Stanford MEDICINE | MS in PA Studies

Program Policies of Interest to Prospective Students

This document contains information on selected Stanford MSPA Program policies that may be of interest to prospective students. Please note that the policies described herein are presented at an overview level that is pertinent to prospective students; full policies and procedures are available in the MSPA Student Handbook, which is distributed to all students at the beginning of each academic year.

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1. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1.1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW: ACCREDITATION, GOALS, PANCE PERFORMANCE

Information on the MSPA Program's ARC-PA accreditation status, evidence of its effectiveness in meeting its goals, and the current annual "NCCPA PANCE Exam Performance Summary Report Last 5 Years" can be found in the Program Overview section of the MSPA website:
Accreditation status: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/program-overview/program-accreditation.html
Mission and Goals: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/program-overview/mission-and-goals.html
PANCE Performance: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/program-overview/pance-pass-rate.html

1.2 PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

Information on Competencies can be found on the Program Competencies page of the Program's website: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/program-overview/program-competencies.html

1.3 PROGRAM TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Information on Technical Standards can be found below and in the MSPA Student Handbook, which is distributed to students at the beginning of each academic year.

Observation
Candidates must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments of science, including but not limited to such things as dissection of cadavers; examination of specimens in anatomy, pathology, and neuroanatomy laboratories; and microscopic study of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. Candidates must be able to accurately observe patients and assess findings. They must be able to obtain a medical history and perform a complete physical examination in order to integrate findings based on these observations and to develop an appropriate diagnostic and treatment plan.

Communication
Candidates must be able to demonstrate communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, colleagues, and all members of the health care team. They must be able to obtain a medical history, interpret all aspects of communication, and establish therapeutic relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to record information accurately, maintaining comprehensive and timely medical records, and communicate effectively in English with other health care professionals in a variety of patient settings.

Examination, Diagnostic, and Procedural Skills
Candidates must possess the capacity to perform all medical, diagnostic, and surgical procedures considered essential for the area of practice, including physical examinations and diagnostic maneuvers. They must be able to respond to emergent or urgent situations in a timely manner and provide general and emergency care. They must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities.

Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities
Candidates must have sufficient cognitive (mental) abilities and effective learning techniques to assimilate the detailed and complex information presented in the curriculum. They must be able to learn

through a variety of modalities, including, but not limited to, classroom instruction; small group, team and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports; use of computer technology; medical simulation; clinical encounters; coaching; and personal reflection.

Candidates must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and communicate their knowledge and reasoning. They must recognize and draw conclusions about three-dimensional spatial relationships and logical sequential relationships among events. They must be able to formulate and test hypotheses consistent with the scientific method that enable effective and timely problem solving in the diagnosis and treatment of patients in a variety of clinical modalities. They must be able to make timely, prudent, informed, and defensible decisions in the best interests of patients.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Candidates must demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, which includes, but is not limited to, accepting responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment, and promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. Candidates must be able to work effectively, respectfully and professionally as part of the healthcare team, and to interact with patients, their families, and health care personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. They must possess the physical and emotional skills to function in a competent and professional manner in the healthcare setting, meet the work hour needs associated with patient care, function effectively under stress, and display flexibility and adaptability to changing environments. They must be capable of regular, reliable, and punctual attendance for classes and their clinical responsibilities.

Candidates must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments, accept formative feedback from others, and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes. It is expected that minimum accommodation will be requested with regard to this set of standards.

Ethical and Legal Standards

Candidates are expected to understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within the law and ethical standards of the medical profession. They must meet the legal standards to be licensed to practice as a PA in the State of California and adhere to the Stanford University Honor Code. They must maintain and demonstrate ethical and moral behavior commensurate with the role of a PA in all interactions. As such, candidates for admission must acknowledge and provide written explanation of any felony offense or disciplinary action taken against them prior to matriculation in the School of Medicine. In addition, should the student be convicted of any felony offense while in PA school, they agree to immediately notify the Associate Dean for PA Education. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action by the School of Medicine that may include dismissal.

Disability-Related Accommodations

The MSPA Program is in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations (including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended), and California law (Civil Code 51 and 54).

Disability-related accommodations requests are reviewed individually, on a case-by-case basis, with a complete and careful consideration of all the skills, attitudes, and attributes of each candidate to determine whether there are any reasonable accommodations or available options that would permit

the candidate to satisfy the standards. For more information on disability-related accommodations, please refer to Handbook Section 3.5, Student Resources: Accommodations and Support.

