



# Physician Assistant Program Knoxville Student Handbook 2025-2026

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide to the rules, policies, and services of the LMU- SMS-Knoxville PA Program; therefore, it is not intended to establish a contract and the LMU- SMS-Knoxville PA Program reserves the right to amend, modify, or change regulations, policies, and financial charges stated in the handbook throughout the year. In such a case, the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program will make reasonable efforts to notify its PA Students, in a timely manner, of any changes in policies and regulations. Notification shall be made via the student's LMU-issued email account.

## **HERITAGE**

Lincoln Memorial University grew out of love and respect for Abraham Lincoln and today honors his name, values, and spirit. As the legend goes, in 1863 Lincoln suggested to General O. O. Howard, a Union Army officer, that when the Civil War ended he hoped General Howard would organize a great university for the people of this area.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Lincoln Memorial University is an Equal Opportunity educational institution. In support of its Mission Statement, LMU is committed to equal opportunity in recruitment, admission, and retention for all students and equal opportunity in recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and retention for all employees. In furtherance of this commitment, Lincoln Memorial University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, veteran status, military status, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, and genetic information in all University programs and activities. Lincoln Memorial University prohibits retaliation against any individual for 1) filing, or encouraging someone to file, a complaint of discrimination; 2) participating in an investigation of discrimination; or 3) opposing discrimination. "Retaliation" includes any adverse action or act of revenge against an individual for filing or encouraging someone to file a complaint of discrimination, participating in an investigation of discrimination, or opposing discrimination. The Office of Institutional Compliance investigates allegations of prohibited discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving members of the LMU community.

This policy is widely disseminated in University publications, including the employee handbook and all LMU student catalogs and handbooks. All members of the University community bear responsibility for compliance with this policy. Compliance is monitored and reported annually through the offices of the Office of Institutional Compliance, the Department of Human Resources, and LMU Campus Police and Security.

This policy is in compliance with federal and state law, including the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Executive Order 11246, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974 as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, as amended, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and the Tennessee Human Rights Act.

All members of the University community bear responsibility for compliance with the equal opportunity, affirmative action, and nondiscrimination policies disseminated through the current University publications, including, but not limited to the LMU Railsplitter Community Standards Guide (ONLINE), the Lincoln Memorial University Catalog, other program catalogs and handbooks, and the Lincoln Memorial University Faculty/Staff Policy Manual. Compliance is monitored and reported annually through the offices of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Services, and the Office of Human Resources.

## **WELCOME TO THE LMU-SMS-KNOXVILLE PA PROGRAM**

### **Welcome to the Lincoln Memorial University Physician Assistant Program in Knoxville, Tennessee!**

We are thrilled that you've chosen to join our program. Our mission—aligned with the purpose of LMU—is to prepare future physician assistants who deliver high-quality, patient-centered care in the Appalachian region and beyond. Through a rigorous curriculum and expanded training in surgical sciences, we are dedicated to supporting your academic success, professional growth, and development as a compassionate and skilled healthcare provider.

Over the next 27 months, you will embark on an exciting journey of learning and transformation. During the Didactic Phase, which spans four semesters, you will experience a blend of classroom instruction, small group discussions, laboratory sessions, and simulated patient encounters. A unique highlight of our curriculum is three semesters of Clinically Oriented Anatomy and Dissection in a donor laboratory, where you will not only study prospected donors but also complete dissections and practice clinical procedures. Following this, the Clinical Phase offers three semesters of Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs), during which you will apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world patient care in both primary care and surgical disciplines.

The program is intentionally challenging and will demand focus, commitment, and resilience. However, you will not walk this path alone. Each student is assigned a faculty mentor at orientation to provide academic guidance, professional development, and ongoing support. Just as importantly, your classmates and faculty will serve as a community to lean on, to celebrate successes with, and to help you navigate challenges along the way.

We are excited to watch you grow into a highly knowledgeable, skilled, and professional physician assistant, prepared to make a meaningful impact on the Appalachian region and beyond.

**Welcome to the LMU PA—Knoxville family,**

*D. Bates, DMS, PA-C*

Dustin Bates, DMS, PA-C  
Assistant Dean and Program Director  
LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program

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## **SECTION I: LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY (LMU) AND THE LMU-SMS-KNOXVILLE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) PROGRAM**

### **ACCREDITATION**

#### **Institutional Accreditation**

Lincoln Memorial University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, specialist, and doctorate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Lincoln Memorial University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

#### **Professional Accreditation**

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Lincoln Memorial University-Knoxville Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Lincoln Memorial University**. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be March 2035. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at  
<https://www.arc-a.org/accreditation-history-lincoln-memorial-university-knoxville/>.

Contact the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc., (ARC-PA) at 12000 Findley Road, Suite 275, Johns Creek, Georgia 30097, call 770-476-1224, or visit the ARC-PA website (<http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/standards-of-accreditation/>) for questions about ARC-PA Standards.

PA graduates must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) in order to practice in all states, the District of Columbia, and all American territories. PA graduates are only eligible to take the PANCE if they have graduated from a PA program accredited by the ARC-PA. The LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program is responsible for obtaining and maintaining ARC-PA Accreditation and for complying with ARC-PA Standards and policies. The program will inform all matriculating and enrolled PA Students in person and/or via LMU student email or U.S. mail to the mailing address provided by the student of any change in the program's ARC-PA Accreditation status in addition to posting this information on the program's website.

## **LMU MISSION AND PURPOSE**

Lincoln Memorial University is a comprehensive values-based learning community dedicated to providing quality educational experiences at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels. The University strives to give students a foundation for a more productive life by upholding the principles of Abraham Lincoln's life: a dedication to individual liberty, responsibility, and improvement; a respect for citizenship; recognition of the intrinsic value of high moral and ethical standards; and a belief in a personal God.

While primarily committed to teaching, the University supports research and service. The University's curriculum and commitment to quality instruction at every level are based on the beliefs that graduates must be able to communicate clearly and effectively in an era of rapidly and continuously expanding communication technology, must have an appreciable depth of learning in a field of knowledge, must appreciate and understand the various ways by which we come to know ourselves and the world around us, and must be able to exercise informed judgments.

The University believes that one of the major cornerstones of meaningful existence is service to humanity. By making educational, service, and research opportunities available to students, Lincoln Memorial University seeks to improve life for the students it serves. While serving students from throughout the state, nation, and many other countries, the University retains a commitment to enrich the lives of people and communities in the Appalachian region.

*Reviewed and reaffirmed by LMU Board of Trustees on April 25, 2025.*

## **LMU INSTITUTIONAL GOALS**

Lincoln Memorial University is a private, independent, non-sectarian University with a clearly defined mission that distinguishes it from other educational institutions. While the University cherishes its heritage and rich traditions, it recognizes that dynamic growth and change are required to meet the needs of today's students. The University has identified the following institutional goals that are derived from its mission and reflect its vision for the future:

1. Make educational opportunities available to all without reference to social status.
2. Strengthen student recruitment and retention by fostering an academic and social environment that facilitates success and rewards achievement.
3. Maintain fiscal integrity in all University activities, programs, and operations through efforts to increase endowment and financial standing.
4. Provide quality educational experiences that have their foundation in the liberal arts and professional studies, promote high personal standards, and produce graduates with relevant career skills to compete in an ever-changing, increasingly global society.
5. Advance Cumberland Gap, Appalachia, and the global community through public service and outreach activities in continuing education, health care, leadership development, recreation, and the fine and performing arts.
6. Serve as a critical educational, cultural, and recreational center for the areas served and develop and maintain facilities, which are safe, accessible, and conducive to the development of body, mind, and spirit.
7. Attract and retain a highly qualified faculty and staff, committed to teaching, research and service.
8. Commit resources to support the Institution's primary role of teaching, and, as appropriate, research and service.
9. Support faculty and staff development programs with priority for allocation of resources determined by institutional needs.
10. Improve technological resources for faculty, staff, and students in all academic programs regardless of where or how programs are delivered.
11. Develop and implement academic programs in response to anticipated or demonstrated educational needs and continuously evaluate and improve the effectiveness of current programs.
12. Provide a caring and nurturing environment where students, faculty, and staff with varied talents, experiences, and aspirations come together to form a community that encourages students to grow intellectually and personally to meet their academic and career goals.
13. Provide quality educational opportunities through selected degree programs for students who live and/or work a significant distance from the Lincoln Memorial University main campus, and for whom other options are not as accessible or satisfactory.

*Revised: April 25, 2025, by LMU Board of Trustees.*

## **LMU-SMS-KNOXVILLE PA PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS**

Consistent with the mission and purpose of Lincoln Memorial University, the primary mission of the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program is to train future PAs to provide high-quality, patient-centered care in the Appalachian region and beyond by providing a rigorous educational experience, with expanded training in surgical sciences, which supports each student's academic success and professional development.

**To accomplish this mission, the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program is committed to achieving the following goals:**

1. Support student success in the program,
  - *Benchmark:* Program completion rate  $\geq 90\%$
2. Prepare graduates for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE),
  - *Benchmark:* First-time PANCE pass rate  $\geq 90\%$
3. Prepare students for surgical Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs), and
  - *Benchmark:* Mean of  $\geq 4.5$  on a 5-point Likert scale on clinical preceptor evaluations of student performance in surgical SCPEs
4. Foster an atmosphere of community, support, and mutual respect for all students, faculty, and staff.
  - *Benchmark:* Mean of  $> 4.0$  on a 5-point Likert scale on student, faculty, and staff survey items related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Program outcomes, in relation to the above goals, are published on the program's website as soon as data is available.

*Revised: April 17, 2025, by LMU PA-Knoxville Faculty and Staff Committee.*

## **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL OATH**

I pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

- I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings.
- I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice.
- I will recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.
- I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- I will work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- I will respect my professional relationship with the physician and all other health care professionals.
- I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.

