

# COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND NATURAL SCIENCE

## Master of Physician Assistant Studies Hybrid Program (M.P.A.S.)

**Program Director/Associate Professor:** [Marci Contreras](#)

**Director of Program Evaluation/Assistant Professor:** Christi Kobald

**Program Coordinator:** Melanie McMaster

**Assistant Professor:** [Daniel Anderson](#) , Director of Didactic Education

**Medical Director:** [Harold Gottlieb](#)

Physician Assistants (PAs) are nationally certified and licensed healthcare professionals who practice medicine with a physician's collaboration and/or supervision working as a team.

As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive healthcare, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Within the PA-physician relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

A PA's practice may also include education, research, and managerial/administrative services. Physician Assistants, while trained in general medicine, often specialize in emergency medicine, surgery, orthopedics, obstetrics, pediatrics as well as other specialties.

Students in the Franklin Pierce University M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program will attend classes virtually during the didactic year and attend mandatory immersion experiences on-campus in Goodyear, Arizona (just 30 miles west of Phoenix). Our modern, spacious facility includes classrooms, simulated exam rooms, and clinical lab space where students will learn hands-on practical skills. Clinical experience will be a vital part of the program and is conducted at sites throughout the country. The full-time program is designed to be completed in 24 months.

### Mission

Our mission is to prepare Physician Assistants (PAs) to provide compassionate care with the highest level of clinical excellence and ethical standards. We develop PAs who are patient advocates, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners. We nurture the development of culturally sensitive leaders who embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion to serve patients within their communities.

### Program Goals

- Recruit a talented and multicultural student body that corresponds to the diversity of the U.S. population.
- Offer a flexible schedule that encourages mindfulness and work-life balance. Our program utilizes multiple teaching and learning strategies using innovative technology to promote student success.
- Prepare graduates to become competent PAs with a first-time PANCE pass rate that meets or exceeds the national average.

### Program Learning Outcomes

- Competently address a patient's chief complaint by eliciting a focused and/or comprehensive patient history and conducting a focused and/or comprehensive physical exam. (Competency 1: Medical Knowledge and Patient Care; Competency 5: Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities)
- Develop a differential diagnosis for medical and behavioral problems seen in a primary care setting based on fundamental knowledge of the basic and clinical sciences. (Competency 1: Medical Knowledge and Patient Care; Competency 5: Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities)
- Apply critical-thinking principles to patient care using current medical literature and evidence-based medicine to order and interpret the proper diagnostic studies and recommend treatments. (Competency 3: Clinical and Technical skills; Competency 5: Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities)
- Implement health maintenance and disease prevention screening and counseling to patients across the lifespan. (Competency 1: Medical Knowledge and Patient Care; Competency 2: Interpersonal and Communication Skills)
- As a collaborative member of the healthcare team, accurately and concisely communicate in both oral and written forms, patient encounters and their outcomes. (Competency 2: Interpersonal and Communication Skills)
- Communicate effectively and respectfully with patients, families and caregivers while considering a patient's emotional state, culture, and/or socioeconomic background for shared medical decision-making. (Competency 2: Interpersonal and Communication Skills; Competency 4: Professional behaviors)
- Develop, implement, and monitor management plans for patients across the life span and in a variety of health care delivery settings with emergent, acute, chronic, and ongoing conditions. (Competency 1: Medical Knowledge and Patient Care, Competency 3: Clinical and Technical skills; Competency 5: Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities)

- Perform clinical and medical interventions as necessary to include diagnostic procedures, surgery, counseling, therapeutic procedures, and rehabilitative therapies. Obtain informed consent for such tests and/or procedures as needed. (Competency 3: Clinical and Technical skills, Competency 4: Professional behaviors; Competency 5: Clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities)
- Demonstrate behaviors consistent with the highest ethical and legal standards. (Competency 4: Professional behaviors)

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation information changes will need to be made where noted, and with the following update (verbatim as per ARC-PA):

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation[1]Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students. Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class. The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at [http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-franklin-pierce-university\[1\]goodyear-az/](http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-franklin-pierce-university[1]goodyear-az/).

### **Technical Standards**

The following technical standards establish the essential qualities necessary for students enrolling in the M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program. Students must possess these qualities upon admission to the program and continue to demonstrate these standards throughout the program, in order to achieve the required level of competency stipulated for program advancement and graduation. Failure to do so will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

### **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)**

All applicants who were born outside of the United States and who did not graduate from a United States high school will be required to submit internet-based TOEFL (iBT) scores with their application. A minimum total score of 100 (with at least 25 in each section) is required. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) code for submitting your score to CASPA is 3709.

### **Observation and Sensation**

- Candidates and graduates must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to participate in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational or clinical settings.
- Must be able to receive verbal and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform a complete patient physical exam.