1.4 GRADUATION AND ATTRITION RATES

Information on the graduation and attrition rates can be found on the Student Attrition page of the Program's website: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/program-overview/Student_Attrition.html

1.5 COST OF ATTENDANCE

Estimates for the Cost of Attendance can be found on the Tuition page of the Program's website: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/tuition.html. This information is updated every year on August 1 to reflect the upcoming academic year's figures.

The cost estimate given is per quarter. The MSPA Program is 9 quarters in length. If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress and is unable to complete the program in 9 quarters, additional tuition and other costs will apply for any additional quarters needed to complete the program. This additional tuition may be at a lower rate than standard.

Costs can vary significantly based on students' choices regarding variable costs, including housing, transportation, and health insurance; several models are represented in the cost estimate. To arrive at a total estimated cost of attendance for the entire program, prospective students should multiply the per-quarter cost by 9 quarters and add the applicable adjustments from the Adjustments section. Prospective students should be advised that tuition and often fees typically experience small, incremental increases with each academic year.

2. SELECTED GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES

2.1 HEALTH COMPLIANCE POLICIES

2.1.1 ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS: MINIMUM IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH SCREENING OF STUDENTS

All matriculated Stanford students must complete the Entrance Medical Requirements (https://vaden.stanford.edu/medical-student-physician-assistant-student-entrance-requirements and https://vaden.stanford.edu/health-requirements) at their own expense. These requirements are monitored by Vaden Student Health Center (https://vaden.stanford.edu). Immunizations are based on current CDC health professionals' recommendations and applicable county and state mandates.

Required Vaccines for Matriculation

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
    - 2 doses of live vaccines MMR/MMRV or
    - Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Varicella
    - 2 doses of Varicella vaccine or
    - Laboratory evidence of immunity
- Hepatitis B
    - 3 doses of vaccine
- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap)
    - Booster must be within past 10 years, regardless of last Td vaccine

Students are expected to comply with evolving University vaccination requirements.

Recommended Vaccines for Matriculation

In addition to the required immunizations above, Stanford also recommends that students consider the following immunizations if applicable:

- COVID-19 vaccine: the COVID-19 vaccine is recommended but not required by the University; it is required by some clerkship sites
- Hepatitis A vaccine
- Human Papillomavirus vaccine
- Meningococcal vaccine
- Pneumococcal vaccine (for those with a history of asthma or other lung diseases, an immune system condition, or smoking)
- A completed polio vaccine series

Required Testing for Matriculation

- Tuberculosis (TB): Quantiferon blood test or chest X-ray as determined by the chart at https://vaden.stanford.edu/health-requirements/do-you-need-be-tested-tb
- Hepatitis B: Quantitative surface antibody titer. The titer must be quantitative, i.e., it must include a numerical value; a positive/negative result is insufficient. A quantitative range, e.g., <10 or >10, is acceptable. Note that the titer is required in addition to vaccination.

2.1.2 REQUIRED ANNUAL TESTS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

The following are required of each MSPA student annually after matriculation:

- Tuberculosis (TB): Quantiferon blood test or chest X-ray as determined by the chart at https://vaden.stanford.edu/health-requirements/do-you-need-be-tested-tb
- Influenza vaccine: All students must be immunized against influenza. A declination process is available. Influenza vaccination is also required for clerkship rotations.

2.1.3 CLERKSHIP PHASE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

The requirements set forth in 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 represent the foundation of the health requirements for the clerkship phase of the program. Additional tests or immunizations, such as 10-panel drug screens, may be required by specific clerkships; the clerkship team has documentation of these requirements and will inform students well in advance of any additional requirements that may apply.

Students who have been approved for an international elective clerkship must make an appointment with Vaden's Travel Clinic at Stanford, which provides consultation and immunizations to meet the needs of Stanford students traveling overseas. Complete evaluations are customized to each patient's health status and travel plans and align with current CDC health professionals' recommendations and applicable country mandates. Additional information regarding health requirements for international elective rotations may be found in the syllabus for the corresponding course.

2.2 POLICY FOR STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The policy for student employment can be found below and in the MSPA Student Handbook.

The MSPA program discourages students from working during their PA education given the intensity of the courseload, and reminds students to prioritize their education when considering engaging in other activities. The MSPA program cannot require students to work for the Program.

MSPA students have a proud history of serving as TAs for School of Medicine courses. While TAing is encouraged, students must receive the approval of their Academic Advisor in order to proceed. MSPA TAs must not at any time have access to academic records or confidential information for their PA classmates.

Students with specific knowledge, experience, or skills may assist faculty in didactic and workshop sessions to share their knowledge and skills. However, students are not permitted to be the primary instructor or instructor of record for any component of the curriculum. While on clerkships, students are not permitted to function in any medical/clinical role outside that of a PA student. As an example, a student is not allowed to function as a medical assistant or scribe.