## **ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, AND STAFF**

### **LMU Administration and Staff**

Please see <https://www.lmunet.edu/presidents-office/administration>

### **LMU Board of Trustees**

Please see <https://www.lmunet.edu/presidents-office/board-of-trustees>

### **Student Services**

Director of Counseling – Jason Kishpaugh, LPC-MHSP

Title IX Coordinator – Rebekah Webb

Director of Accessible Education Services – Jason Davis

Registrar – Helen Bailey, M.Ed.

Executive Director of Student Financial Services – Tammy Tomfohrde

### **School of Medical Sciences (SMS) Administration**

Dean School of Medical Sciences – Paula Miksa, DMS, PA-C

Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs School of Medical Sciences – Micheal Stephens, DMS, PA-C

Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs School of Medical Sciences – Paul Miller, Ph.D.

### **PA Program Administration, Faculty, and Staff**

Assistant Dean and Program Director – Dustin Bates, DMS, PA-C

Medical Director – Robert Wilmoth, M.D., FACS

Associate Medical Director and Principal Faculty – Daniel Drinnen, M.D.

Director of Assessment – Aaron Harris, MMS, PA-C

Director of Clinical Education – Sonia Rupani, DMS, PA-C

Director of Didactic Education – Catherine Neal, DMS, PA-C

Director of Clinical Phase Operations – Kaitlin Greene, DMS, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Sarah Campbell, MS, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Ashely Foster, PharmD

Principal Faculty - Matthew Griffiths, MMSPA, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Jaan Kelly, DMS, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Savannah Kidd, MPAS, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Rachel Kohn, MMS, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Erin Kramer, MMS, PA-C

Principal Faculty - Mary Scott, MD

Principal Faculty – Catherine Taylor, MPAS, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Mary Strickler, MSPA, PA-C

Principal Faculty – Hannah Maus, MMS, PA-C

Anatomy Instructor – Eric Winn, MS

Anatomy Instructor – Sarah Jivraj MS

Program Administrative Coordinator – Melysha Gist

Admissions and Community Relations Coordinator – Amy Reed

Administrative Assistant - Didactic Team - Samintha Welch

Administrative Assistant - Clinical Team - Haley Parker

## **SECTION II: PA STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **LMU STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

All PA Students must comply with LMU student policies and procedures published in the LMU Railsplitter Community Standards Guide which can be accessed electronically ([www.LMU.net.edu](http://www.LMU.net.edu)).

### **PA PROGRAM STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Program policies and procedures apply to all students, faculty, and staff, whether on campus or off campus at a clinical site. Where program policies and procedures exceed LMU student policies and procedures and create enhanced or additional obligations for the PA Student, program policies and procedures shall apply. The policies and procedures of clinical affiliates who provide Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs) may supersede the program's policies and procedures. Policies and procedures published in this handbook are reviewed each year prior to the start of a new student cohort. Students may access this handbook electronically on the program's website. The Program Director provides matriculating students with an overview of program policies and procedures during orientation in the first semester. Changes to program policies and/or procedures are communicated with students via LMU-issued student email accounts. These changes are also published in the handbook.

### **MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ENROLLMENT AND PROGRESSION AND MEDICAL CLEARANCE POLICY**

The program has identified minimum technical standards all students must meet and maintain for enrollment and progression in the program to ensure successful completion of the program and the delivery of safe and effective patient care during SCPEs and following graduation. These technical standards, listed below, are necessary for achievement of the program's Graduate Competencies (found in the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program Student Catalog), competencies stipulated by accreditation agencies, and the standards of PA practice.

- **General Health:**  
Students must be able to participate in all learning activities and assessments (classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings). These learning activities and assessments may require more than eight hours of active participation (sitting, standing, performing procedures, etc.) and exposure to various body fluids, communicable diseases, radiation, and toxic substances. Students must maintain a general state of physical and mental health necessary to operate under the typical demands and performance requirements of the program and the PA profession. This includes standard preventive health measures such as annual immunizations. Students must be medically cleared (absence of any medical and behavioral/mental condition and communicable disease that would present harm to patients and/or prevent full participation in the program's curriculum) prior to matriculation. All students enrolled in the program must maintain health insurance coverage from matriculation through graduation.
- **Critical Thinking and Cognitive Abilities:**  
Students must possess the intellectual capabilities required to complete the full curriculum and achieve the competencies delineated by the program and the PA profession. Critical thinking requires the intellectual ability to measure, calculate, synthesize, and analyze a large and complex volume of information. The ability to comprehend three dimensional and spatial relationships of structures is also required.
- **Computer Technology Skills:**  
Students must be able to utilize computerized information technology to access learning management systems, participate in computerized testing, conduct research, prepare multimedia presentations, access online medical information, and review and enter data in electronic medical records.
- **Communication Skills:**  
Students must be able to speak, hear, and observe patients to gather pertinent data, describe observations, and perceive nonverbal communications. Students must be able to communicate, orally and in writing, with peers, faculty/staff, patients, families, and members of the healthcare team from different social and cultural backgrounds with sensitivity, clarity, and accuracy.
- **Visual Abilities:**  
Students must have the visual acuity needed to evaluate a patient during a physical examination, monitor patient stability, and perform a wide range of clinical procedures involved in the practice of medicine and surgery.

- **Hearing and Tactile Abilities:**  
Students must have the motor and sensory functions needed to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, and percussion, as well as perform a wide range of clinical procedures involved in the practice of medicine and surgery.
- **Motor and Fine Skills:**  
The provision of patient care often requires upright posture with sufficient total body strength, mobility, and cardiovascular endurance. Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and be able to sit, stand, and perform other activities for long periods of time. Students must be able to execute the physical movements required to maneuver in small places, calibrate and use equipment, position, and move patients, and perform clinical procedures involved in the practice of medicine and surgery.
- **Interpersonal Abilities:**  
Students must possess a wide range of interpersonal skills, including (1) management of high stress situations while maintaining full intellectual abilities, (2) utilization of good judgment, (3) time management (arrive on time, prioritize activities, complete tasks efficiently), (4) development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with classmates, faculty, staff, all members of the healthcare team, and patients and their families, (5) recognition of one's own emotional state and the emotional states of others, (6) management of personal emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict, (7) engagement with patients and families in a way that establishes confidence and trust, and (8) acceptance of constructive criticism and initiation of appropriate behavior modification.

All students enrolled in the program must be able to independently, or with reasonable accommodation, demonstrate these health standards, cognitive and motor skills, and professional behaviors for program matriculation, progression, and graduation. Students are responsible for contacting the Office of Accessible Education Services ([www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu)) to request accommodation(s) if desired. The program attempts, to the best of its ability, to develop mechanisms by which otherwise qualified applicants for admission and enrolled students can be accommodated; however, the program's Minimum Technical Standards for Enrollment and Progression must be maintained to ensure that all parts of the program's curriculum are delivered to all students and that students provide safe and effective patient care. Clinical affiliates that provide SCPEs expect students to have met the program's Minimum Technical Standards for Enrollment and Progression and to perform assigned duties in a timely manner as such ability is critical and essential to safe and effective patient care. Therefore, extra time is not granted to students during assessments of physical examination and clinical procedure skills, simulated patient encounters, and completion of patient care duties during SCPEs. Similarly, the use of trained intermediaries is not approved in the assessments listed above and in SCPEs. The LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program Student Catalog contains additional information regarding accessible education services.

Students must submit a Medical Clearance Form, completed, and signed by a licensed health care provider, confirming whether they meet the Minimum Technical Standards for Enrollment and Progression and are medically cleared to participate fully in the program's curriculum prior to matriculation. Students must notify the Program Director as soon as possible if there is any change in their ability to meet these technical standards.

## **EXPOSURE TO INFECTIOUS AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS POLICY**

### **Personal Responsibility**

Health professions students and providers have a fundamental responsibility to provide care to all patients assigned to them regardless of diagnosis. Failure to accept responsibility violates a basic tenant of the healthcare profession to place the patient's interest and welfare first. Attention to immunizations and use of standard precautions and other prevention measures minimizes personal risk. Each student must take personal responsibility for being aware of their status and taking proper precautions.

All exposures to infectious and environmental hazards are managed according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Students are instructed in the use of standard precautions and other prevention measures to protect against exposure to

infectious agents and other hazards prior to engaging in learning activities or assessments that would place them at risk. These prevention measures are reviewed with all students during new student orientation and prior to beginning SCPEs. Additional information regarding exposure to infectious and environmental hazards is available on the program's website. Students are responsible for all costs related to disease or disability acquired because of enrollment in the program.

Students must follow standard precautions at all times based on the assumption that all blood, body fluids, and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM, e.g., secretions, excretions other than sweat, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes) may be infectious. Exposures include percutaneous injuries (e.g., puncture by needle or sharp object) and contact with mucous membranes or non-intact skin (especially prolonged contact) involving blood and OPIM. The program's policies and procedures on percutaneous injuries and exposures to bloodborne pathogens are available on the program's website.

The potential for injury increases when a person is pregnant, lactating, or temporarily disabled. The greatest hazards exist while working directly with patients, which may result in serious injury to any person or fetus involved. Exposure to formalin, toxic drugs, abortifacients, infectious agents, inhalation anesthetics, radiation, and other agents presents additional hazards. Pregnant, lactating, or temporarily disabled students must complete the following requirements to continue to participate in the program's curriculum:

- Immediately notify the Program Director of pregnancy, lactation, or temporary disability.
- Contact their treating health care provider immediately to obtain recommendations for minimizing exposure to hazards that may be associated with participation in the program's curriculum.
- Provide the Program Director with a signed statement from the treating health care provider that defines permitted limits of exposure to possible hazards during the period of pregnancy, lactation, or temporary disability.
- Provide the Program Director with updated recommendations from the treating health care provider for each semester during which they are pregnant, lactating, or temporarily disabled.
- Notify the Program Director of any change in recommendation(s) from their treating health care provider.