### **Communication**

- Candidates and graduates must be able to speak, hear, and observe patients, family members, and other clinicians.
- Communicate clearly and effectively through oral and written communication.
- Candidates and graduates must have the ability to receive and process communication from the healthcare team to respond in a timely manner and make appropriate decisions.
- Candidates and graduates must possess the skills to communicate attentively and sensitively to others while honoring the HIPAA policy.

### **Motor Function**

- Candidates and graduates must have sufficient strength, coordination, dexterity, and equilibrium to perform the activities required of a physician assistant, including performing a physical examination utilizing diagnostic instruments and techniques required in auscultation, palpation, percussion, and diagnostic maneuvers.
- Must be able to manipulate medical equipment for basic laboratory tests and procedures such as airway management, suturing, needle placement & IV, stethoscope & ophthalmoscope, tongue blades, gynecologic speculum and scalpel.
- Candidates and graduates must have the physical stamina to sit, stand, and move within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms, and operating rooms for long periods of time.

### **Intellectual Capability**

- Candidates and graduates must possess clinical problem solving and reasoning skills to think critically with sound judgment, emotional stability, maturity, and empathy.
- Candidates and graduates must be able to accurately collect, measure, organize, prioritize, calculate, reason, analyze and integrate data to make decisions in a timely manner.
- Must be able to comprehend the medical literature to use this knowledge in problem solving and patient care.
- Must be able to interpret diagnostic testing and treatment regimens.

### **Behavioral and Social Proficiency**

- Candidates and graduates must be able to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships.

- Must work cooperatively with other members of the health care team.
- Must be able to prioritize competing demands and exercise good clinical judgment.
- Must be able to respond to emergencies in a calm and reasonable manner and handle physical, mental, and emotional stress while functioning effectively.
- Must be able to develop rapport with patients and their families as well as their colleagues.
- Must be able to demonstrate compassion, empathy, motivation, integrity, and flexibility while interacting with a diverse population.
- Must be able to accept criticism and modify behavior and practice as needed.
- Candidates and graduates must understand and apply ethical standards and responsibility in their daily practice.
- Candidates and graduates must demonstrate emotional stability to deliver the appropriate patient care in all settings.

### **Advanced Placement**

The M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program is a full-time program and does not offer advanced placement for students.

### **Work Policy**

In order to enhance student learning and assure student success in the M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program, it is recommended that students do not work while enrolled in the program. If a student chooses to work while enrolled in the program, work schedules cannot interfere with class attendance, academic performance, or clinical rotation schedules. Students are never required to work for the program in any capacity.

### **Physician Assistant Hybrid Program Academic Policies**

The policies below are in addition to the standards noted above as set by the College of Health and Natural Sciences.

#### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

All M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program students must achieve and maintain a term grade point average (TGPA) and cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 (B) or higher to remain in good academic standing. M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program students may have no more than two grades lower than a B- on the academic record at the time of graduation. Any student not meeting this minimum will be required to meet with their academic advisor to establish and sign a Learning Contract to address academic deficiencies. A student will be considered to have attained satisfactory academic progress when the student receives consistent course grades of B- or better and maintains a cumulative and TGPA of 3.0. Students with a history of academic probation will be referred for academic dismissal from the program if they fail to maintain the academic standards of the program or University. The M.P.A.S. Progress and Promotions Committee meets throughout each term to review and discuss each individual student's progress.

Concerns regarding a student's academic performance will be documented and referred to the student's academic advisor. At the close of each term, academic records will be reviewed by the Program Director. Appropriate sanctions will be applied if necessary. Students on Academic Probation at the end of the didactic year cannot progress to the clinical year without approval of the M.P.A.S. Progress and Promotions Committee. In addition to academic expectations regarding Academic Standing, recipients of all forms of financial assistance are expected to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.

\*Note: The standards and policies of the M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program supersede any university policy regarding academic probation and/or dismissal.

#### **Part-time Enrollment and Deceleration**

The design of the curriculum within the M.P.A.S. Hybrid Program does not allow for students to attend part-time.

Students who cannot continue on a full-time basis may consider applying for a Leave of Absence (LOA), which then must be approved by the Program Director. Poor academic performance is not a valid reason for taking a LOA. Only those students with an approved LOA (or other extenuating circumstance approved by the Program Director) will be allowed to decelerate. Deceleration is defined as movement from the student's entering cohort to a subsequent cohort. Students who decelerate may be required to repeat some or all of the coursework completed at the time of withdrawal.

