



Policy: SCPE Travel and Clinical Site Assignment	Applicability: PA Sciences Program Students
Policy Owner: PA Sciences Program	Approved By: Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Effective Date: February 25, 2026	Last Reviewed: March 6, 2025
Next Review: February 25, 2027	Contact: (615)321-2933

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations regarding student travel during the clinical phase of the Physician Assistant Program. Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences are assigned to ensure that students meet program-defined learning outcomes, accreditation expectations, and required clinical experiences across a variety of specialties, patient populations, and clinical settings.

ARC-PA standards require PA programs to secure sufficient clinical sites and preceptors so students can meet supervised clinical practice learning outcomes, and SCPEs must enable students to meet learning outcomes across required disciplines and settings.

POLICY: During the clinical year, students are expected to travel to assigned SCPE sites. While the PA Program will make reasonable efforts to place students at clinical sites within the region of the campus when feasible, clinical site availability, preceptor availability, specialty requirements, patient population needs, and educational objectives may require students to complete three or more SCPEs at a distant clinical site.

Students should expect to be assigned to clinical rotation sites more than 500 miles from campus during the clinical year. Assignment to a distant clinical site is considered a normal and expected part of the clinical education curriculum and, by itself, does not constitute grounds for refusal of a rotation assignment.

DEFINITIONS:

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience: A structured clinical rotation in which a PA student participates in supervised patient care activities designed to meet program-defined learning outcomes.

Clinical Site: A hospital, clinic, health system, private practice, or other approved healthcare setting affiliated with or approved by the PA Program for student clinical education.

Distant Clinical Site: Any assigned SCPE site located a substantial distance from campus, including but not limited to sites located more than 500 miles from campus.



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Clinical Education Team: The Program faculty and staff responsible for developing, assigning, monitoring, and evaluating SCPEs.

PROCEDURE:

Notification of Clinical Year Travel Expectations: Students will be informed of clinical year travel expectations prior to the start of the clinical phase. This information will be provided through the student handbook, clinical year orientation, and other Program communications.

Students will be advised that SCPE assignments may require travel and/or temporary relocation, including placement at clinical sites located more than 500 miles from campus.

Student Acknowledgment: Prior to beginning the clinical year, students may be required to sign an acknowledgment confirming that they understand:

1. SCPE assignments are determined by the PA Program;
2. Clinical sites may be located outside the immediate campus region;
3. Students may be required to travel more than 500 miles from campus;
4. Students are responsible for transportation, housing, meals, and other travel-related expenses;
5. Refusal of an assigned SCPE based solely on distance, cost, housing, transportation, or personal preference may affect progression or graduation.

Assignment of SCPE Sites: The PA Program assigns students to SCPE sites based on educational needs, site availability, preceptor qualifications, accreditation requirements, program requirements, and the student’s ability to meet clinical learning outcomes.

Clinical site assignments are made by the PA Program. Students may provide preferences when requested; however, preferences are not guaranteed. The Program retains final authority over all SCPE assignments.

Students may not decline, refuse, or attempt to alter an assigned SCPE solely because of distance from campus, personal convenience, financial concerns, housing needs, transportation requirements, or preference for a different geographic location.

Communication of Assignments: Students will be notified of SCPE assignments by the Clinical Education Team. Assignment details may include the name of the clinical site, location, preceptor information, rotation dates, onboarding requirements, and any site-specific instructions.



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Students are expected to review all assignment information promptly and complete any required onboarding, credentialing, compliance, or documentation requirements by the stated deadlines.

Student Responsibility for Travel Arrangements: Once assigned to a clinical site, students are responsible for arranging reliable transportation and, when necessary, temporary housing. Students are expected to make arrangements that allow them to arrive on time, attend all required clinical activities, and meet all Program and site expectations.

Students should not delay planning for travel or housing once an assignment has been communicated. Failure to secure transportation or housing does not excuse missed clinical time, tardiness, or failure to meet SCPE requirements.

Requests for Geographic Consideration: Students may submit requests for geographic consideration when requested by the Clinical Education Team or in accordance with Program procedures. Requests may include personal, family, or other circumstances that the student would like the Program to consider.

Submission of a request does not guarantee approval. The Program will review requests in relation to available sites, educational requirements, accreditation expectations, and the needs of the clinical curriculum.

Requests for Exceptions or Accommodations: Students requesting an exception to a travel assignment must submit the request in writing to the Clinical Education Team by the stated deadline or as soon as the need becomes known.