The Program Director decides, in consultation with the Office of Accessible Education Services, whether accommodations for the treating health care provider's recommendations are possible while meeting the technical standards and academic requirements of the program. Time off due to pregnancy, lactation, or temporary disability may result in a delay in progression in the program including a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation.

The program recognizes that pregnant, lactating, and temporarily disabled students have rights and bear the responsibility for decisions concerning their health and should expect due consideration from program faculty and staff. At the same time, students must complete all requirements of the program's curriculum by following a schedule or plan that allows them to meet the minimum technical standards and academic requirements of the program and which deems the risks assumable by students and their treating health care provider. Program faculty and clinical preceptors may refuse to allow a pregnant, lactating, or temporarily disabled student to be actively involved in any learning or assessment activity whenever the potential for accidents or exposure to hazards is considered too high and the treating health care provider has not cleared the student.

#### **Immunizations, Tuberculosis Screening, and Urine Drug Screening Policy**

Prior to matriculation and prior to beginning SCPEs, students must have a licensed health care provider verify the student's immunization, tuberculosis screening, and urine drug screening status relative to the requirements listed on the program's website. Clinical sites may have additional requirements. Students are responsible for all costs associated with obtaining the program's immunization and screening requirements and any additional requirements of clinical sites providing SCPEs for the student. Students must submit their immunization records, tuberculosis screening results, and urine drug screening results to the online central screening service by the program's submission due dates. Failure to meet the requirements of the program and clinical site(s) may result in a delay in progression in the program including a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation. Program faculty and staff responsible for confirming

proof of vaccination, immunity, and tuberculosis and urine drug screening results review these documents after obtaining written permission from the student (Appendix E).

#### **Student Health Insurance Policy**

Students enrolled in the program must maintain and provide evidence of health insurance coverage prior to matriculation and prior to beginning SCPEs (Appendix D). LMU provides health insurance coverage for students enrolled in the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program. The Office of Student Financial Services assists students with LMU's health insurance coverage. Student accounts are automatically charged for this coverage. Students may apply for a waiver of automatic enrollment.

#### **Infection with Communicable Diseases Policy**

Any student displaying "flu-like" symptoms or students testing positive for influenza/COVID-19 must notify the Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team and clinical site and/or clinical preceptor (Clinical Phase) as soon as possible. Students with influenza infection may be excused from class/SCPE to minimize viral exposure to other persons and to promote the health of the infected student. The Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team and clinical site and/or clinical preceptor (Clinical Phase) will discuss the appropriate date of return to class/SCPE with the student.

Students potentially exposed to patients with meningitis, Ebola infection, or infection with other highly contagious pathogens must follow post-exposure protocols (as published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or clinical affiliates) and contact the Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team and clinical site and/or clinical preceptor (Clinical Phase) as soon as possible. Students may be excused from class/SCPE to minimize pathogen exposure to other persons and to promote the health of the infected student. The Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team and clinical site and/or clinical preceptor (Clinical Phase) discuss the appropriate date of return to class/SCPE with the student.

#### **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Students must maintain high standards of private and public conduct on campus, off campus, and at LMU-sponsored events. Violation of these and other generally accepted rules of behavior, whether covered by specific policies or not, may subject a student to disciplinary action. **Claims of ignorance of acceptable behavior or enumerated policies and standards are not accepted as an excuse for violation.**

Students are formally evaluated on their professional conduct at least once each semester during the Didactic Phase (Appendix F). These records are maintained by the program. Students are evaluated on their professional conduct for each SCPE by clinical affiliates and program faculty and staff. Students suspected of violating the Student Code of Conduct may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) for a progression and/or disciplinary action recommendation(s) which may include dismissal from the program.

The LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program's Student Code of Conduct includes policies for the following areas:

- Academic Conduct (found in the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Student Catalog)
- Professional Conduct
- Attendance
- Confidentiality
- Social Media
- Audio and Video Recording
- Learning Environment
- Dress Code
- Identification as a Physician Assistant Student (PA-S)
- Arrest/Criminal Background Check
- Drug/Alcohol Screening and Driving while Under the Influence (DUI)

### **Professional Conduct Policy**

PAAs are highly trained health care professionals who practice medicine within the ethical framework of the Physician Assistant oath. By entering the program, students have made a conscious decision to become a professional with behavior suitable for inclusion in the medical profession. This requires prioritizing the needs of others over one's own; being empathetic, compassionate, and respectful towards others; maintaining confidentiality; conducting oneself with honesty and integrity; taking responsibility for one's learning and actions; knowing the current limits of one's training; engaging in life-long learning; and being free of impairment from substance use, cognitive deficiency, or mental illness that prevents use of full intellectual abilities. Because unprofessional conduct presents a potential harm to patients and undermines the credibility of the PA profession, the PA-patient relationship, and the PA-healthcare team relationship, professional conduct shares equal importance with academic achievement in successful completion of the Program's curriculum.

Students are expected to have achieved the level of maturity and professional conduct of a healthcare profession student prior to matriculation. Throughout the curriculum, program faculty mentor students in the development of professional conduct necessary to achieve Graduate Competencies related to professionalism. Students meet with their assigned Didactic Phase faculty mentor early in the first semester in the Didactic Phase to develop their plan to achieve academic success and professional development in the Program. Students continue to meet with their assigned Didactic Phase faculty mentor at least once every semester to review and revise their plan as necessary. Prior to graduation, students meet with their assigned Clinical Phase faculty mentor to determine a plan for ongoing self-assessment, self-directed learning, scholarship, service, and leadership. The program's Professional Conduct domains are as follows:

- Altruism:
  - Prioritizing the needs and interests of others before self
- Empathy and Compassion:
  - Being aware of and acknowledging the suffering of others and a desire to relieve it
- Respect for Others:
  - Consideration of the autonomy and values of others
  - Being reliable and punctual
  - Facilitating a collegial atmosphere
  - Maintaining confidentiality
- Service:
  - Sharing knowledge, talent, and resources
- Integrity:
  - Being honest and straightforward in all activities
  - Accepting personal responsibility for actions
  - Recognizing the limits of current training and seeking help appropriately
  - Accepting personal responsibility for learning
- Excellence:
  - A commitment to exceeding minimum expectations
  - Regularly seeking feedback for performance improvement
  - Receiving feedback with a positive attitude and making corrections as appropriate
  - A commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and adhering to ethical principles
  - Assuming increasing degrees of responsibility under proper supervision
- Emotional Resiliency:
  - Adapting, being flexible, and tolerating ambiguity

### **Attendance Policy**

Didactic Phase: Attendance for all learning activities and assessments scheduled by the program (including classroom and laboratory sessions) is mandatory. Students are responsible for all material presented in missed learning activities, announcements, and assignments. Students must contact the Director of Didactic Education via email as soon as an absence for illness/injury occurs. Students who expect an absence must request approval (Appendix G) from the Director of Didactic Education via email no less than 24 hours prior to the date/time of absence. If the absence is not foreseeable within 24 hours, then the student should communicate as soon as safely feasible.

**Clinical Phase:** To ensure that each student receives the greatest benefit from the program's curriculum, attendance for all SCPEs is mandatory. Students must contact the Clinical Team via email as soon as an absence for illness/injury occurs. Students completing SCPEs must also notify the clinical site and/or clinical preceptor, via phone (or method of communication preferred by the clinical site/clinical preceptor), of their absence due to illness/injury prior to the time/date they are expected at the clinical site. Students who expect an absence must request approval from the Clinical Team via email no less than 24 hours prior to the date/time of the absence. Students must also obtain written approval from their clinical preceptor for an absence for personal matters no less than 24 hours prior to the date/time of the planned absence. If the absence is not foreseeable within 24 hours, then the student should communicate as soon as safely feasible.

Excused absences include personal illness or injury (with care rendered by a health care provider for absences greater than three (3) days), illness of a family member (requiring the student's assistance for care for greater than three (3) days), death of an immediate family member (spouse/partner, child, parents/in-laws, siblings, and grandparents), and military service. Requests for an absence related to legal matters or to attend professional meetings or employment interviews are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students must have prior approval from the Clinical Team for an absence during SCPEs to attend professional meetings and employment interviews. An absence for any other reason may be considered an unexcused absence.

Students who miss a scheduled assessment (e.g., written examination, physical examination skills assessment) must contact the Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team (Clinical Phase) via email as soon as possible for approval to reschedule the assessment.

Students with more than three (3) excused absences during a semester (Didactic Phase) or SCPE (Clinical Phase) may be referred to the SPC for a progression decision(s). Students with an unexcused absence(s) will be referred to the SPC for a progression and/or disciplinary action decision(s) which may include dismissal from the program.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

Students are exposed to private health information during training. A patient's health information is private and is protected by law. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that sets rules about who can look at and receive patient health information. Students must always follow HIPAA regulations. Students receive HIPAA training during orientation in the first semester and again prior to beginning SCPEs.

Students must respect the confidentiality of their classmates, patients (standardized patients, patient models, and patients and their families encountered during service activities and SCPEs), program faculty and staff, clinical preceptors, and members of the program's clinical affiliates. Students are not permitted to discuss or post on social media any protected health information about their classmates, patients (standardized patients, patient models, and patients and their families encountered during service activities and SCPEs), program faculty and staff, clinical preceptors, and members of the program's clinical affiliates. Students are not permitted to obtain or post any pictures of patients (standardized patients, patient models, donors, and patients and their families encountered during service activities and SCPEs). Students may use a patient's initials for patient case presentations and other assignments required by the program.

Students do not have access to the academic records or other confidential information of other students or program faculty or staff. Students are only informed of their own performance in the program. The results of assessments (including minimum, maximum, or mean grades) and SPC decisions are not posted and are only accessible to program faculty and staff with a legitimate need to know.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The program complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 1974, as amended. This law maintains that the program will provide for the confidentiality of student education records. Identifiable information from a student's educational record will only be accessible to program faculty and staff and other LMU employees with a legitimate educational need for the information. Student grades are recorded, stored,

and secured with the LMU Registrar. All other student educational records are maintained by the program. Please see ([www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu)) for detailed information regarding FERPA and the list of disclosures that LMU may make without student consent in accordance with FERPA.