#### **Summative Evaluation**

The Summative Evaluation is administered within the last four (4) months of the program in Professional Practice IV, and is used to assess the culmination of the following: (1) medical knowledge, (2) clinical and technical skills, (3) interpersonal skills, (4) clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, and (5) professional behaviors. As the Summative Evaluation is the means by which we verify each student is prepared to enter clinical practice, a student will be permitted to take the Summative Evaluation only after successful completion of all courses in the didactic and clinical phases of the program AND they are in good academic standing. An exception to this rule will be permitted only under extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis and at the sole discretion of the Program Director. Students must demonstrate satisfactory performance in the Summative Evaluation in order to successfully complete the program.

#### **Course Sequence**

**Didactic Phase**

**Grad Term II Winter November-March**

Anatomy I 2 Credits  
Basic Science I 2 Credits  
Patient Assessment I 3 Credits  
Clinical Pharmacology I 2 Credits  
Clinical Medicine I 2 Credits  
Mindfulness in Medicine 1 Credit  
Evidence-based Medicine 1 Credit  
Preventive Medicine 2 Credits  
Introduction to Health Professions 1 Credit  
Diagnostic Methods I 1 Credit

**Total 17 Credits**

**Grad Term III Spring March-May**

Anatomy II 3 Credits  
Basic Science II 2 Credits  
Patient Assessment II 3 Credits  
Clinical Pharmacology II 2 Credits  
Clinical Medicine II 3 Credits  
Diagnostic Methods II 2 Credits  
Behavioral Health 1 Credits

**Total 16 Credits**

**Grad Term IV Summer June-August**

Anatomy III 3 Credits  
Basic Science III 2 Credits  
Patient Assessment III 3 Credits  
Clinical Pharmacology III 2 Credits  
Clinical Medicine III 3 Credits  
Diagnostic Methods III 2 Credits  
Cross Cultural Health 1 Credit

**Total 16 Credits**

**Grad Fall Term I August-November**

Anatomy IV 2 Credits  
Basic Science IV 2 Credits  
Patient Assessment IV 3 Credits  
Clinical Pharmacology IV 2 Credits  
Clinical Medicine IV 3 Credits  
Clinical Skills 4 Credits  
Research 1 Credits  
Medical Ethics 1 Credits

**Total 18 Credits**

**Clinical Phase YEAR TWO**

SCPE Internal Medicine 5 Credits  
SCPE Family Medicine 5 Credits  
SCPE Emergency Medicine 5 Credits  
SCPE Surgery 5 Credits  
SCPE Pediatrics 5 Credits  
SCPE Women's Health 5 Credits  
SCPE Behavioral Medicine 5 Credits  
SCPE Elective 1 5 Credits  
SCPE Elective 2 5 Credits  
Professional Practice I 1 Credit

Professional Practice II 1 Credit  
 Professional Practice III 1 Credit  
 Professional Practice IV 1 Credit

### **Total 49 Credits**

Total Credits over 8 Terms = 116 credit hours earned

### **Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.)**

- Department Chair & Academic Director (A.Z.): Letha B. Zook
- Academic Director (N.H.): Meghan Rohde
- Associate Professors (A.Z.): RuiPing Xia, Scott R. Richardson, Robert Phillips, Tamara Hefferon,
- Associate Professors (N.H.): Ann W.B. Coventry, Allison Kellish,
- Assistant Professors (A.Z.): David Lorello, Shaina Ettinger, Elise Harris
- Assistant Professors (N.H.): Maureen Clancy, Lisa Doyle, Willow L. Henry, Olga McSorley, Theresa O'Neil, Elke Schaumberg

### **One University – Two DPT Programs**

Franklin Pierce University offers two full-time DPT programs with distinct formats, both are fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy. The faculty in both programs stay clinically relevant by engaging in clinical work. Both programs have the same mission and goals and curriculum outcomes.

Students in both D.P.T. programs are required to hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university and complete all prerequisite courses and requirements prior to matriculating into the program. The Essential Functions provide specific core performance standards that every student must be able to meet, with or without reasonable accommodation, for admission and progression in the D.P.T. program.

The New Hampshire DPT program is an on-site program which is 30 months in length in Manchester, New Hampshire. It has 38 weeks of clinical experience in 10 graduate terms. An early full-time experience of 8 weeks is done during the fifth term.

The Arizona DPT program uses the hybrid mode of delivery and is 25.5 months in length. The curriculum is a blend of online learning (synchronous and asynchronous) and intensive 4–5-day lab sessions, held in Goodyear, Arizona. In addition to the 30 weeks of full-time clinical experiences at the end of the didactic portion, the student participates in early hands-on experiences in the FPU clinic during the intensive lab weeks.

### **The Physical Therapy Profession**

Physical Therapists (PTs) are licensed health care professionals who diagnose and treat individuals of all ages, who have health-related conditions that limit their abilities to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. Physical therapists:

- Diagnose and manage movement dysfunction and enhance physical and functional abilities;
- Restore, maintain, and promote optimal physical function, wellness, fitness, and quality of life as it relates to movement and health;
- Prevent the onset, symptoms, and progression of impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities that may result from diseases, disorders, conditions, or injuries.

