



# **BUTLER**

## UNIVERSITY

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### **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

PRECEPTOR MANUAL  
2023–2024

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## Welcome

On behalf of the Butler University Physician Assistant (PA) Program, we would like to thank you for your interest in becoming a PA student preceptor. The transition from the didactic phase to the experiential phase of the PA's training could not happen without the help of our preceptors. The clinical setting synthesizes concepts and application of principles for quality health care delivery. You, as a clinical preceptor, are the key to successful learning experiences in the clinical setting. The PA student will work closely with you, learning from your advice and example. Through your supervision, the student will progressively develop the skills and clinical judgment necessary to become a practicing PA. Thank you for your commitment to PA education. Your knowledge and experience in your respective field of medicine are crucial in developing the next generation of outstanding medical professionals.

The entire faculty at the Butler University PA Program appreciates the time and dedication that you give to our students during their experiential education. Please feel free to contact us via phone or email with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer R. Guthrie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

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## Physician Assistants

PAs are well-recognized and highly sought-after members of the health care team. "The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. Professional competencies for physician assistants include the effective and appropriate application of medical knowledge; interpersonal and communication skills; patient care; professionalism; practice-based learning and improvement; systems-based practice; as well as an unwavering commitment to continual learning, professional growth, and the physician-PA team for the benefit of patients and the larger community being served. These competencies are demonstrated within the scope of practice, whether medical or surgical, for each individual physician assistant as that scope is defined by the supervising physician and appropriate to the practice setting." (NCCPA)

PAs practice in all specialty fields; twenty-five percent of all PAs provide primary care services, especially in family practice and general internal medicine. Top areas certified PAs are practicing also include Surgical Subspecialties and Emergency Medicine. Their job descriptions are as diverse as those of their supervising physicians and may include non-clinical roles such as medical education, health administration, and research.

## PA Program History

In the early 1990s, the report of the Indiana Health Care Commission noted that many areas of Indiana were medically underserved. During this same period, Methodist Hospital expanded its mission of "curing disease and rescuing from disaster" to include "delivering primary care services" and the Butler University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences recognized an educational void in Indiana. The creation of a PA Program, co-sponsored by Methodist Hospital and Butler University, was recognized as a way to address all of these issues.

The PA Program admitted its first class of nine students in January 1995 and this class graduated in August 1996 with a BS in Health Sciences. In 2006, the program matriculated its first Master's degree granting class. Graduates are awarded a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree. Today, the PA Program is operated solely by Butler University and most aspects of didactic training occur on the Butler University campus. 75 Students per cohort complete a 24-month graduate-level curriculum for a total of 108 credit hours.

## Program Accreditation

The PA Program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Upon completion of the program, graduates are eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

## Mission Statement

To produce graduates with a foundation in primary care to deliver high quality, patient-centered care in a wide variety of clinical settings.

## Goals / Student Learning Objectives

1. Select highly qualified applicants through the admission process who will successfully complete our PA Program.
2. Provide a quality educational experience that provides students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for entry-level practice as PAs.
3. Provide an educational experience that prepares our graduates to provide quality primary care in a wide variety of clinical settings.
4. Help our students develop a sensitivity that will allow them to effectively work with a variety of patients.
5. Maintain our status as the longest accredited PA Program in the state of Indiana.
6. Promote professionalism, service, and leadership of students and faculty.

## Program of Study

The curriculum is 24 consecutive months and is designed to provide an understanding of the knowledge and skills used as a PA. The first 12 months of the program are devoted to didactic studies in the basic medical, clinical and behavioral sciences, and the final 12 months are largely focused on the clinical experiences in primary care, medical and surgical specialties. Upon completion of the rigorous PA Program, graduates have earned 108 credit hours.

The didactic curriculum is integrated to introduce the student to medical sciences as they relate to specific organ systems and clinical problems. Learning strategies include the traditional lecture format and basic science laboratory, hybrid, small group tutorials, and patient case discussions. Regular patient contact is an important part of the first-year curriculum; therefore, students begin to see patients during the didactic year. Standardized patient evaluations, through simulation and actors, are also a part of the didactic curriculum.