### **Social Media Policy**

Students are expected to exhibit professional and ethical behaviors on campus, during SCPEs, and in any setting where they are representing the program. This includes the “persona” put forth by students when engaged in social media platforms (e.g., Facebook®, Snapchat®, blogs, etc.) in which they are identified as part of the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program in any form. PAs are held to a higher standard of personal and professional conduct than many other professions due to the trust placed in health care professionals by patients. State licensing boards have the authority to discipline licensed PAs or deny state licensure to PAs for social media posts that do not meet the professional standards of the state licensing board. Employers, including hospital credentialing boards, may dismiss an employed PA or decline to hire a PA for social media posts that do not meet the professional standards of the health system/practice. Therefore, the program holds students, at all stages of training, responsible for abiding by the same rules of ethical and professional conduct, including confidentiality, in a social media platform as in any other setting set forth in this handbook.

The program’s Social Media Policy is as follows:

- Students are not allowed to engage in social media platforms with program faculty and staff and members of any clinical affiliate while enrolled in the program.
- Students must not use any social media platform during any activity scheduled by the program, including SCPEs, without permission from the program faculty or staff member leading the activity or members of clinical affiliates providing the SCPE.
- Students must not post photos, comments, or memes of classmates, program faculty and staff, members of any clinical affiliate, or patients and their families on any social media platform.
- Students must not share patient information on any social media platform.
- Students must not engage in discussions using profanity and/or discriminatory or disparaging comments about any patients or groups of patients; LMU faculty, staff, and students; members of any clinical affiliate; or the community on any social media platform.
- Students must not interact with current or past patients and/or the families of patients on any social media platform.
- Students must not post photos or comments showing themselves in potentially unprofessional situations (e.g., appearing intoxicated, using illicit substances, assuming provocative body positions, etc.) on any social media platform.
- Students must not represent themselves as a graduate PA (or other type of health care provider except for any previously obtained titles, e.g., EMT, RN, etc.) on any social media platform prior to graduation from the program.

### **Audio and Video Recording**

It is expressly prohibited to make audio or video recordings of any learning or assessment activities without prior written permission from the Program Director. Likewise, it is expressly prohibited to copy and distribute any recorded, electronic, or printed learning and assessment materials without prior written permission from the Program Director. Failure to follow this policy is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Learning Environment Policy**

To maintain an environment conducive to learning in the classroom and laboratories, the program has established guidelines for appropriate behavior in all locations where learning takes place. Activities that interfere with the presentation of material, facilitation of safe laboratory sessions, and learning opportunities for any student are prohibited. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Engaging in discussions unrelated to classroom or laboratory session activities,
- Using an electronic tablet or laptop computer for activities unrelated to classroom or laboratory activities,
- Using ear buds, cell phone, smart watch, or similar devices during learning and assessment activities,
- Bringing animals to the classroom or laboratory sessions,

- Bringing guests, including children, to the classroom or laboratory sessions (except as requested by faculty), and
- Eating, smoking, drinking alcohol, using illicit substances and/or illegally obtained prescription drugs.

Students are asked to limit their exit from and reentry into the classroom outside of breaks to prevent disruption of learning activities.

#### **Dress Code Policy**

As part of professional conduct, students must adhere to the program's dress code policies. Failure to follow the dress code may result in dismissal from the activity, classroom, laboratory setting, or clinical site. Students are required to purchase standardized color/style scrub attire to be used during laboratory activities. Students must change out of scrubs worn during anatomy laboratory sessions prior to attending other learning and assessment activities.

Clothing should allow for adequate movement during patient care (this includes bending/leaning forward, kneeling, and reaching) and must not be tight, short, low cut, or expose the shoulders, anterior chest, back, abdomen, buttocks, or thighs (whether standing, bending/leaning forward, kneeling, or reaching). Athletic shoes may be worn during laboratory sessions. Shoes that expose the toes or heel are not acceptable during laboratory activities and simulated patient encounters (human and manikin). On special occasions students may be allowed to wear jeans and LMU branded hoodies, sweatshirts, and t-shirts. Jeans must not have holes, rips, or tears.

Piercings of body areas other than the ears or nose must be covered. Large grommets or colored plugs are not acceptable. Fingernails must be kept trimmed to finger length. Students must be able to remove jewelry for laboratory sessions and surgical SCPEs. Nail polish must be removed for scrubbing, gowning, and gloving laboratories and surgical SCPEs. Head covers traditionally worn for religious purposes or to honor cultural tradition may be worn. Hair must be clean and arranged so as not to interfere with laboratory activities and patient care.

Unless directed otherwise, the dress code for each activity is listed below.

- Lecture: Students are expected to wear business casual attire to lectures and small group activities (e.g., PBLs) unless notified of an exception by the Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) and the Director of Clinical Education (Clinical Phase).
- Donor laboratory (including clinical procedure skills laboratories and assessments conducted in the donor laboratory): Students are expected to wear gray LMU scrubs and non-slip, closed-toe shoes. On any day in which students have an activity requiring gray LMU scrubs, business casual attire must be worn the rest of the day. Disposable face masks, eye protection (e.g., goggles), and gloves are provided by the program and are required to be worn anytime students are working with donors.
- Physical examination and clinical skills laboratories and assessments (not conducted in the donor laboratory): Students are expected to wear blue LMU scrubs over athletic shorts with bike shorts underneath, socks, and non-slip, closed-toe shoes. Students may wear blue LMU scrubs all day on any day in which they have an activity requiring blue LMU scrubs, unless students are also scheduled to complete activities in the donor laboratory.
- Simulation laboratory and Clinical Examination Center (SIMs and OSCEs): Students are expected to wear blue LMU scrubs, socks, and non-slip, closed-toe shoes. Disposable face masks may be required for simulated patient encounters.
- Examinations: Students may wear blue LMU scrubs or business casual attire to written examinations and to lectures that occur after written examinations.
- After hours/weekend (not during official program activities): When on campus after hours and on weekends, students may wear modest casual attire.
- SCPEs: Unless directed otherwise, students must wear business casual attire. Near the end of the Didactic Phase, students participate in a White Coat Ceremony where a short, white laboratory coat with the

program's patch and embroidered student name is provided by the program. This laboratory coat must be worn during SCPE's, and other activities as directed. Students must always wear their LMU-issued name badge that identifies them as an LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Student and any additional identification provided by clinical affiliates.

**Faculty, staff, and any member of clinical affiliates providing SCPEs reserve the right to dismiss students from the classroom, laboratory, or clinical site for inappropriate dress, including improper identification (see Identification as a Physician Assistant Student [PA-S] below).**

#### **Identification as a Physician Assistant Student (PA-S) Policy**

All students must identify themselves as a Physician Assistant Student (PA-S) while on campus, during SCPEs, and in any other setting where they are representing the program. Students must never present themselves as a physician, resident, medical student, graduate PA, or as a current colleague of clinical preceptors. Use of titles earned prior to matriculation into the program is not permitted (e.g., EMT, RN, Ph.D., etc.) when representing the program.

During orientation the first week of the first semester, students are issued a name badge that identifies them as an LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Student. Students must wear this name badge while on campus, during SCPEs, and in any other setting where they are representing the program.

#### **Arrest/Criminal Background Check Policy**

The Physician Assistant profession requires that both students and licensed health care professionals to submit to criminal background checks. Therefore:

- Prior to matriculation, accepted students must submit to a criminal background check.
- Prior to beginning SCPEs, students must submit to a repeat criminal background check.
- From time to time, students may be required to submit to additional criminal background checks, which may include fingerprinting, based on clinical affiliation agreements with the program's clinical affiliates (clinical sites) or at the Program Director's discretion.
- Any student arrested or formally charged with a violation of the law (other than minor traffic violations) must report the arrest or formal charge to the Program Director within two (2) business days after the arrest/formal charge.
- Students are responsible for the costs of criminal background checks and fingerprinting.

The Program Director reviews pre-matriculation criminal background checks to determine if matriculation is appropriate. Post-matriculation criminal background checks are reviewed by the Program Director to determine if referral to the SPC for recommendations on progression in the program is appropriate. Decisions regarding matriculation and progression in the program are made on a case-by-case basis.

**The program reserves the right to rescind an offer of admission and prohibit progression in the program to any student at any time based on the results of a criminal background check(s) or student refusal to submit to a criminal background check(s).** Additionally, clinical affiliates reserve the right to refuse or remove students from their clinical site(s) based on the results of a criminal background check(s) or student refusal to submit to a criminal background check(s)/fingerprinting. **The contents of a criminal background check or student refusal to submit to a criminal background check may prevent the student from completing one or more components required by the program and thereby prevent graduation. Additionally, the contents of a criminal background check may prevent a graduate from obtaining state licensure and/or hospital/practice credentialing.**

#### **Drug/Alcohol Screening and Driving Policy**

Safe and competent delivery of patient care requires all providers to be free of impairment from drugs and alcohol. Prior to matriculation and prior to beginning SCPEs, students must submit the results of a urine drug screen to the program. At times students may also be required to submit to additional drug and/or alcohol screens. Students are responsible for the cost of drug and alcohol screens. The Program Director reviews any positive finding(s) on the pre-matriculation urine drug screen to determine if matriculation is appropriate. Any positive findings on post-matriculation drug and alcohol screens are reviewed by the Program Director to determine if referral to the SPC for

recommendations on progression in the program is appropriate.