Physical therapists provide care for people in a variety of settings, including: hospitals, private practices, outpatient clinics, home health agencies, schools, sports and fitness facilities, work settings, and nursing homes (apta.org). Franklin Pierce University offers Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) programs in Manchester, New Hampshire and in Goodyear, Arizona. Both facilities are newly renovated with state-of-the-art equipment and learning technologies. Clinical experience is a vital part of the program and is conducted at sites throughout the country.

### **Mission**

The Mission of the D.P.T. program is to graduate competent practitioners who are prepared to enhance the physical health and functional abilities of the members of the public. Our graduates render independent judgment in collaboration with others to advocate for and meet the needs of the patient/client and to ensure equal access for all individuals. They critically analyze, appropriately utilize, and contribute to evidence-based practice. Our graduates embrace life-long learning and consciously apply ethical values. They contribute to society and the profession in practice, teaching, administration, community service, and the discovery and application of new knowledge related to physical therapy.

### **Expected Graduate Goals and Outcomes**

#### **Graduates of the D.P.T. program will:**

1. Have the knowledge and skills of a PT capable of working as an autonomous practitioner

- Achieve 100% ultimate pass rate on the NPTE
  - Employed as autonomous practitioners in a variety of practice settings
  - Integrate current research, clinical expertise, and patient values into practice
2. Demonstrate empathetic and compassionate practice
    - Adhere to the APTA Code of Ethics
    - Respect and treat each patient as an individual, without regard to gender, race, color, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation
  3. Demonstrate commitment to the physical therapy profession
    - Promote the profession through education
    - Possess skills to advocate for the profession

### **Franklin Pierce University's D.P.T. Educational Philosophy**

- The curriculum and teaching are guided by the following values:
  - The inherent worth of the individual and the value of diversity;
  - The autonomous practice of the profession;
  - The inherent value of inter-professional collaboration and consultation;
- That community service is a powerful mechanism for teaching and learning;
- That life-long learning is critical for all physical therapy practitioners;
- That ethical thinking, behavior and social responsibility are central to physical therapist education;
- That the development of critical thinking and the application of evidence-based practice are core skills for all graduates;
- That graduates contribute to society through work, teaching, community involvement, and the application of new knowledge.

Faculty, graduates, and employers continue to contribute to the development of the D.P.T. curriculum preparing our students and graduates to have the skills to practice in a changing society and health care delivery system.

Special consideration for entrance into the FPU D.P.T. program is offered for FPU undergraduates in three pathways:  
(See more information under D.P.T. Direct Admit)

1. Freshman D.P.T. Direct Admit: High School Seniors who meet specific requirements (see below) are guaranteed entrance into the FPU D.P.T. program upon satisfactory completion (see below) of the requirements for entrance into the D.P.T. program.
2. Current FPU Student D.P.T. Direct Admit: Current students who meet the established levels of academic success in the undergraduate courses (see below) can apply for D.P.T. Direct Admit in their first three years of undergraduate work. These students will have guaranteed entrance into the FPU D.P.T. program upon satisfactory completion (see below) of the requirements for entrance into the D.P.T. program.
3. Preferential FPU Application review for current student into the FPU D.P.T. program: Students who are current students at FPU and are not in the D.P.T. Direct Admit program will have preferential application review than transfer students if they meet the following criteria:
  - Completed application in PTCAS before October the year before expected entrance into the D.P.T. program
  - Recommendation from FPU advisor

### **Application Process**

The application and admissions process is the same for both Manchester, N.H. and Goodyear, A.Z. D.P.T. programs. Students must apply through the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) online at [ptcas.org](http://ptcas.org). The PTCAS application cycle opens midsummer for the following academic year. We evaluate applications throughout the admissions cycle with a soft deadline in the beginning of March and consider qualified applicants until the class is filled.

### **Doctor of Physical Therapy Promotion Policy**

In addition to the University's Graduate Academic Standing Policy, as listed in the current Catalog, the Doctor of Physical Therapy program implements the following Promotion Policy that is more stringent.

### **Good Academic Standing**

The course sequence in the curriculum is designed to provide incremental knowledge and skills necessary for PT practice. In general, the sequence must be followed to achieve this goal. A student in good academic standing will progress through the curriculum as designed. Since courses are arranged in a specific sequence, repeating a course will result in deceleration of the student's progress through the curriculum, and require a longer period of time to successfully complete the entire curriculum. Good academic standing is obtained by achieving a term grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or greater, maintaining a cumulative GPA (CGPA) of 3.00 or greater, passing all Pass/Fail courses, earning course grades of B- or greater and maintaining appropriate standards of professional behavior.