As part of the experiential curriculum, students participate in both clinical rotations and didactic course work. Students are required to complete core rotations in emergency medicine, family medicine, general surgery, internal medicine, mental health, pediatrics, and women's health. Students also choose an elective rotation. In the experiential year, students must successfully pass end-of-rotation exams and participate in other course work to include Core Topics, Issues of Professional Practice, and the Summative Practicum as they prepare for graduation and entry into clinical practice.

Because the experiential teaching is carried out in many practice settings across the country, students should anticipate travel to local and distant sites for their clinical experiences to fulfill these requirements.

## Expected Progression of PA student

PA students are trained to take detailed histories, perform physical examinations, give oral presentations of findings, develop differential diagnoses, interpret laboratory and imaging tests, and perform procedures. As the year continues, they should be able to more effectively come up with an assessment and plan, though this will involve discussion with the preceptor. If the preceptor deems it necessary, students initially may observe patient encounters. However, by the end of the first week, students should actively participate in evaluating patients. As the preceptor feels more comfortable with the student's skills and abilities, the student should be allowed progressively increasing supervised autonomy.

The clinical year takes students from the theoretical classroom setting to an active, hands-on learning environment to prepare them for a lifetime of continued refinement of skills and expanded knowledge as a practicing PA. To this end, the goals of the clinical year include:

- Apply didactic knowledge to supervised clinical practice
- Develop and sharpen clinical problem-solving skills
- Expand and develop the medical fund of knowledge
- Perfect the art of history taking and physical examination skills
- Sharpen and refine oral presentation and written documentation skills
- Practice procedural skills in the outpatient, inpatient and surgical settings
- Develop an understanding of the PA role in health care delivery
- Prepare for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam
- Develop interpersonal skills and professionalism necessary to function as part of a medical team

## Clinical Rotations

During the experiential phase of the PA Program, students are required to spend 4 weeks in each of the following core rotations: Surgery, Mental Health, Pediatrics, and Women's Health. Students are required to spend a total of 8 weeks in these core rotations: Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, and Internal Medicine. Additionally, there is one 4-week elective rotation. Students should be scheduled for a minimum of 32 hours of clinical exposure per week and are not to



exceed 80 hours per week. At the conclusion of each of the core rotations, all students are required to successfully pass an end-of-rotation examination in that given specialty, with the exception of an elective rotation.

Students enrolled in our program must not be required to perform clerical or administrative work for your practice and must not be used as a substitute for regular clinical or administrative staff. Participation in these activities should be required if the primary purpose of the participation is patient care-related and it facilitates the PA student's educational process in that setting.

### Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to perform the following during their clinical rotations:

- Obtain detailed histories and conduct physical exams, develop a differential diagnosis, formulate an assessment and plan through discussion with the preceptor, give oral presentations, and document findings
- Interpret common diagnostic tests, including laboratory and imaging studies
- Perform clinical and technical skills including procedures based on then current professional practice
- Educate and counsel patients across the lifespan regarding health-related issues
- Attend clinical rotations as scheduled in addition to grand rounds, lectures, and conferences, if available to them
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, and flexibility during the clinical year

### Standards of Professional Conduct

PAs, as health care practitioners, are required to conform to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. These include respect, flexibility, academic integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, accountability, and cultural competency. PA students are expected to adhere to the same high ethical and professional standards required of certified PAs. The professional conduct of PA students is evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the didactic and clinical years of the program. Violations of standards of conduct are subject to disciplinary actions administered by the university and by the physician assistant program. If preceptors observe any concerns about a student's professionalism, please contact the experiential education team immediately. More information is outlined in the [student handbook](#).

### End of Rotation Examinations

At the end of each 4-week core clinical rotation, students must successfully pass an exam specific to that given specialty. The Butler University PA Program faculty utilizes the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) End of Rotation Examinations and endorses the objectives utilized to develop these exams as imperative to enter into practice as a PA. Each exam incorporates current, relevant test items that follow rotation-specific content Blueprints and corresponding Topic Lists. More information may be obtained online [www.endofrotation.org](http://www.endofrotation.org).

### Experiential Year Attendance Policy

Students' attendance is mandatory at the following: Any on-site orientation required by clinical sites, Rotation specific pre- and/or post-rotation meetings; Each End of Rotation (EOR) designated days (*approximately 2 days per month*), Summative Exam and any practice sessions pertaining to the clinical year.

