

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Except for the granting of Bachelor's degrees only to women students, Chatham University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, color, age, or handicap status in its educational programs and policies, co-curricular activities, scholarships and loan programs, and employment practices.

These policies and procedures supersede any previous policies and procedures of the Physician Assistant Program, and are superseded by any Health Sciences or Chatham University policies if there is a conflicting policy. Information contained herein is subject to change.

Tuition and Fees

The following are the current tuition and associated fees for each semester in the Physician Assistant Program as published in the 2009-2010 Chatham University Catalog:

Master of Physician Assistant Studies	\$11,456
Student Health Insurance	\$ 620
Combined lab and insurance fee	\$ 155
Campus fee	\$ 160
Technology Fee	\$ 350
Graduation fee (one time)	\$ 100

Fees for graduate housing / board are published in the College Catalog. Applicants are directed to this resource for a list of costs.

Additional required fees and estimated expenses (**subject to change**) include the following:

Books	\$ 1,800-2,200
Equipment	\$ 500-1,000
Travel to clinical sites (second year)	\$ 2,500-3,000
PSPA Membership (two-year)	\$ 50
PSPA Conference (first year)	\$ 135
CPR	\$ 50
Art of Auscultation conference	\$ 50
Basic EKG review seminar	\$ 35
Act 33/34 clearances	\$ 20
Urine drug screen	\$ 58
PPD	\$ 5-25
On-Campus Parking	\$ 275

Students accepted into and enrolled in Chatham's PA Program who are citizens or permanent residents of the United States are eligible to apply for financial aid through the Federal Stafford Loan program. For more information, contact the financial aid officer at the Student Services Center.

Academic Policies

Academic Advising

The students will be assigned an academic advisor for their course of study. The student should meet with the advisor as scheduled and at least once per term or more frequently if needed. The advisor provides academic and professional guidance and will refer the student for additional guidance, when necessary. If a student desires a change of advisor, s/he may petition for a change of advisor to the Program Director. Academic advisors may change periodically, based upon faculty availability and/or students' academic needs.

Grading

Course grades assigned will be pass (P) or fail (F). Individual assignments and evaluations will be graded as a numerical score, satisfactory (S) or needs improvement (N). All assignments and evaluations must be satisfactorily completed or satisfactorily remediated in order to receive a (P) in any given course. Specific assignments and their grading are subject to individual course syllabi.

Grading Criteria

- Demonstrate acquisition of a strong knowledge base
- Demonstrate satisfactory self-directed learning skills
- Demonstrate satisfactory self-assessment skills
- Demonstrate satisfactory clinical thinking and reasoning skills
- Demonstrate satisfactory competence with clinical skills
- Demonstrate satisfactory professional comportment

Students must demonstrate completion of:

1. All established competencies for a given semester in order to proceed to the next term,
2. All established competencies in the academic year in order to proceed to the clinical year, and
3. All program competencies in order to graduate.

The ***Student Progress Advisory Committee*** (SPAC, see below) will review all students for recommendation as to progression from term-to-term or graduation.

Outcomes Assessments

Periodic assessments are conducted to assure that students are attaining the knowledge, skills and behavior required of a practicing physician assistant. These assessments are used to assist the faculty and students in identifying areas for further study and to give students feedback on what they have already learned. Assessments in this program may include the following:

Didactic Education Assessments

SOAP Notes

These papers will be evaluated for writing skills as well as content and format.

History and Physical Examination Practicum

Students will demonstrate and document history and physical examinations based upon simulated patient cases.

Clinical Procedures Practicum

Students will document any procedures performed in the lab by writing an appropriate procedure note.

Videotaping

Students may be videotaped performing tasks such as interviews, history and physical examinations, and/or patient education sessions. These tapes will be used to aid in evaluating communication and physical examination skills. Students will have the opportunity to review the tapes and self-evaluate.

PBL Skills and Participation Evaluation

Evaluations of critical thinking, clinical thinking, self-directed learning, self-evaluation, and professional skills are done at the end of each unit. Students are directed to course syllabi for specific criteria.