**The program reserves the right to rescind an offer of admission and prohibit progression in the program to any student at any time based on the results of a drug and/or alcohol screen(s) or student refusal to submit to a drug and/or alcohol screen(s).** Additionally, clinical affiliates reserve the right to refuse or remove students from their clinical site(s) where SCPEs occur based on the results of a drug and/or alcohol screen(s) or student refusal to submit to drug and/or alcohol screens. **Positive findings on a drug/alcohol screen(s) may prevent the student from completing the SCPEs required for graduation and may prevent graduates from obtaining state licensure and/or hospital/practice credentialing.**

Students, especially those under the age of 21 years, may not possess, consume, sell, distribute, or be in the presence of alcoholic beverages on LMU grounds, in LMU facilities, at LMU activities, and at clinical sites of the program's clinical affiliates.

### **SUPERVISED CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCES (SCPEs) POLICIES**

#### **Student Credentialing for SCPEs**

Clinical affiliates have various requirements for student credentialing that must be completed prior to beginning the SCPE. The Clinical Team provides students with the student credentialing requirements for each assigned SCPE. Students are responsible for all costs associated with student credentialing except for malpractice insurance. LMU provides students with liability insurance coverage throughout the program. Failure to complete credentialing requirements by clinical affiliate and program deadlines will result in a delay or cancelation of the SCPE (which may also result in a delay in graduation and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation). If a SCPE is cancelled due to the student's failure to complete credentialing requirements, the student will be referred to the SPC for progression and/or disciplinary action recommendations.

Students must keep a copy of documents commonly used in student credentialing for clinical affiliates.

- Proof of health insurance coverage
- Criminal background check, Fingerprinting
- Urine drug screening results
- Tuberculosis screening results
- Proof of annual influenza vaccination
- Proof of immunity to hepatitis B virus (HBV), measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella
- Proof of TdaP vaccination as an adult
- Proof of current TdaP or Td vaccination
- Proof of COVID-19 vaccination/booster (or exemption approval)
- Student biography/curriculum vitae
- LMU photo identification

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

The clinical affiliate must inform patients that a PA Student will be participating in patient care. Patients must consent to evaluation and treatment by the PA Student, who is properly supervised by the clinical preceptor, before the PA Student may participate in the patient encounter. Students must introduce themselves as a Physician Assistant Student to patients. Patients have the right to decline PA Student involvement in their care.

#### **Student Supervision Policy**

For each SCPE, students are assigned a primary clinical preceptor who has the overall responsibility for coordinating and supervising the student's learning activities and assessing student performance. The program orients the clinical site and primary clinical preceptor to the supervision requirements, which are also outlined in the clinical affiliation agreement. Students may be assigned to alternate clinical preceptors at times as necessary (e.g., absence of the primary clinical preceptor or additional learning opportunities with another clinical preceptor). Clinical preceptors provide direct supervision of student encounters with patients and performance of clinical procedures. Clinical preceptors may gradually increase the level of student autonomy in accordance with demonstrated level of expertise; however, clinical preceptors must see every patient evaluated by the student and evaluate every clinical

procedure completed by the student prior to patient discharge.

#### **Documentation in the Medical Record and Prescription Writing Policy**

The medical record is a legal document. Students must use the initials "PA-S" after their signature to clearly indicate they are a Physician Assistant Student for all entries in the medical record. Students must not use any previously earned titles (e.g., EMT, RN, Ph.D., etc.) while enrolled in the program.

Students receive instruction from the clinical affiliate regarding the use of electronic medical records. Students may be provided with access to electronic medical records for review and/or documentation. Students must not use the username/password of the clinical preceptor or other member of the healthcare team to access electronic medical records. Students must follow HIPAA guidelines when viewing electronic medical records.

Students may document patient encounters in the medical record if permitted to do so by the clinical affiliate. The clinical preceptor must verify in the medical record all student documentation and findings, including history, physical examination, and clinical decision making. The clinical preceptor must personally perform (or re-perform) the physical examination and clinical decision-making activities of the evaluation and management (E/M) service being billed but may verify any student documentation of them in the medical record, rather than re-documenting this work. ([www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov))

Students may transmit prescribing information for the clinical preceptor; however, the clinical preceptor must sign all prescriptions. The student's name must not appear on any prescription. For electronically submitted prescriptions, the clinical preceptor must use their personal username/password and personally complete, electronically sign, and transmit the prescription to the pharmacy.

#### **Student-Clinical Affiliate Relationship Policy**

Students must maintain a professional relationship with all members of the clinical affiliate (e.g., clinical preceptors, nurses, clinical support staff, etc.) and always adhere to appropriate professional boundaries. Social activities and personal relationships outside of the professional learning environment should be appropriate and carefully selected so as not to put the student or member of the clinical affiliate in a compromising situation. Contact with members of the clinical affiliate via social media platforms prior to graduation is prohibited. If a student and a member(s) of the clinical affiliate have a pre-existing personal relationship, a professional relationship must always be maintained.

#### **Adherence to SCPE Policies and Procedures**

The **protection of patients is of utmost importance** to the program and the clinical affiliates providing SCPEs. The program instructs and assesses students on HIPAA, bloodborne pathogens, and universal precautions; however, when discrepancies exist relative to these three areas, the policies of the clinical affiliate supersede program policy. Students suspected of violating the policies and procedures of the clinical affiliate will be referred to the SPC for progression and/or disciplinary action recommendations which may include dismissal from the program. The SPC recommendation may lead to a delay in graduation and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation. Students may also be removed from the SCPE prior to SPC referral if patient care is thought to be compromised by the student's actions and/or at the clinical affiliate's request.

#### **REMEDIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT DEFICITS**

Students who exhibit unprofessional conduct may be reported to program faculty by LMU faculty and staff, patients, members of the program's clinical affiliates (e.g., clinical preceptors, office managers, nurses), LMU students, and persons not affiliated with LMU. Program faculty mentor students with professional conduct deficits and monitor for improvement. The program faculty or staff who observes or is made aware of the deficit will notify the SPC Chair via email and provide details of the professional conduct deficit. The SPC Chair determines if a student with a suspected Student Code of Conduct violation will meet with the SPC for a decision(s) on a progression and/or disciplinary action(s). Student Code of Conduct violations that warrant immediate referral to the SPC for a decision(s) on a progression and/or disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program, include any action that compromised or may have compromised the safety or confidentiality of patients, members of the clinical affiliates, classmates, and program faculty and staff.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICIES**

A grievance is defined as dissatisfaction with an action or inaction that is non-academic in nature and perceived as unjust, inequitable, or creates undue hardship. **Students should contact the Office of Institutional Compliance/Title IX Coordinator ([TitleIX@LMUnet.edu](mailto:TitleIX@LMUnet.edu)) as soon as possible for any grievance stemming from sexual harassment, racial discrimination, or any other act discriminatory in nature.** Each student can advise the program of grievances with the assurance of fair treatment. The student, faculty, or staff member alleged to have caused the grievance must be fully informed of the allegations by the program and provided the opportunity to respond in a fair and reasonable manner.

### **Conflict with a Student**

If a student has a conflict with another student in the program, the student should attempt to resolve the conflict in a direct and constructive manner with the other student as soon as possible. If a resolution cannot be reached, the student should request help from the Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team (Clinical Phase). If the conflict remains unresolved, the student may then request help from the Program Director for final resolution of the conflict. If a student has a conflict with a student from a different LMU program, the student should attempt to resolve the conflict in a direct and constructive manner with the other student as soon as possible. If the conflict remains unresolved, the student may then request help from the Program Director for final resolution of the conflict.

### **Conflict with a Faculty or Staff Member**

If a student has a conflict with a program faculty or staff member, or faculty or staff member from a different LMU program, the student should attempt to resolve the conflict in a direct and constructive manner with the faculty or staff member as soon as possible. If a resolution cannot be reached, the student may then request help from the Program Director. If the conflict remains unresolved, the student may then request help from the School of Medical Sciences (SMS) Dean.

### **Conflict with a Member of a Clinical Affiliate**

If a student has a conflict with a member of a clinical affiliate (e.g., clinical preceptor, staff), the student should attempt to resolve the conflict in a direct and constructive manner with the member of the clinical affiliate as soon as possible. If a resolution cannot be reached, the student may then request help from the Clinical Team as soon as possible. If the conflict remains unresolved, the student may then request help from the Program Director for final resolution of the conflict.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

This policy is published on page two (2) of this handbook. The Office of Institutional Compliance handles all complaints of discrimination. Students may contact the Institutional Compliance Officer to report allegations of discrimination by LMU faculty, staff, and members of clinical affiliates ([TitleIX@LMUnet.edu](mailto:TitleIX@LMUnet.edu))

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/TITLE IX**

Freedom and liberty from unwanted, unwelcome, or coerced sexual contact is the right of every member of the LMU community. Individual responsibility and recognition of the intrinsic value of high moral and ethical standards are guiding principles for every member of the LMU community to foster an atmosphere that does not tolerate unwanted sexual contact or sexual violence. LMU does not tolerate sexual misconduct or other sexual violence committed on or off campus by or against any sector of the LMU community, faculty, staff, students, or third parties. The Title IX Coordinator provides consultation, investigation, and disposition of all inquiries and complaints of alleged discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, stalking, and any other forms of discrimination on the basis of sex. Students may contact the Title IX Coordinator ([TitleIX@LMUnet.edu](mailto:TitleIX@LMUnet.edu)) to report allegations of discrimination based on sex as listed above. The identity of any individual who makes a report or complaint of discrimination on the basis of sex will be confidential. Additional information can be found on the LMU website.