Requests based on disability-related needs must be submitted through the institution's established accommodation process. The PA Program will consider approved accommodations in accordance with institutional policy and applicable law; however, accommodations do not guarantee placement at a specific site or within a specific distance from campus.

Changes to SCPE Assignments: SCPE assignments may be changed by the PA Program due to site availability, preceptor availability, affiliation agreement status, student performance concerns, compliance issues, or other circumstances affecting the educational experience.

Students may not independently change, cancel, arrange, or confirm a clinical rotation without prior written approval from the PA Program.



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Failure to Report or Refusal of Assignment: A student who refuses an assigned SCPE, fails to report to an assigned site, or fails to complete required onboarding may be referred to the appropriate Program committee for review.

Depending on the circumstances, consequences may include delayed progression, delayed graduation, reassignment when available, professionalism documentation, academic action, or disciplinary action in accordance with Program and institutional policies.

Documentation: The PA Program will maintain records related to SCPE assignments, student acknowledgments, requests for consideration, approved exceptions or accommodations, and any issues related to failure to comply with this policy.

Documentation may be used to support academic progression decisions, accreditation records, and Program review of clinical education processes.

Travel Expectations

Students are responsible for maintaining reliable transportation throughout the clinical year. This includes transportation to and from assigned clinical sites, housing locations, required program activities, callback days, exams, and other clinical education requirements.

Students should plan for the possibility of:

1. Daily commuting to clinical sites;
2. Temporary relocation for one or more rotations;
3. Travel to rural, underserved, or out-of-region clinical sites;
4. Rotations located more than 500 miles from campus;
5. Additional expenses related to fuel, lodging, meals, parking, tolls, and other travel-related costs.

Students assigned to distant clinical sites are expected to make appropriate travel and living arrangements that allow them to meet all attendance, punctuality, professionalism, and clinical performance expectations.

Housing and Financial Responsibility

Students are responsible for all costs associated with travel and participation in SCPEs, including but not limited to transportation, housing, meals, parking, fuel, tolls, and incidental expenses.



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The PA Program does not guarantee housing, transportation, relocation assistance, or reimbursement for clinical-year travel expenses unless otherwise stated in writing by the institution or the Program.

Students are encouraged to plan financially for travel and relocation expenses during the clinical year before entering the clinical phase. Published cost-of-attendance information should be carefully reviewed, and students are encouraged to consult the appropriate financial aid office regarding budgeting for clinical-year expenses.

Attendance and Professional Expectations

Students are expected to report to all assigned SCPEs on time and remain in compliance with the schedule established by the preceptor, clinical site, and PA Program.

Travel distance, transportation delays, housing issues, or relocation challenges do not excuse unapproved absences, tardiness, or failure to meet SCPE requirements. Students are expected to communicate promptly with the Clinical Education Team and preceptor if an unexpected emergency impacts attendance.

Students must comply with all Program, institutional, and clinical site policies while traveling to, from, and participating in SCPEs.

Student-Initiated Requests

Students may request consideration for placement in a particular geographic area or clinical site; however, such requests are not guaranteed. Approval of student-requested sites or geographic preferences is at the sole discretion of the PA Program and depends on educational appropriateness, affiliation agreements, site capacity, preceptor qualifications, accreditation requirements, and Program needs.

Students are not permitted to independently arrange, confirm, or attend clinical rotations without prior written approval from the PA Program.



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Exceptions and Accommodations

Requests for exceptions to this policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Approval is not guaranteed.

Students seeking disability-related accommodations must follow the institution's established accommodation process. The PA Program will consider approved accommodations in accordance with institutional policy and applicable law; however, accommodations do not guarantee placement at a specific site or within a specific distance from campus.

Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with this policy, including refusal of an assigned SCPE based on travel distance, failure to report to an assigned site, or failure to maintain appropriate travel arrangements, may result in consequences, including but not limited to:

1. Referral to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee;
2. Delay in progression or graduation;
3. Extension of the clinical year;
4. Requirement to complete an alternate SCPE when available;
5. Professionalism concerns documented in the student record;
6. Other academic or disciplinary action consistent with Program and institutional policy.

Student Acknowledgment

Prior to beginning the clinical phase, students may be required to acknowledge in writing that they understand the travel expectations of the clinical year, including the possibility of assignment to SCPE sites located more than 500 miles from campus.