Multiple choice examinations are designed to assess core medical knowledge and provide practice for the certifying examination. Questions are based on any information encountered during the unit, including, but not limited to, problem-based learning sessions, special seminars, and Skills classes.

Patient management problems (also known as "PBL Written Exams") are designed to assess the students' clinical reasoning. Students will identify necessary historical questions and physical examination components necessary for information needed and when presented with that information, will determine what diagnostic evaluations need to be pursued. Upon getting those results, students will make an assessment and plan for that particular patient and problem. Grading criteria will be established for each problem presented. Students are directed to course syllabus for specific grading criteria.

Critical Reading of the Literature

Students will be asked to evaluate research papers regarding the study question, study design, controls and variables, statistical analysis, whether the conclusions support or contradict the proposed hypotheses, etc. Students will write a research paper proposal, perform a literature review, develop a study design, and fill out an Institutional Research Board (IRB) proposal.

Clinical Education Assessments

Preceptors' evaluations

These evaluations will be based on the observed student interactions with patients, oral presentations, history and physical examinations, progress notes, and any other professional interactions.

Clinical coordinator evaluations

These evaluations will be based on the observation of the student in the clinical setting and/or discussion with the clinical preceptor, oral presentation, written H&Ps, SOAP notes, procedure notes, operative notes, initial patient evaluations, discharge summaries, and review of the student's patient encounter logs.

Computerized patient and procedure tracking system

This system will track patient encounters and clinical procedures performed during the student clinical experience. The information entered will be evaluated by the clinical coordinator to determine whether the student has continued to identify learning issues and has met the competencies required.

Multiple choice examinations

These exams are designed to assess core medical knowledge and its application to the clinical setting. They also provide practice for the national certifying examination. Questions are based on any information that may be encountered in the specific medical setting of the student clinical rotation.

Medical documentation skills

These include, but are not limited to, patient encounter notes, procedural notes, admissions orders, progress notes, discharge orders, referral or consultation requests, and prescription writing.

Remediation

Students will be given the opportunity to remediate certain assessments in the program. If students are unable to satisfactorily remediate their end-of-semester formative evaluation, end of academic year summative evaluation, end of rotations MCQ examinations, or end of program summative evaluation they will be referred to SPAC. Specific criteria are included in each course syllabus. Acceptable resources for all remediations include only those references from the approved list in this manual.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policies

In accepting admission to Chatham University, and specifically to the Physician Assistant Program, students automatically agree to be personally responsible in all matters pertaining to academic honor and pledge to abide by those rules considered by

the community as part of its honor code. Each year at opening convocation students reaffirm their commitment to the honor code.

The honor system at Chatham University challenges each student to act in such a manner as to appreciate how personal actions affect those around him/her and the reputation of the college. The acceptance and maintenance of the honor system promotes a climate of trust, concern, and respect among us which is conducive to learning and growing without which our community would deteriorate.

The honor system at Chatham enhances the development of leadership, integrity, and self-confidence through individual and community responsibility. The honor system depends for its effective operation on both the personal concern for each member of the community and for the collective concern for the maintenance of the community standards put forth by the college. Chatham University students pledge to maintain the Honor Code, which states in part: "Honor is that principle by which we at Chatham form our code of living, working and studying together. The standards of honor at Chatham require that all students act with intellectual independence, personal integrity, honesty in all relationships and consideration for the rights and well being of others."

Both the student handbook and the Chatham University catalog reference the academic integrity and the honor system at Chatham with specific examples. Students are encouraged to read both of these sections as well as the composition of the judicial system and the appeals process.

Professionalism

Unprofessional Behavior

Any evidence of documented unprofessional behavior may lead to failure of the course. Examples of unprofessional behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Falsifying data
- Impersonating a certified PA or other health professional
- Breach of patient confidentiality
- Inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature
- Refusal to see a patient when requested to do so
- Performing under the influence of drugs or alcohol during patient or professional encounters
- Failure to attend classes, labs, seminars, or other professional sessions
- Plagiarism

Such behaviors need not occur exclusively in the classroom but include any behaviors related to a course (e.g. in the library, bookstore, cafeteria, or any other location on campus or a clinical or professional site).