Information regarding Title IX and pregnant and parenting student resources may be found on the LMU website under "Equal Opportunity/Title IX". [www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu)

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

The program is responsible for ensuring the safety of program students, faculty, and staff in all locations where program instruction occurs. On-campus safety and security services include vehicle and foot patrols, door locks and unlocks, escort services after hours, camera monitoring, and dispatch for emergent and non-emergent situations. The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, Clery Act information, Adam's Law, Suzanne's Law, crime prevention information, and instructions for reporting crimes and other emergencies are posted on LMU's website. [www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu)

All students are encouraged to sign up on LMU's LiveSafe emergency notification system via their smart phone. LMU students, faculty, and staff are advised of any emergency on campus or in the immediate vicinity that threatens imminent harm to people. More detailed information on responding to emergencies, including an active shooter situation, is found on the LMU Campus Police and Security website. [www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu)

**Any student presented with a clear threat of imminent physical harm must leave the immediate area and call 911.**

Any student who feels unsafe because of the behavior of a student, faculty, staff member or campus visitor but does not perceive a clear threat of imminent physical harm must notify the Program Director and campus security immediately.

## **LMU Annual Security & Fire Safety Report**

The LMU Annual Security & Fire Safety Report (ASFSR) is published by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and posted on the LMU website. [www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu)

The LMU ASFSR contains three previous years of crime statistics; campus policies and procedures, including alcohol, drug, sexual violence, etc.; and law enforcement authority. This publication is required to be in compliance with the Clery Act and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

To request a paper copy, contact the Clery Act Compliance Coordinator at 423-869-6301 or in person at: Tex Turner Arena, 330 Mars/DeBusk Parkway, Harrogate, TN 37752.

## **Personal Safety and Security During SCPEs**

The program evaluates the safety of the clinical site(s) in which the clinical preceptor(s) of the clinical affiliate provide care prior to assigning a student to the clinical affiliate for SCPEs. Each clinical affiliate agrees to orient students on the appropriate security and personal safety measures associated with their clinical site(s). Students must notify the Clinical Team immediately of any safety concerns related to the assigned clinical affiliate. The program will investigate reported safety concerns and will not use clinical affiliates deemed unsafe.

Students complete many SCPEs at locations physically distant from the program's campus. To assist the program in ensuring student safety while completing SCPEs, students must notify the Clinical Team as soon as possible with any change in name, contact information, or emergency contact(s) information in person or via telephone or email communication.

**Any student presented with a clear threat of imminent physical harm must leave the immediate area and call 911.**

Any student who feels unsafe because of the behavior of a patient or member of the clinical affiliate but does not perceive a clear threat of imminent physical harm must notify the clinical site office manager or security (based on the security and personal safety measures associated with the clinical affiliate) immediately and must notify the Clinical Team as soon as possible. To optimize personal safety and security students should:

- Not leave valuables (e.g., wallet, jewelry, keys, etc.) in the open view of others.

- Mark valuable items (e.g., cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc.) and keep a list of model and serial numbers and descriptions.
- Lock all doors and windows before leaving their apartment/house/vehicle and never prop open doors when entering/exiting their apartment/house.
- Not lend their vehicle or housing keys to anyone.
- Use the “WalkSafe” feature of the LiveSafe smartphone application provided by LMU’s Campus Police and Security Team so a personal contact can track them as they walk from a building to their vehicle.
- Use the “buddy system” whenever possible – enter and leave buildings and walk to and from their vehicle with a friend or security guard/hospital escort.
- Walk purposefully and look confident – always be alert and avoid taking shortcuts through isolated and poorly lit areas.
- Park in well-lit areas and do not sit in their car for extended periods of time in parking lots.

#### **SHADOWING HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

Shadowing of any health care professional not arranged and authorized by the program while enrolled in the program is not permitted and is not covered under LMU’s malpractice coverage for PA Students. This policy is to prevent students from violating healthcare facility credentialing procedures and from providing patient care for which they do not have appropriate training. LMU’s malpractice coverage for PA Students does not cover any volunteer activities not arranged and/or authorized by the program.

#### **EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

Outside employment is strongly discouraged while enrolled in the program as it may interfere with the academic and professional conduct requirements of the program. LMU’s malpractice coverage for PA Students does not cover any employment activities. Absences from any component of the program curriculum due to employment commitments are not allowed (except for military service requirements). Students are not required to work for the program. Students must not substitute for or function as faculty, clinical or administrative staff, regardless of prior knowledge, experience, or skills, at any time throughout the program (Didactic or Clinical Year). The Clinical Team advises clinical affiliates of this policy.

### **SECTION III: STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE (SPC)**

#### **STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE (SPC)**

The purpose of the SPC is to ensure that each LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program graduate has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and clinical and professional judgment to assume the responsibilities of a PA. The SPC monitors student progress in all phases of the curriculum and makes decisions on student progression in the program and, when appropriate, decisions on disciplinary action(s) and/or dismissal. Any student referred to the SPC is encouraged to contact the SPC Chair for guidance in the SPC process prior to the SPC meeting. Students are referred to the SPC for the following reasons:

- Academic (e.g., course failure, remediation failure)
- Professional (e.g., violation of the Student Code of Conduct)
- Progression decision (e.g., continue to the Clinical Phase, dismissal from the program)
- Follow-up on prior SPC decisions (e.g., removal from academic probation)

#### **SPC Procedures**

The SPC is comprised of the Associate Medical Director, who serves as the SPC Chair, and three (3) members of the program Faculty. The SPC convenes at least once each semester to review each student’s academic performance and professional conduct, as reported by program faculty, and make decisions on student progression in the program. The SPC also convenes whenever necessary at the discretion of the SPC Chair.

The SPC Chair informs any student required to meet with the SPC at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting via the student’s LMU-issued student email account and provides the date, time, location, and reason(s) for the meeting. Students required to meet with the SPC must appear in person to answer questions and submit any

information felt to be relevant to their case. Students may appear via videoconferencing at the discretion of the SPC Chair. If a student who is required to meet with the SPC fails to appear before the SPC, a decision(s) is made in their absence.

All SPC meeting proceedings are confidential and closed to anyone not part of the SPC proceedings. Students and SPC members are not allowed to bring personal items to the SPC meeting, including audio/video recording devices, cell phones, and smartwatches. Meeting minutes are recorded by a program staff member and maintained by the SPC Chair. The SPC members review all documents relevant to the student's meeting. When the student enters the meeting room, the SPC Chair verifies that the student knows all SPC members present and can explain the reason for the SPC meeting. The student is offered an opportunity to provide testimony relevant to the meeting. SPC members may ask the student questions relevant to the meeting. The student is then asked to leave the meeting room while the SPC members discuss progression and disciplinary action options. A decision(s) is submitted to a vote with a simple majority ruling. The SPC Chair is a non-voting member except in the case of a tie vote. Because this is not a criminal court, the level of proof for a decision shall be "more likely than not" and not the strict criminal law standard of "proof beyond a reasonable doubt". Once the SPC has reached a decision(s), the student is asked to return to the meeting room and the SPC Chair explains the decision(s) and relevant instructions/expectations to the student.

The SPC Chair notifies the Program Director of all SPC decisions. Campus Security, the Registrar, the Executive Director of Student Financial Services, and the program's Admissions and Community Relations Coordinator are notified if a decision(s) results in student dismissal or a delay in graduation. Within three (3) business days following the meeting, the student receives notification of the SPC's decision(s) and relevant instructions/expectations via the student's LMU-issued student email account. When the SPC decides to delay progression in the program, including a delay in beginning SCPEs or a delay in graduation, or dismiss a student from the program in the absence of the student, the student is informed of the SPC's decision in person or via telephone communication by the SPC Chair in addition to receiving email notification as stated above.

### **SPC Decisions**

The SPC has the authority to make decisions regarding student progression in the program and disciplinary action(s) based on each student's academic performance, professional conduct development, and adherence to the Student Code of Conduct policies.

#### **For Professional Conduct Deficits**

Any student who is suspected of violating the Student Code of Conduct may be referred to the SPC for a decision(s) on disciplinary action and progression, including dismissal from the program.

In cases where the SPC does not dismiss the student, the student is placed on Professional Probation and is required to successfully complete remediation of the professional conduct deficit(s) in the following time frame:

- Didactic Phase
  - Prior to beginning the Clinical Phase (this may result in a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation)
- Clinical Phase
  - Prior to beginning the next scheduled SCPE or beginning the Summative Evaluation (this may result in a delay in graduation and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation)

In addition, the SPC may require any of the following for professional conduct deficits:

- Mentoring by faculty
- Use of other program/LMU resources
- Other (e.g., use of resources external to LMU)

If the student does not successfully complete remediation of professional conduct deficit(s), the student will be dismissed from the program. In addition, students referred to the SPC more than once for professional conduct deficits may be dismissed from the program.

#### **Violations of the Arrest/Criminal Background Check and Drug/Alcohol Screening Policies**

- Students arrested for alcohol, illicit drug(s), or illegally obtained prescription drug(s) charge are referred to the SPC for immediate review. This may result in the student being removed from the current SCPE. The SPC may make the decisions listed in the “For Professional Conduct Deficits” section above. This may result in a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation, or dismissal from the program.
- Clinical affiliates reserve the right to refuse and remove any student arrested for an alcohol, illicit drug(s), or illegally obtained prescription drug(s) charge from their clinical site(s). This may result in a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation, or dismissal from the program.
- Students found guilty of an alcohol, illicit drug(s), or illegally obtained prescription drug(s) charge are immediately dismissed from the program.
- In addition, students arrested for an alcohol, illicit drug(s), or illegally obtained prescription drug(s) charge are expected to seek appropriate medical/behavioral treatment/counseling to determine if future patient safety may be compromised by the student’s actions. The program may require the student to obtain medical/behavioral treatment/counseling to ensure the program and the public that patient safety will not be compromised by the student’s actions.

Academic and professional standing within the program for students arrested for other charges is at the discretion of the Program Director and the administration of the School of Medical Sciences (SMS) and LMU and is based on current policies or precedent. Students found to falsify information about past or current criminal history will be dismissed from the program.

