

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES, MSPAS

The University of South Carolina School of Medicine (USCSOM)-Columbia is the academic home of the Master's degree program for Physician Assistant (PA) education. Students will earn a **Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies**, and graduates are prepared to become practicing Physician Assistants, once they successfully graduate and pass the national board certification exam (PANCE). Physician Assistants (PAs) are needed to address the growing needs for primary care in South Carolina and throughout the nation, especially in rural and underserved areas. In addition, PAs are able to assist with medical and surgical procedures in a cost-effective manner. The role of PAs is expanding as the population ages, and there is an increased need for additional healthcare providers. PA Programs are accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program is a collaboration with USCSOM's clinical partners at Palmetto Health (PH) and the Dorn VA Medical Center (Dorn VAMC) in addition to numerous other healthcare organizations throughout the state. These clinical partners will be providing training in both eight core medical disciplines as well as providing several elective clinical rotation options in medical subspecialties.

UofSC PA Program Competency List

Knowledge

1. Possess medical knowledge to evaluate and manage medical and surgical conditions of patients of all ages.
2. Possess pharmacology knowledge to prescribe medications appropriately bearing in mind patient safety, cost, and potential for abuse.

Interpersonal Skills

1. Elicit an accurate and appropriate problem-focused or comprehensive medical history using appropriate patient-centered interpersonal communication (verbal and non-verbal).
2. Utilizing the clinical presentation and diagnostic testing results, provide clear, concise oral presentations to other healthcare professionals and document accurate patient notes and orders.
3. Professionally exhibit interprofessional teamwork to improve patient care.
4. Provide relevant education to patients and families including treatment, compliance, available resources, and activity/lifestyle modification.

Clinical and Technical Skills

1. Perform a problem-focused or comprehensive physical exam directly related to the medical history and be able to recognize normal and abnormal health states.
2. Practice strategies to improve patient safety and decrease medical errors in patient care.
3. Demonstrate entry-level proficiency for technical skills and clinical procedures common to primary care practice.

Professional Behaviors

1. Reflect cultural awareness through exposure to diverse patient populations.
2. Develop life-long learning skills by using evidence-based medicine strategies and staying current with clinical practice guidelines.
3. Demonstrate the attributes of professional and ethical behavior to include resiliency, flexibility, adaptability, altruism, and ability to overcome adversity when evaluating and managing patients.

Clinical Reasoning and Problem Solving

1. Order and interpret appropriate, cost-effective laboratory or diagnostic studies to determine the differential diagnosis.
2. Demonstrate clinical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving to develop differential diagnoses and select the most likely diagnosis.

Program Goals

1. Enroll diverse and highly-qualified students who reflect the dynamic population of South Carolina and the nation.
2. Encourage life-long professional involvement, scholarly activity, leadership and service.
3. Maintain a level of first-time PANCE pass rates that meets or exceeds the national average.
4. Maintain an overall graduation rate of 94 percent (current Physician Assistant Education Association national average) or better for entering University of South Carolina Physician Assistant students.
5. Maintain an accredited program with an innovative curriculum that prepares entry-level graduates for the contemporary practice of medicine.

View and download the full version of the Physician Assistant Program Goals and Outcomes [pdf] (https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/medicine/education/graduate_programs/physician_assistant/documents/pa_program_goals_2020_2.pdf).