The first episode of unprofessional behavior will result in referral to the SPAC. The following actions may be taken:

1. The committee is satisfied that no offense occurred and no further action will be warranted
2. The student admits to the wrongdoing.

- a. An **Academic Dishonesty Form** is submitted to the **Office of Students Affairs**.
- b. On first infractions the SPAC may decide what penalty to apply. These may include with the student:
 - i. Resubmitting the assignment or taking a new one
 - ii. Failing the assignment
 - iii. Failing the course, resulting in deceleration or attrition
3. The student denies the wrongdoing but the SPAC determines that dishonesty occurred:
 - a. An **Academic Dishonesty Form** is submitted to the **Office of Students Affairs**.
 - b. The **Student Conduct Board** (SCB) convenes a hearing
 - c. If wrongdoing is confirmed, penalties and/or sanctions may include:
 - i. Academic probation
 - ii. Suspension
 - iii. Expulsion from the university

Timeliness*

Any assignment or remediation that is not completed by the established due date may be automatically considered an "N" unless previously arranged and approval (in writing) with the evaluating faculty member. A pattern of tardiness or absenteeism may be referred to the SPAC. Due to the competency-based nature of the curriculum, students must complete all assignments, even if they receive an "N" secondary to timeliness.

Attendance*

Attendance is expected at all program-sponsored activities. In the event of an unavoidable absence, the student must notify the instructor and/or the program office as soon as possible, prior to the scheduled activity start time. Specific attendance policies are subject to individual course syllabi.

Students are responsible for any missed coursework, regardless of the reasons they miss a program-sponsored activity.* A pattern of absences or tardiness reflects unacceptable professional comportment and could jeopardize the student's progress in the program. Students are strongly advised to arrange personal activities, such as routine medical/dental visits or interviews, during their scheduled recesses. All absences (excused or unexcused) require remediation to be arranged with the student's instructor of record and must be completed within one week upon the student's return to the program.

Foreseen absences *may* be excused if requested in writing (preferably by Chatham University email) to the instructor of record for the course, for first-year students, or Clinical Coordinator for second-year students. The student advisor should be sent a copy of the request. Official program notification of approval or denial of the request will be sent (by email or printed form). Requests for observance of religious holidays require notification during the first week of the start of an academic term.

In the event of a clinical preceptor's absence, students are required to immediately notify the clinical coordinator. Arrangements may be made by the clinical coordinator to reschedule or reassign the student.

Reasons for the expected attendance to sponsored activities include:

Problem-Based Learning Sessions

As a member of a team whose goal is to learn the art and science of medicine, *every* participant of a PBL group must contribute his/her knowledge and reasoning skills in order that effective learning transpires. If any participant is absent, the entire group suffers from the absence of that participant's contributions.

Labs

Laboratory sessions are designed to assist students in developing and completing the necessary skills competencies. In order to guide, maintain, and assess student progress, *attendance is required*.

Special Seminars and Special Events

Special seminars and events such as field trips and conferences are planned with the expectation of providing the students with additional learning opportunities. Lectures and seminars provided by adjunct faculty and instructors cannot be duplicated and missing these activities could be detrimental to the overall educational experience of the student.

Meetings

Class meetings are held to provide students an opportunity to address problems, exchange information, and plan events. If a student does not attend these meetings, s/he will lose his/her voice in the direction of the program and may miss vital information. All students are responsible for all material announced at these meetings.

***These are minimal expectations. Each instructor of record may impose criteria that surpass the ones delineated above.**

Attire

Students should have a professional appearance whenever they are representing Chatham University in an off campus setting including clinical sites, research meetings and special events. Being neatly dressed, well groomed and avoiding a "stylish" mode of dress exemplify professional appearance. Wearing exercise clothing, cut-offs, soiled clothing, T-shirts with offensive items, or clothing with holes during on-campus activities is not considered professional attire.

