

# COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND NATURAL SCIENCE

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

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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.

The Arizona-based, hybrid 24-month Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Program is designed to prepare 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. Explore a technology-rich environment where you will attend classes virtually. Your clinical training will include rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine, surgery, behavioral medicine, pediatrics, women's health, and two elective rotations. Develop hands-on, practical skills during scheduled immersion weeks at the Goodyear, Arizona center. In addition to online instruction, in-person clinical experience is a vital component to the program. Full-time courses are designed for program completion in 24 months.

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### 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**

At its March 2025 meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the Franklin Pierce University Master of Physician Assistant Studies Hybrid Program sponsored by Franklin Pierce University on Accreditation-Probation status until its next review in March 2027. Probation accreditation is a temporary accreditation status initially of not less than two years. However, that period may be extended by the ARC-PA for up to an additional two years if the ARC-PA finds that the program is making substantial progress toward meeting all applicable standards but requires additional time to come into full compliance. Probation accreditation status is granted, at the sole discretion of the ARC-PA, when a program holding an accreditation status of Accreditation - Provisional or Accreditation - Continued does not, in the judgment of the ARC-PA, meet the Standards or when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, a program that fails to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at

<https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-franklin-pierce-university-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 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 phase 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 Fall Term I August-November**

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 II Winter November-March**

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 17 Credits**

#### **Grad Term III Spring March-May**

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 Term IV Summer June-August**

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