

- 6.1 Function effectively within different healthcare settings
- 6.2 Recognize cost-conscious healthcare practices
- 6.3 Recognize components of systems-based analysis to improve patient care

References/Resources:

1. Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession. Originally adopted 2005; revised 2012. <https://www.aapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/PA-Competencies-updated.pdf>.
2. Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant. Accreditation standards 6th ed. July 2025. https://www.arc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Standards-6th-Edition_July2025.pdf
3. Core Competencies for New Physician Assistant Graduates. Physician Assistant Education Association. https://paelearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Core-Competencies-for-New-PA-Graduates_FINAL_061918.pdf Accessed January 2020.
4. Obeso V, Brown D, Aiyer M, Barron B, Bull J, Carter T, et al, eds.; for *Core EPAs for Entering Residency Pilot Program*. Toolkits for the 13 Core Entrustable Professional Activities for Entering Residency. Washington, DC: Association of American Medical Colleges; 2017. aamc.org/initiatives/coreepas/publicationsandpresentations.