

PRECEPTOR INFORMATION SHEET FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

Physician Assistant Program

The University of Toronto's BScPA (Bachelor of Science Physician Assistant) is a 24-month, second-entry professional degree program housed in the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Family and Community Medicine. The comprehensive PA education program is delivered in collaboration with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) and The Michener Institute for Education at UHN. The three institutions form the Consortium of PA Education.

Physician Assistants (PAs) are academically prepared and highly skilled healthcare professionals who provide a broad range of medical services. PAs are physician extenders and not independent practitioners; they work with a degree of autonomy, negotiated and agreed upon by the supervising physician and the PA. (This is a distinction between PAs and NPs). PAs can work in any clinical setting to extend physician services and they also complement existing services and aid in improving patient access to healthcare.

The rotation objectives are very similar to those of 3rd year medical clerks, and are derived from the Canadian Association of Physician Assistant Scope of Practice and National Competency Profile. This National Competency Profile is a standard for entry-level PAs in Canada and is based on the CanMEDs format - the competencies from which Canadian medical education is based. PA learners complete 12 months of academic courses, including Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Diagnostic and Clinical Skills before they enter the clinical phase. All of the PA learners in the U of T program have at least one year experience as a healthcare professional with direct patient care prior to starting the PA program.

Part of their comprehensive list of responsibilities and activities may include conducting patient interviews, histories and physical examinations, diagnosing and treating illnesses, counselling on preventive healthcare and assisting in surgery. Ordering tests and prescribing, which are controlled acts, can be performed by the PA if they are delegated by the supervising physician. PAs in Ontario, therefore, are able to implement a physician's prescription or orders for procedures and diagnostic tests if specified by the supervising MD either through a medical directive or a direct order.

Rotation Schedule

Clinical placements are expected to be scheduled for at least 4 days (8 -9 half days) a week (not including on-call). All PA learners have **Wednesday mornings as a protected academic half day** for course work, program meetings and exams. They may also negotiate an additional half-day of protected time each week for independent study. This additional half-day can be arranged for a mutually agreeable time between the student and preceptor.

Expectations of Preceptor

The clinical preceptor is a licensed physician or healthcare practitioner who provides daily supervision of the PA learner on clinical placement. The role of the clinical preceptor is that of clinical supervisor as well as faculty preceptor/teacher.

In addition to providing ongoing feedback during the placement, preceptors are expected to complete 3 on-line assessments of the PA learner during the rotation:

- I. During the second week: a mid-point Observation of Clinical Skills Assessment
- II. In the final week: a Final Observation of Clinical Skills Assessment; and
- III. an Assessment of Student Clinical Performance (the score on this assessment is used to generate a grade for the learner)

All assessments are automatically generated from our E*Value management system. Email notifications will be sent to preceptors starting at 1 week prior to the due date of an assessment, with weekly reminders to follow. The email notification contains a direct link to the rubric and assessment form. Additional guidance and best practices regarding student assessment can be reviewed in the [Clinical Handbook](#).

Students write an [End Rotation Examination](#) on the last Wednesday of their rotation. This will need to be proctored at the clinical site or at the academic centre.

Stipend Payments

Preceptors will receive a stipend of \$1000 for the 4 week placement. This stipend is contingent, upon completion of all required assessments by the preceptor.

For new preceptors, we require [banking information](#) to be submitted to NOSM Finance. The forms can be scanned and emailed to accountspayable@nosm.ca

Clinical Handbook

[Clinical Handbook](#)

Further information

Further information, including a video on PA Preceptor Development, can be found on the [Information for Preceptors](#) section of the program website.