ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE CPAS PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

Purpose: The Albany Medical College Center for Physician Assistant Studies has developed and adapted its Program Competencies to define the knowledge, skills, clinical reasoning, communication, and professional behaviors expected of program graduates. These competencies establish measurable expectations for entry-level practice and guide student development, curriculum design, assessment, and continuous program improvement. The competencies reflect the Program's commitment to preparing graduates to provide safe, evidence-informed, patient-centered care within collaborative healthcare teams.

Development and Review of Program Competencies: The Program Competencies were developed from the Center for Physician Assistant Studies' existing Functions and Tasks and informed by contemporary expectations for PA practice as indicated by the competencies of PA practice established by the AAPA, PAEA, ARC-PA, and NCCPA in addition to institutional and programmatic priorities. The competencies were revised to establish measurable, observable outcomes that reflect the level of performance expected of students at the time of graduation. They are reviewed annually as part of the Program's ongoing assessment and continuous improvement processes to ensure continued alignment with professional practice, curricular priorities, and the evolving needs of the healthcare environment.

Date of Last Review: 9-8-2026

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Program Graduate Competencies (*organized into domains)*:

Patient Assessment & Clinical Reasoning:

1. Obtain an appropriate history from a patient of any age or gender in a variety of settings.
2. Integrate relevant information from medical records, collateral sources, or other available data to inform patient assessment and management.
3. Perform an appropriate physical examination on a patient of any age and gender in a variety of settings.
4. Formulate an appropriate differential diagnosis based on the patient's history, physical examination, and available clinical data.
5. Order and justify appropriate diagnostic studies based upon the patient's history and physical exam findings.
6. Analyze pertinent medical and laboratory data for the formation of diagnostic and/or management plans.

Patient Management & Clinical Care:

7. Perform technical procedures associated with the management of medical or surgical conditions.
8. Develop, implement, and modify evidence-based, patient-centered management plans, including appropriate pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic therapies, follow-up, and referrals.
9. Educate and counsel patients using clear, patient-centered communication that supports understanding, shared decision-making, and adherence to the plan of care.
10. Incorporate health promotion and disease prevention strategies into patient-centered care.
11. Integrate social, emotional, cultural, economic, and environmental factors into patient-centered assessment and management.

12. Recognize and prioritize potentially life-threatening conditions and initiate appropriate evaluation and management.

Clinical Communication & Documentation:

13. Provide clear, concise, situation-appropriate medical records.
14. Perform succinct, complete, and well-organized case presentations to supervising physicians, consultants, peers, and coworkers.

Professionalism & Professional Development:

15. Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior, accountability, self-awareness, responsiveness to feedback, and recognition of personal limitations in the provision of patient care.
16. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and ongoing professional development through continuing medical education, quality improvement, leadership, professional advocacy, and engagement with the profession.

Evidence-Based Practice & Scholarship:

17. Critically appraise and apply current medical literature and evidence-based medicine principles to clinical practice and scholarly inquiry.

Assessment of Competency Achievement: The Program's curriculum is intentionally designed to support the progressive development and assessment of the Program Competencies throughout the didactic and clinical phases. Student performance is evaluated through course-level assessments that provide opportunities to develop, apply, and demonstrate these competencies with increasing levels of independence and complexity. Formal achievement of the Program Competencies is assessed near the completion of the Program through a comprehensive summative evaluation consisting of multiple assessment components. This process ensures that each graduate has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors expected by the Program for entry-level PA practice.