Students are expected to be at their assigned clinical site every day as scheduled, regardless of weekends, holidays, or weather. Any student missing an experiential day for any reason must report their absence to the Director of Experiential Education immediately and complete a required absence request form for review. The Director of Experiential Education will review the request for approval or denial. Documentation (e.g., doctor's note, obituary, etc.) may be required to justify the absence(s) at the discretion of the Director of Experiential Education. The preceptor must also approve these requests. Unexcused and/or unreported absences may be grounds for failure of a clinical rotation, or other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the Butler PA Program Administration. Please be sure to document any absences on the final student evaluation form for each student.

### Policy for Student Travel to End of Rotation Meetings

If an End of Rotation meeting begins the day following the last scheduled rotation day and your site is more than two hours from Butler's campus, the following guidelines apply:

- If a rotation site is a 2-5 hour drive from campus, one half day from rotation will be excused for travel.
- If a rotation site is more than a 5-hour drive from campus, one full day from rotation will be excused for travel.

### The Preceptor—Program Relationship

The success of clinical training of PA students depends on maintaining good communication among the student, the PA Program, preceptors, and the experiential team. All members of the team should share contact information.

If a preceptor has a question or concern about a student, they should contact experiential education team. The program strives to maintain open faculty–colleague relationships with its preceptors and believes that, should problems arise during a rotation, by notifying appropriate program personnel early, problems can be solved without unduly burdening the preceptor. In addition, open communication and early problem solving may help to avoid a diminution in the educational experience.

### Technology

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices for personal phone calls, text messaging or web surfing while on your rotation is not allowed. Communication by text may only be used if determined by the preceptor that this is their preferred form of communication. Engaging in social media is not acceptable during student learning. Preceptors are encouraged to discipline students accordingly if such situations arise during the course of a rotation.

### Sexual Harassment

Butler University is committed to maintain a respectful educational environment, free from harassment. Harassment of any kind is not acceptable at Butler; it is inconsistent with the commitment to excellence that characterizes Butler University's activities. Alleged violations of this policy may result in referral to the University student conduct system. In addition, those who engage in harassing behavior may be subject to criminal prosecution under appropriate federal, state, or municipal law. Action taken by the University through the University's student conduct process does not preclude the pursuit of criminal or civil action. All COPHS students must adhere to the policies outlined under "Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policies" in the Butler University Student Handbook. Students and preceptors are expected to abide by these policies. The following link to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) provides information about federal laws that protect students against racial, sexual, or age discrimination. [www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov)

### Needle Stick or Exposure to Biohazard Policy

This policy is based on standard national guidelines to identify and, if applicable, treat those students who incur a needle stick or are exposed to a biohazard related to the accidental exposure. Students will need to discuss site procedures with the preceptor prior to any activities that have the potential of causing a needle stick or exposure to biohazards.

If a student does experience a needle stick or biohazard exposure during their rotation experience, the following steps shall be taken:

- Immediately wash injury with soap and water and induce bleeding. If eye is contaminated, rinse with sterile water or normal saline for 15 minutes. Other mucous membranes can be rinsed with tap water.
- Per affiliation agreements, the student will immediately notify the preceptor and determine what procedures exist at that site to deal with needle stick/biohazard situations.
- Based on the services provided at the site, the student should have the appropriate steps taken based on the site's protocol for needle sticks/biohazard exposure. The student will be responsible for any costs associated with testing, care and treatment provided by the site.
- If the site does not have a protocol in place for accidental exposures, the student and preceptor will determine where the nearest emergency room is located so the appropriate laboratory tests can be collected within 30 minutes of exposure.

