

Physician Assistant Program Graduate Competencies

The Plaza College PA Program graduate competencies represent the student performance requirements for graduation from the Plaza College Physician Assistant (PA) Program. These competencies include medical knowledge and clinical reasoning, interpersonal skills, communication skills, clinical and technical skills, and professional behaviors.

These program-defined competencies were informed by the “Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession” as developed jointly by the National Commission on Accreditation of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the Accreditation Review Commission for Education of the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), as well as the PAEA “Core Competencies for New Physician Graduates. These documents provide guidance regarding the expected knowledge, skills and abilities expected of a “practice-ready” PA program graduate.

1. Medical Knowledge for Practice

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to apply comprehensive knowledge of biomedical and clinical sciences to acute, chronic, urgent, and emergent patient-centered care of all patients across the lifespan.

Competency:

- 1.1: Demonstrate critical thinking in making patient care decisions.
- 1.2: Discern among acute, chronic, urgent, and emergent disease states and conditions.
- 1.3: Apply principles of basic and clinical sciences to the care of patients.
- 1.4: Select, interpret, and apply diagnostic studies to inform clinical decision-making related to patient care.

2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program, students will be able to demonstrate effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, patient-identified family or proxies, and other health professionals and members of the patient care team.

Competency:

- 2.1: Utilize effective communication skills to provide information to and elicit information from patients and other members of the health care team.
- 2.2: Accurately and adequately document medical information in a uniform, concise, clear and legally competent manner.

3. Clinical and Technical Skills

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to demonstrate the clinical reasoning and technical skills required to provide patient – and setting specific, age-appropriate assessment, evaluation and care of all patients.

Competency:

- 3.1: Elicit a detailed and accurate history and perform an appropriate physical examination on a patient.
- 3.2: Develop treatment and management plans for common medical problems, including written medical orders.
- 3.3: Perform routine medical procedures including but not limited to injections, immunizations, suturing, wound care, intravenous catheterization, phlebotomy, arterial blood gas sampling, urinary catheter insertion, splint and casting applications.

4. Professionalism Behaviors

4.1 Interprofessional Collaboration

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to demonstrate the ability to engage with a variety of other healthcare professionals in a manner that optimizes safe, effective, patient- and population-centered care.

Competency:

- 4.1.1: Recognize when referrals are needed and make them to the appropriate health care provider.
- 4.1.2: Communicate effectively with other professionals, striving to improve patient outcomes.

4.2 Professionalism and Ethics

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to demonstrate integrity and a commitment to practicing medicine in ethically and legally appropriate ways, while emphasizing the professional maturity and accountability for delivering safe and high-quality patient-centered and population-centered care.

Competency:

4.2.1: Demonstrates self-reflection and commitment to ongoing learning and development, including being receptive to formative feedback.

4.2.2: Demonstrate professionalism and respect for the PA Profession and patients by wearing appropriate professional clothing, a clearly visible identifier or name tag, washing hands or utilizing hand sanitizer as appropriate, preserving patient modesty, asking permission of patients before initializing an examination, always maintaining a professional and polite tone and manner with patients, colleagues and co-workers, and demonstrating compassion for patients.

4.3 Practice-Based Learning

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to demonstrate the ability to learn and implement quality improvement practices by engaging in critical analysis of one's own practice experience, the medical literature, and other information resources for the purposes of self-evaluation, lifelong learning, and practice improvement.

Competency:

4.3.1: Demonstrate self-awareness to identify strengths, address weaknesses, and recognize limits in knowledge and expertise.

5. Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving Ability

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to demonstrate the clinical reasoning and problem-solving ability required to provide patient – and setting specific, age-appropriate assessment, development of a differential diagnosis, and design an appropriate plan of care for all patients.

Competency:

- 5.1: Demonstrate the ability to apply clinical reasoning and problem-solving ability to develop appropriate and complete diagnostic evaluation plans.
- 5.2: Demonstrate the ability to gather and synthesize patient information to formulate a differential diagnosis.

6. Society and Population Health

Graduates of the Plaza College PA Program will be able to recognize and understand the influences of the person, family, population, culture, environment, and policy on the health of patients, health outcomes, and healthcare, and integrate knowledge of these determinants of health into patient care decisions.

Competency:

- 6.1: Describe the impact of social and cultural influences on health, disease, healthcare-related behaviors, and compliance.
- 6.2 Describe the influence of genetic, socioeconomic, environmental, and other determinants on the health of the individual and community.