

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES, M.S.

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 Prisma 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.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the knowledge to evaluate and manage common clinical problems in patients across the lifespan in a variety of healthcare settings.
2. Discern among acute, chronic, and emergent disease states.
3. Communicate and interact effectively with patients, families and members of the interprofessional team across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.
4. Elicit an appropriate medical history.
5. Accurately document patient encounters in the medical record.
6. Apply an understanding of indications, contraindications, techniques, risks and benefits of common medical procedures.
7. Demonstrate the ability to perform common medical procedures.
8. Demonstrate the ability to perform and interpret a detailed physical exam relevant to the medical history.
9. Demonstrate professional behavior in congruence with the AAPA ethical code of conduct.
10. Demonstrate the ability to search, interpret and evaluate medical literature in application to professional development and patient care.
11. Applying clinical acumen and medical decision-making skills, create and refine the differential diagnosis to determine the most likely diagnosis.
12. Utilizing and interpreting appropriate physical exam findings and diagnostic and laboratory studies, formulate a treatment plan to include pharmacologic therapy and patient education.
13. Develop a patient- centered management plan with consideration to social determinants of health in an effort to increase access to care and patient compliance.

## 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](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/medicine/education/graduate_programs/physician_assistant/documents/pa_program_goals_2020_2.pdf)).