### Appropriate laboratory tests

#### Student testing

- Hepatitis B SAG (Hepatitis B Surface Antigen)
- Hepatitis C Antibody
- HIV Antibody (Human immunodeficiency Virus) when consent is given
- Hepatitis B SAB (Hepatitis B Surface Antibody)

#### Source patient testing

- Hepatitis B SAG (Hepatitis B Surface Antigen)
- Hepatitis C Antibody
- HIV antibody (Human immunodeficiency Virus) when consent is given
- Hepatitis B Core Antibody when the exposed patient is HBSAB negative
- Other tests for confirmation of diagnosis when clinically indicated

# Evaluations

Butler University PA students are responsible for discussing their progress with their preceptor and completing a mid-rotation evaluation to be submitted to our office by the student. Near the conclusion of the rotation, the preceptor will receive an evaluation through our automated system, eValue™. Copies of the mid-rotation and final evaluations are available in the appendices of the preceptor manual.

## Student Evaluation

The evaluation is designed to promote communication between preceptor and student. Preceptors are encouraged to discuss strengths and weaknesses to encourage students about their strengths as well as provide opportunities to improve upon weaknesses. The evaluation should also reflect on student knowledge and skills as well as their improvement throughout the rotation and assess progress in comparison to other students at the same level. The preceptor's evaluation of the student is *tremendously important*. On required rotations (i.e., core rotations required by the specific institution for all students prior to graduation), a passing evaluation from the preceptor is mandatory. If deemed “not passing,” the student may be requested to repeat the rotation or undergo procedures specified by the program. The program faculty ultimately makes the final grade for a clinical rotation and the decision to pass or fail a student. The program will designate how often evaluations need to be completed.

Preceptors should consider consulting privately with colleagues and staff to get additional insight into the student's professionalism and effectiveness as a team player with all members of the health care team. These insights are helpful contributions to student evaluations. Additionally, staff feedback may enhance the student experience from one rotation to another and can help to improve efficiency and flow while also maximizing educational opportunities.

## Feedback to Students

While students may have only one formal evaluation during the clinical rotation, it is imperative that they receive regular positive and constructive feedback on a daily basis from their preceptors to help improve their clinical performance. Please see the appendices to the preceptor manual for ideas on giving feedback to students.

## eValue™

The Butler University PA Program uses an automated evaluation tool called eValue™. The eValue™ system will automatically email you a link to an evaluation form prior to the end of the student's rotation. Simply open the email, click on the link, complete the evaluation, and submit. If you have any questions about the eValue™ system, you may contact Liv West at [obwest@butler.edu](mailto:obwest@butler.edu) or 317-940-6192. Please contact Liv by the last day of the rotation if, for any reason, you do not receive an evaluation in your email or have a change in email address.

## Supervision of the PA Student

During a student's time at the clinic or hospital, the preceptor must be available for supervision, consultation, and teaching, or designate an alternate preceptor. Although the supervising preceptor may not be with a student during every shift, it is important to clearly *assign* students to another MD, DO, PA, or NP who will serve as the student's preceptor for any given time interval. Having more than one clinical preceptor offers the advantage of sharing preceptorship duties and exposes students to valuable variations in practice style, which can help learners develop the professional personality that best fits them. This type of collaboration during short 4-week rotations should be utilized with awareness to ensure the student receives meaningful feedback. Students may be given additional assignments or may spend time with ancillary staff (x-ray, lab, physical therapy, etc.), as these experiences can be very valuable. The main preceptor should be aware of the student's assigned clinical activities at all times.

Students are not employees of the hospitals or clinics and, therefore, work entirely under the preceptor's supervision. Students are not to substitute for paid clinicians, clerical staff, or other workers at the clinical sites. On each rotation, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the supervising physician or preceptor also sees all of the student's patients. The preceptor can provide direct supervision of technical skills with gradually increased autonomy in accordance with the PA student's demonstrated level of expertise. The PA student is not allowed to see, treat, or discharge a patient without evaluation by the preceptor.

### Informed Patient Consent Regarding Student Involvement in Patient Care

The patients are essential partners in this educational endeavor as well. All efforts will be made to observe strict confidentiality, respect patient privacy and dignity, and honor their preferences regarding treatment. All students complete HIPAA training prior to their clinical year. However, patients must be informed that a physician assistant student will participate in their care, and the patient's consent must be obtained. This may be done through standardized forms at admission or on a person-by-person basis. The students should be clearly identified as PA student and must verbally identify themselves as such. If the patient requests a physician and refuses the PA student's services, the request must be honored. Patients must know that they will see their regular provider, and they should have an explicit opportunity to decline student involvement.