#### **For Academic Deficits**

##### **Didactic Phase – Academic Probation**

Any student required to complete remediation is automatically placed on Academic Probation at the time of identification and documentation of the academic deficit. The course grade for the related course may be initially recorded as “IP” (in progress) until the remediation assessment(s) is completed. The SPC reviews documentation for every student required to complete remediation at the end of each semester. At that time the SPC may recommend any of the following actions/requirements for students who have successfully completed remediation:

- Removal from Academic Probation
- Mentoring by program faculty
- Use of other program/LMU resources
- Other (e.g., use of resources external to LMU)
- Progression in the program

Students who do not successfully complete remediation assessment(s) will be dismissed from the program.

##### **Didactic Phase – Course Failure**

Course grades are calculated after remediation assessments are completed. Failure of any remediation assessment for a course results in failure of that course regardless of the final calculated course grade. Any student who fails a Didactic Phase course will be dismissed from the program.

##### **Clinical Phase – Academic Probation**

Any student required to complete remediation is automatically placed on Academic Probation at the time of identification and documentation of the academic deficit. The course grade for the related course may be initially recorded as “IP” (in-progress) until the remediation assessment(s) is completed. The SPC reviews documentation for

every student required to complete remediation at the end of each semester. At that time the SPC may recommend any of the following actions/requirements for students who have successfully completed remediation:

- Removal from Academic Probation
- Mentoring by program faculty
- Use of other program/LMU resources
- Other (e.g., use of resources external to LMU)
- Progression in the program

Students who do not successfully complete remediation assessment(s) will be dismissed from the program.

#### **Clinical Phase – Course Failure**

Course grades are calculated after remediation assessments are completed. Failure of any remediation assessment for a course results in failure of that course regardless of the final calculated course grade. Any student who fails a Clinical Phase course will be dismissed from the program.

#### **Didactic Phase Cumulative Examination, Clinical Phase Cumulative Examination, and Summative Evaluation – Remediation**

The SPC reviews documentation for every student required to complete a remediation assessment(s) for any component of the Didactic Phase Cumulative Examination, Clinical Phase Cumulative Examination, and Summative Evaluation following completion. At that time the SPC may recommend any of the following actions/requirements for students who have successfully completed the remediation assessment(s):

- Removal from Academic Probation
- Mentoring by program faculty
- Use of other program/LMU resources
- Other (e.g., use of resources external to LMU)
- Progression in the program
- Completion of a PANCE review course prior to taking the PANCE
- Independent review of specific content on the PANCE Content Blueprint prior to taking the PANCE
- Progression to graduation

Students who do not successfully complete Cumulative or Summative Evaluation remediation assessment(s) may be dismissed.

#### **Follow-up on SPC Decision(s)/Recommendation(s)**

The SPC monitors student progress and compliance with all SPC decisions and may meet with students to determine if the student has met all the SPC requirements for removal from academic/professional probation and progression in the program. The SPC can remove the student from academic/professional probation and allow the student to progress in the program. Failure to meet SPC requirement(s), in whole or in part, may result in the following:

- Continued Academic/Professional Probation
- Continued mentoring by program faculty
- Use of other program/LMU resources
- Other (e.g., use of resources external to LMU)
- Dismissal from the program

#### **Definitions of SPC Decisions/Recommendations**

Academic/Professional Probation is defined as demonstration of academic/professional deficits of such a magnitude as to warrant more frequent monitoring by the SPC and/or disciplinary action(s). Academic/Professional Probation may result in a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation. State licensing and hospital credentialing boards may decline to grant licensure and credentialing to graduates with a history of academic/professional probation while enrolled in a professional training program.

Remediation is defined as the program's applied process for addressing deficits in a student's knowledge, skills, and professional conduct such that correction of deficits is measurable and can be documented. Remediation may result in a delay in beginning SCPEs, a delay in graduation, and failure to complete the program curriculum within 54 months of initial matriculation. Failure to successfully complete any remediation assessment will result in dismissal from the program.

Dismissal is defined as an SPC-initiated immediate discontinuation of the student's enrollment in the program where the student is not eligible to re-enroll without re-application to the program. Students dismissed for professional deficits are not eligible to reapply to the program.

Deceleration is defined as the loss of a student from the entering cohort who remains matriculated in the program. Deceleration is not offered to students dismissed from the program by the SPC for academic and/or professional deficits. If a student appeals the SPC's decision for dismissal and the Appeals Committee determines the SPC should make an alternate recommendation, deceleration may be offered to the student at that time. Deceleration may be offered to students who take a leave of absence (Leave of Absence [LOA]/Withdrawal Policy).

Graduation from the program does not guarantee successful state licensure or hospital credentialing. State licensing and hospital credentialing boards may require documentation to support the applicant's written explanation for a delay in graduation and may decline to grant licensure/credentialing to graduates with a history of disciplinary action, including academic/professional probation, while enrolled in the program.

#### **Dismissal Policy**

**The program may dismiss any enrolled student or rescind an offer of admission to any matriculating student** found to betray the values and integrity of LMU, the program, the PA Profession, and/or the community. Circumstances warranting dismissal or rescinding of an offer of admission may be of an academic, professional, or legal nature. Enrolled students who are dismissed must complete an exit interview with the Office of Student Financial Services and must return their LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Student name badge and parking tag to Campus Security. Failure to do so will result in the program withholding all records pertaining to the student's attendance.

#### **Readmission/Reapplication Policy**

- Any student dismissed from the program for academic deficits is eligible to reapply to the program. The program does not offer automatic readmission for any student dismissed for academic deficits.
- Any student dismissed from the program for violation of the Student Code of Conduct is not eligible to reapply to the program.

#### **Appeals Process**

Any SMS student who is called to a SPC meeting and has a disciplinary action or judgment placed on them for academic and/or professional reasons has the right to appeal that decision. The appeals process is to ensure that proper procedure has been followed, that appropriate precedents and policies have been applied, and to ensure that the judgment aligns with the precipitating event.

Only judgements or disciplinary actions originating from an SPC decision will initiate the SMS appeals process if the student submits written notification to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

After receiving official written notification of an SPC decision, the student may begin the appeals process by emailing a professional and **succinct appeal letter to the SMS ADAA** (or the SMS Dean if the ADAA is unavailable) **within two (2) business days of receiving the SPC decision**. The letter must provide a clear rationale, focused on facts and/or procedural concerns, avoid accusatory language, comparisons to other cases, or references outside the institution, and be written solely by the student—not by family members, attorneys, or other parties.

The ADAA contacts the Appeals Committee Chair to schedule **a meeting, which should occur within three (3) business days of notification**. The Appeals Committee Chair informs the student of the meeting date and time as

soon as it is confirmed. A copy of the appeals procedures will also be provided to the student upon request. The ADAA will also notify the appropriate Program Director that the appeals process has been initiated and will request all SPC materials used in reaching the original decision, including complete meeting minutes. These materials will be compiled and provided to the Appeals Committee Chair.

The Appeals Committee will review the SPC documentation and the student's appeal letter to determine whether a breach of policy or procedure occurred and whether relevant precedent was appropriately considered. The Appeals Committee will maintain detailed minutes of its proceedings. Following review, the Committee will vote to either uphold the SPC decision or sustain the student's appeal. The Chair of the Appeals Committee must notify the ADAA of the decision within twenty-four (24) hours and forward the outcome to the SPC Chair. The Appeals Committee's decision is reviewed by the Dean of the School of Medical Sciences for final approval. This is the final step in the appeals process.

**Within 24 hours** of final approval by the Dean, the ADAA emails the student the Appeals Committee's decision and any further instructions. The ADAA sends an official notification to the student and the ADAA informs the Program Director and SPC Chair of the decision.

If the student's appeal is upheld, the SPC Chair schedules a follow-up SPC meeting to develop a plan for the student. The student will be notified at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled SPC meeting. If the SPC decision is upheld, the student must follow the SPC instructions as outlined in the original decision letter.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)/WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

### **Leave of Absence (LOA) Eligibility**

Only students in good academic standing are eligible to request a University or School of Medical Sciences (SMS) Leave of Absence (LOA). Students who are not passing their current coursework are not eligible.

### **Valid Reasons for LOA**

Acceptable reasons for an LOA include, but are not limited to:

- Medical emergencies (personal or family)
- Medical leave\*
- Military service
- Jury duty
- Financial hardship
- Other serious personal matters

\*Students requesting an LOA due to pregnancy are encouraged to contact Rebekah Webb, Title IX Coordinator, at [rebekah.webb@lmu.net](mailto:rebekah.webb@lmu.net) in the LMU Office of Institutional Compliance for additional assistance.

### **Request Process**

1. The student must submit a written request via their LMU-issued email account to the Program Director, indicating intent to take a Leave of Absence.
2. A formal meeting will be held with the Program Director to review the circumstances and complete required documentation.
3. The Program Director will forward the request to the SMS Dean (or designee) for final approval.
4. Upon approval, the SMS Dean (or designee) will provide documentation to the Registrar and Financial Aid Office.

### **Documentation Requirements**

- **Medical LOA:** Documentation from a licensed health care provider confirming the student's inability to continue and eventual readiness to return.
- **Military LOA:** Official documentation of required service.
- **Financial LOA:** Documentation proof of recovery before re-enrollment.

### **Duration of LOA**

- The maximum SMS LOA period is **12 months**.

- The LOA start date is based on the date of written request submission.
- If the LOA spans different semesters, additional stipulations may apply.

### **Re-Enrollment Requirements**

To return from an LOA, students must:

1. Submit written notification of intent to return at least one (1) month prior to re-enrollment.
2. Obtain clearance from the Student Progress Committee (SPC), if required, to ensure retention of previously completed coursework.
3. Complete any remedial or assessment activities as assigned.
4. Complete the program within the maximum timeframe from initial matriculation:
  - PA-Knoxville: 54 months

### **Transcript and Financial Responsibility**

- An approved LOA does not remove grades or coursework completed prior to approval.
- Courses may be recorded as “WD” (Withdrawn) or “IP” (In Progress), depending on timing and course progression.