During clinical rotations or program sponsored activities off-campus, students are not to wear jeans, tennis shoes, shorts, cut-offs, T-shirts, clothing with holes, dangling jewelry, heavy perfumes or after-shaves, nail polish, multiple earrings, or nose, lip or tongue jewelry. Men are to wear jackets and ties. The hair is to be clean and worn in a neat arrangement in accordance with the policy of each clinical facility. Fingernails should be kept trimmed. Students may not exhibit offensive tattoos. The students will wear a short, white lab coat with the Chatham University patch on the left upper sleeve at the shoulder with the identifying rocker sewn directly beneath. Nametags and photo identification tags shall be worn on the left pocket or lapel. No gum chewing or smoking/tobacco use will be allowed in the clinical setting. If the clinical

site or research site has established policies and practices regarding dress, the site's policies supersede those of the program.

Identification

Physician assistant students must introduce themselves as a physician assistant student from Chatham University. Students shall be identified as follows:

Nametags and Chatham University photo identification tags are to be worn at all off-campus special seminars, all clinical experiences, and all research activities. If the site requires another form of identification, the student must wear both identifications.

The **lab coat** must be short (blazer-style), white, and must bear the school patch with a rocker at the bottom identifying the physician assistant student

Professional Comportment

Comportment encompasses all academic and professional experiences. Every individual has the right to learn and work in an environment free of threats, harassment, retaliation, or other risks. All students, faculty, staff, and clinical preceptors are expected to act in a respectful and professional manner at all times. All violations of professional comportment must be addressed. Individuals should immediately remove themselves from the situation and report the incident to the Program Director.

Grievances

Students may encounter a variety of problems and interpersonal problems over the course of their 24 months in this program. Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve difficulties by discussing them with the person involved; if they are unable to do so, the next person to contact is their advisor. If the problem is still unable to be resolved, then students should contact the Program Director. While students are on clinical rotation, they should notify the clinical coordinator of any difficulties they are encountering, even if they are able to resolve their difficulties in person. The student should also contact his/her advisor on campus for assistance. Ultimately if these attempts fail, the Program Director should be contacted.

All formal grievances should be filed, in writing, to the Program Director.

Acknowledgement of receipt of the grievance and an initial plan for resolution of the grievance will be provided, in writing, to the student within 5 working days of receipt from the Program Director. Any further actions related to the grievance will be acknowledged in writing to the student as they occur.

Student Progress Advisory Committee (SPAC)

Composition and Process

The SPAC shall be composed of the Program Director, Academic Coordinator, and Clinical Coordinator. Other designated physician assistant faculty may be involved

on a case by case basis. Based on periodic reviews, the SPAC may make one of the following recommendations:

Academic or clinical probation

A student is placed on academic or clinical probation if s/he has not satisfactorily completed all assignments, evaluations, and remediations by the established due date. The student must be given a deadline for the remediation, to be supervised by the student's instructor of record. During this time, the student will attend regularly scheduled program sessions, but will otherwise spend the remainder of his/her time remediating papers, exams, or skills as indicated by the SPAC. The student's instructor of record will supervise the remediations. A student in academic probation may be decelerated, under the recommendation of the instructor of record. Students in clinical probation cannot be decelerated. ***Failure of more than one course in the program (didactic, clinical or any combination) will result in automatic withdrawal from the program.***

Deceleration

A student, under the recommendation of the instructor of record, may be removed from the normal didactic sequence of the program. Reasons for deceleration may include:

- Not meeting expected progress
- Failure of any of the following:
 - An academic or clinical course
 - End of semester formative evaluation
 - End of academic year summative evaluation
 - End of program summative evaluation
- Valid medical issue (verified by a Physician letter)
- Military service requirement (verified by original orders)
- Other reasons (validity to be determined by the SPAC)