### Documentation

If allowed by the preceptor and/or facility, PA students may enter information in the medical record. Preceptors should clearly understand how different payors view student notes as related to documentation of services provided for reimbursement purposes. As of January 1, 2020, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services now allows all preceptors to verify, rather than re-perform, documentation provided by PA students during the provision of E/M services. For review of the full document click [here](#). A brief statement is also available through the PAEA newsroom [CMS Finalizes Student Documentation Proposal](#)

Any questions regarding this issue should be directed to the experiential team. Students are reminded that the medical record is a legal document. All medical entries must be identified as "student" and must include the PA student's signature with the designation "PA-S." The preceptor cannot bill for the services of a student. Preceptors are required to document the services they provide as well as review and edit all student documentation. Although student documentation may be limited for reimbursement purposes, students' notes are legal and are contributory to the medical record. Moreover, writing a succinct note that communicates effectively is a critical skill that PA students should develop. The introduction of EMRs (electronic medical records) presents obstacles for students if they lack a password or are not fully trained in the use of one particular institution's EMR system. In these cases, students are encouraged to hand-write notes, if simply for the student's own edification, which should be reviewed by preceptors whenever possible for feedback.

### Prescription Writing

Students may transcribe prescribing information for the preceptor, but the physician must approve and sign all prescriptions. More specifically, the student's name is not to appear on the prescription. For clinical rotation sites that use electronic prescriptions, the preceptor must log into the system under his/her own password to personally sign and send the electronic prescription. The student or the preceptor must not violate these guidelines.

# Certificate of Liability Insurance

Butler University carries group professional liability insurance for all PA students enrolled in our program. To request a copy of the certificate, contact Karen Corby at [kcobby@butler.edu](mailto:kcobby@butler.edu) or 317-940-9507. A certificate will be emailed directly to you and/or your site from Gregory & Appel Insurance.

## Preceptor Appreciation

The Butler University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Experiential Education Team hosts preceptor appreciation events throughout the year. Information about these events will be sent to you via email and announced online. Indiana Academy of Physician Assistants (IAPA) awards any active preceptor, defined as acting as a preceptor for at least two PA students per year, a 20% discount on your annual membership to IAPA. Additionally, a free annual membership to Epocrates Plus is provided for active preceptors.

### Affiliate Faculty Appointment

Preceptors for the Butler PA Program who take at least four PA students annually are eligible to receive an appointment to our Affiliate Faculty. This designation allows access to Butler's on-line library, which contains extensive medical resources including NEJM, UpToDate, and much more. The Affiliate Faculty member also has access to free download of the Microsoft Office Suite to use on their home computers. Upon request, an Affiliate Faculty preceptor can be issued a Butler I.D. card, which will allow access to on-campus libraries and discounts at selected events at Clowes Memorial Hall.

### Preceptor Continuing Medical Education (CME)

The Butler University PA Program will provide a letter and certificate of the preceptors' hours, annually, at the conclusion of each experiential year. Additional requests should be submitted in writing to the PA Experiential Team ([PAExperientialTeam@butler.edu](mailto:PAExperientialTeam@butler.edu)) as needed for your certification requirements.

### CME Credits Category 1 (Physician Assistants Only)

Clinical Preceptors who are Physician Assistants may be awarded an unlimited number of AAPA Category 1 CME for their precepting efforts from the Butler University PA Program. PA Preceptors can earn 2 AAPA Category 1 CME credits per PA student per 40-hour week. Only PA Programs who apply for this accredited activity are approved to award Category 1 Credit to preceptors.

### CME Credits for other healthcare providers

Upon request, documentation will be provided attesting to hours spent as a preceptor for the Butler University PA Program. Information about claiming CME hours should be available through your accrediting body.

### Tuition Discount for Doctor of Medical Science Program

PA Preceptors enrolled in the Butler University Doctor of Medical Science (DMS) Program may be eligible for a tuition discount. Please see the Butler [website](#) for more information.

### Preceptor Resources

Tools specific to each of the appendices listed below can be found in an electronic copy, which can be accessed on the PAEA website at: [www.PAEAonline.org](http://www.PAEAonline.org), under Resources.