### **Form Utilization**

- The **University LOA Form** should be used in the following circumstances:
  - For SMS-PA students in the clinical phase, when returning within the same semester.
- If the LOA spans across semesters, the **University Withdrawal Form** and **SMS-LOA Form** must both be completed.
 

**Note:** Completion of the University Withdrawal Form does **not** withdraw a student from the program, only from University courses.
- During the didactic phase of the SMS-PA curriculum:
  - Students requesting an extended LOA after a semester ends must complete only the SMS-LOA Form.
  - If already registered for the next semester, both the SMS-LOA Form and University Withdrawal Form are required.
  - Associated transcript notations and timelines follow the Withdrawal policy (see below).

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### **Withdrawal Policy**

Completion of the **University Withdrawal (U-WD) Form** does not withdraw a student from the SMS-DMS or SMS-PA program.

#### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

- The student must complete the University Withdrawal Form and notify the Program Director of the intent to withdraw from course(s).
- The Program Director will submit the form to the SMS Dean for approval.
- The Dean will forward the approved form to the Registrar and other appropriate departments.
- If the student intends to return in the future, the SMS-LOA Form must also be completed.
- If the student does not intend to return, the Dean must be notified.

#### **Administrative Withdrawal**

In cases of administrative withdrawal, the University Withdrawal Form may be completed by the program on behalf of the student.

### **Transcript Notations**

- **Withdrawal with ≥ 3 weeks remaining in the semester:**
  - Completed course grades will remain.
  - Courses not yet started or in progress will be recorded as “WD.”
- **Withdrawal with < 3 weeks remaining in the semester:**
  - Completed course grades will remain.
  - Courses in progress will be recorded as “F.”

The Registrar will determine the official withdrawal date in accordance with the Academic Calendar.

The same transcript notations apply to withdrawals from SMS-PA programs.

**Forms discussed in above policy can be found below:**

1. [University Leave of Absence \(U-LOA\) Form](#)
2. [University Withdrawal \(U-WD\) Form](#)
3. [SMS Leave of Absence \(SMS-LOA\) Form](#)

## **SECTION IV: APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **RECEIPT OF THE LMU-SMS-KNOXVILLE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK AND THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT HANDBOOK**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attended orientation for the LMU-SMS-Knoxville Physician Assistant (PA) Program on \_\_\_\_\_ and was advised of LMU and PA Program policies, procedures, and regulations.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook and that I am able to access a copy of the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook online. I further acknowledge that I am responsible for all the information contained within this handbook and that I will abide by the policies, procedures, and regulations set forth in this document, or subsequent versions.

I further acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Lincoln Memorial University Student Handbook, that I am able to access a copy of the Lincoln Memorial University Student Handbook online, and that I am responsible for the policies, procedures, and regulations set forth thereof. I realize that in some cases, the policies, procedures, and regulations of the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook exceed those of the Lincoln Memorial University Student Handbook and/or create enhanced or additional obligations for PA Students, such as minimum technical standards and dress code, and understand that in such cases I must comply with and shall be subject to the policies, procedures, and regulations set forth in the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook, or subsequent versions.

I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions regarding the contents of the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook and should I have any further questions regarding the stated policies, procedures, and/or regulations, I understand that it is my responsibility to ask the Program Director and faculty for clarification. I understand that the program will notify all students, via LMU-issued student email accounts, of any revisions and subsequent versions of the Physician Assistant Program Student Handbook and that such revisions and subsequent versions will be posted on the program's website. I understand that failure to comply with the policies, procedures, and regulations set forth in these handbooks, or subsequent versions, may result in disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal from the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program.

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Student Name (print legibly)

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Student Signature

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Date

## **APPENDIX B**

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION AS HUMAN SUBJECTS POLICY**

I hereby acknowledge that as part of my experience at the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program I am required to participate as a living subject and an examiner during the Didactic Phase of the program. The program faculty expect that students are professional and cooperative when participating as a living subject and an examiner during instruction and assessment of physical examination techniques and other clinical procedures. Physical examination techniques include, but are not limited to, inspection, auscultation, palpation, and percussion. Clinical procedures include, but are not limited to, extremity splinting and casting and image acquisition with ultrasound.

I further acknowledge that I need to be prepared for all laboratory sessions and that I may be required to partially disrobe for facilitation of physical examination techniques. Shorts are required for examination and splinting of the lower extremities. Male students will be asked to remove their shirt and female students will be asked to wear a sports bra for examination of the thorax and image acquisition with ultrasound.

I acknowledge that if I am unable to follow the dress code for participation as a living subject in laboratory sessions due to religious beliefs, cultural norms, or other reasons that I must discuss this with the Program Director and faculty as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by this policy.

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Student Name (print legibly)

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Student Signature

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Date

## **APPENDIX C**

### **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program's Student Code of Conduct. I understand that I must maintain high standards of private and public conduct on campus, off campus, and at LMU-sponsored events.

The LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program's Student Code of Conduct includes policies for the following areas:

- Academic Conduct
- Professional Conduct
- Communication with the Program
- Attendance
- Confidentiality
- Social Media
- Audio and Video Recording
- Learning Environment
- Dress Code
- Identification as a Physician Assistant Student (PA-S)
- Arrest/Criminal Background Check
- Drug/Alcohol Screening and Driving while Under the Influence (DUI)

Violation of these and other generally accepted rules of behavior, whether covered by specific policies or not, may subject a student to disciplinary action. **Claims of ignorance of acceptable behavior or enumerated policies and standards will not be accepted as an excuse for violation.**

I further acknowledge that my adherence to the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program's Student Code of Conduct will be monitored continuously while enrolled in the program and will be formally evaluated by program faculty and clinical preceptors providing Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs).

I further acknowledge that violation of the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program's Student Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including dismissal from the PA Program.

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Student Name (print legibly)

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Student Signature

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Date

**APPENDIX D**

**PROOF OF HEALTH INSURANCE ATTESTATION AND  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR HEALTHCARE EXPENSES**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest that I have health insurance coverage, a copy of which I have provided (front and back of health insurance card). I certify that I will maintain this coverage so that it will remain in effect during my attendance at the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program. If at any time this coverage lapses, I understand that I have an obligation to immediately inform the Program Director (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team (Clinical Phase). I further understand that a lapse in health insurance coverage may result in dismissal.

I also acknowledge that I am financially responsible for any healthcare expenses not covered by my health insurance provider. In the event I incur medical expenses while enrolled in the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program, I will be financially responsible for all expenses.

I also understand it is my responsibility to maintain health insurance coverage that is effective in any geographic area, internationally or in the U.S., where I go for SCPEs or other learning/service experiences while enrolled in the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program.

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Student Name (print legibly)

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Student Signature

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Date

## APPENDIX E

### **RELEASE OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK AND FINGERPRINTS, HEALTH RECORDS, AND PROOF OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AUTHORIZATION**

Several clinical affiliates utilized by the program require documentation of confidential information for the students completing Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs) at their clinical site(s). Student permission is required for the program to release necessary documentation to clinical affiliates providing SCPEs.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorize the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program to release my criminal background check and fingerprint information, health records (specific documents listed below), and proof of health insurance to any of my assigned SCPEs during my enrollment. I understand that the information will be sent as a composite only to those facilities requiring the documentation. I also understand that the following forms and information will remain on file in the program and will be released as stated above:

- Criminal background check and fingerprints\*
- Medical Clearance and Immunization form\*\*
- Tuberculosis screening form\*\*
- Proof of influenza vaccination
- Proof of COVID-19 vaccination/booster (or exemption approval)
- Urine drug screening form
- Copy of the front and back of health insurance card

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Student Name (print legibly)

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Student Signature

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Date

\*Students are required to obtain a criminal background check prior to matriculation and prior to beginning SCPEs. Some clinical affiliates also require fingerprint information.

\*\***A3.18:** Student *health records* are confidential and *not* accessible to or reviewed by *program faculty* or staff except for immunization and screening results, which may be maintained and released with the student's written permission.

## APPENDIX F

### **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT FORM**

Student:	Date:	Semester/Year:
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#### **RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

1. General Behavior	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Considers the autonomy and values of others; maintains confidentiality	

2. Professional Behavior	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Is reliable and punctual; facilitates a collegial atmosphere	

#### **SERVICE**

3. Initiative	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Shares knowledge, talent, and resources	

#### **INTEGRITY**

4. Professional Behavior	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Honest and straightforward in all activities; accepts personal responsibility for actions; recognizes limits of current training and seeks help appropriately; accepts personal responsibility for learning	

#### **EXCELLENCE**

5. Initiative	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Committed to exceeding minimum expectations	

6. Initiative and Response	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Regularly seeks feedback to improve performance; receives feedback with a positive attitude and makes corrections as appropriate	

7. Accountability	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Demonstrates a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and adhering to ethical principles; assumes increasing degrees of responsibility under proper supervision	

#### **EMOTIONAL RESILIENCY**

8. General Behavior	
Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement
Expected Behavior: Is able to adapt, be flexible, and tolerate ambiguity	

Comments:

Completed by:

Date:

Student Signature:

Date:

The above signature acknowledges my receipt of the LMU-SMS-Knoxville PA Program's Professional Conduct Development and Assessment form.

This form is completed at least once each semester by PA Principal Faculty and is maintained in the student's file. This form may be viewed by the Student Progress Committee and program faculty and staff with a legitimate need to know the information.

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Absence Request Form**

Any student requesting an absence must complete and submit this form to the Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team (Clinical Phase) for review at least 24 hours prior to the requested absence. The Director of Didactic Education (Didactic Phase) or the Clinical Team (Clinical Phase) has the authority to approve or deny the request.

**Semester and year:** [REDACTED]

**Phase:**  Didactic  Clinical

**Date(s) of requested absence and scheduled activities:** [REDACTED]

**Reason for request:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** [REDACTED]



**Signature:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** [REDACTED]

# **END OF STUDENT HANDBOOK**