The student will be automatically placed on academic probation for the remainder of their matriculation in the program. The student will be considered a member of the incoming class and will not be able to walk or graduate with his pre-deceleration class. While in deceleration, the student will be required to enroll and successfully complete one independent study course per semester, in order to remain active and progress through the program. Upon successful completion of all required work and assignments, the students may re-enter the normal didactic sequence of the program. ***No more than one opportunity for deceleration may be granted.***

Repetition of a clinical course

Clinical coordinators may authorize a student to repeat one clinical course. This includes clinical rotations and ICE. These students do not need to be referred to the SPAC. Students that fail to successfully complete a clinical course will be automatically placed on clinical probation. Students in the clinical year do not need to be decelerated but they will be required to complete the failed clinical course in the fall semester following their last course in the normal sequence of the program. These students will not be

eligible to graduate or participate in the national certifying examination until they successfully complete the repeated clinical course.

Withdrawal or dismissal

A withdrawal may be requested by the student in writing with or without the recommendation of the SPAC. Students who withdraw prior to the published "Drop-Add" date are entitled to a refund of their tuition for withdrawn course(s), as per the University's policy. The appropriate paperwork for withdrawal from courses is provided in the HUB. No refund will be provided after this date. Incurred expenses prior to withdraw (including, but not limited to memberships, fees, equipment, and books) are not refundable. The student who withdraws while passing all coursework to-date may re-apply through the admissions process with the exceptions of extenuating circumstances, as determined by the SPAC. These may include:

- Family emergency
- Prolonged illness
- Military activation
- Pregnancy
- Others (as validated by the SPAC)

Students who withdraw while failing coursework are not eligible for re-admission to the program. In the case of extenuating circumstances, the student's academic slot may be held without need for re-application. A student who becomes pregnant in the didactic phase of the program may be given a medical leave of absence with a guaranteed slot; in the clinical year, a pregnant student may miss 1-2 clinical rotations which must be made up. In either case, the student may graduate with the next class. Interim requirements for continuation in the program after a leave of absence or withdraw will be determined by the SPAC. As per the Chatham University catalog, ***all students enrolled in a graduate program must complete all degree requirements within three years after the date of their first enrollment in the program.***

Program awards

At the time of graduation, awards may be bestowed based on nominations from students, faculty, or preceptors. Awards recognize outstanding participation in problem-based learning; outstanding research; outstanding performance in clinical rotations; outstanding leadership; and outstanding service to the class, program, college, or community and achievement. Awards will be officially announced at the closing ceremony.

Review of student progress in the program

A student may progress to the next term if s/he has satisfactorily completed all assignments and evaluations for the previous term, and has received a "P" grade in all coursework.

Graduation

A student may graduate if s/he has satisfactorily completed all assignments, evaluations, and other requirements for the program, and has received a

"Pass" grade in all coursework. Failure to do so will result in the delay of the student's degree conferral.

Professional behavior

Please refer to previous section on Honor Code and Academy Integrity policies.

Appeals

Students may appeal any SPAC recommendation. Appeals must be submitted to the Program Director in writing within four working days of receipt of the SPAC decision. The student is responsible for providing all supporting materials with their written appeal. Following the decision of the Program Director, which is provided within four working days of receiving the written student appeal, a student may then appeal the decision as outlined in the Chatham University Student Handbook.

Miscellaneous Policies

Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification

Students must be certified in BLS for Healthcare Providers prior to starting their Clinical Rotations in the second year. Many clinical sites require proof of current BLS and a student may not be allowed to attend these sites if these certifications are not current. This action may result in a delay in graduation. Students must provide documentation of certification to the Clinical Coordinators.

Moonlighting / Employment

Employment while a student in the Program is strongly discouraged due to the intensity of the curriculum and time constraints of problem-based-learning. ***Students may not be employed by the Program in any capacity due to confidentiality issues.*** In addition, no student will be required to perform clerical or administrative work for the program or any member of the faculty.