3. SELECTED ADMISSIONS POLICIES

3.1 PREFERENCE

Preference is given to applicants with the characteristics listed on the Program's Admissions homepage: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/admissions.html

3.2 REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED PRIOR EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Information on preparation, including information on academic courses and degrees, can be found on the following pages of the MSPA website:

- Overview: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/admissions/entrance-requirements.html
- Preparatory Coursework: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/admissions/preparatory-coursework.html
- Preparatory Experience: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/admissions/preparatory-experience.html

3.3 ADVANCED PLACEMENT

The MSPA Program does not grant advanced placement, as explained on the Preparatory Coursework page: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/admissions/preparatory-coursework.html

4. SELECTED CURRICULUM POLICIES

4.1 CURRICULUM LIST AND ACADEMIC CREDIT

Information on the Program's curriculum and the academic credit offered can be found on the Curriculum page of the MSPA website: https://med.stanford.edu/pa/curriculum.html. Curriculum shown in the grid is for the current academic year, and all coursework listed is required. This page is refreshed on September 1st of each year as needed to reflect the new academic year's curriculum.

4.2 METHODS OF CURRICULUM DELIVERY

Didactic courses are primarily in person, with occasional online or hybrid sessions. Course formats vary and primarily include lectures, seminars, and "flipped classroom" style sessions, where students do readings before the session and the session time is used for activities related to the readings.

Clerkship courses are conducted in person. Behavioral Health rotations may have a limited number of telemedicine experiences in which preceptors are present in the room.

4.3 ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

All courses listed on the curriculum grid in section 4.1 are required.

Students are strongly encouraged to take at least 6 units' worth of elective coursework in support of their Leadership Track. Among this elective coursework, students should enroll in either PAS 255, Introduction to Qualitative Research I, and PAS 256, Introduction to Qualitative Research II, or PAS 257, Introduction to Quantitative Research I, and PAS 258, Introduction to Quantitative Research II, depending on the nature of their Thesis project, as determined in collaboration with their Thesis Advisor.

The full listing of elective courses can be found at https://navigator.stanford.edu.

5. SELECTED CLERKSHIP PHASE POLICIES

5.1 PROCUREMENT OF CLINICAL SITES AND/OR PRECEPTORS

MSPA students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Clinical sites and preceptors will be provided and/or solicited by the MSPA Program and the School of Medicine.

5.2 TRAVEL TO REQUIRED ROTATION SITES

Students are expected to provide their own transportation to clinical sites, and an estimate of costs associated with clinical transportation is included in the Cost of Attendance estimate in Section 1.5 above.

All core (i.e., required, non-elective) clerkship rotations occur at MSPA core sites, without exception. MSPA core sites are located in the 9-county Bay Area and in the area around Fresno in California's Central Valley.

All core rotations are based at sites within a ~50-mile radius of the Stanford campus or Program-provided housing. In the infrequent event that travel beyond this radius is required to reach a secondary site as part of the scheduled rotation, the radius would not exceed 80 miles, and the frequency would not exceed two nonconsecutive days over the course of the rotation.

Regarding assistance with rotation-related expenses:

- Lodging and travel expense support for Central Valley rotations is provided and is grant-dependent.
- Certain rotations in the East Bay are eligible for no-cost housing or travel expense support, assuming continued availability.

The location of elective rotations varies, but they primarily take place within the parameters of the core rotations as described above. Rotations further afield may be available upon request, subject to availability; since these are atypical, the associated travel costs are not reflected in the Cost of Attendance estimate in Section 1.5 above. Travel expense support is not provided for elective rotations. Housing availability for elective rotations may vary.

6. SELECTED ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND PROGRESS POLICIES

6.1 ACADEMIC STANDARDS

In order to maintain enrollment and make Satisfactory Academic Progress in the curriculum, students must satisfy academic and technical standards on an ongoing basis. They must successfully complete the coursework listed in the curriculum grid in Section 4.1 above (and here) at the indicated pace, i.e., completing each course during the quarter under which it is listed.

Remediation, when needed, should take place according to this schedule. If a course or requirement is unable to be remediated in alignment with the schedule, the situation will be evaluated and the remediation will take place at the earliest possible opportunity. In certain cases, this may mean that the student may need to decelerate to the following class.

In addition to successfully completing the didactic coursework, students must pass the End of Didactic (EoD) exam at the end of the 5th quarter in order to progress to the clerkship phase of the program.

6.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM

6.2.1 SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF COURSEWORK

Students must successfully complete all pre-clerkship and clerkship courses with a passing grade (+). These courses are listed in the curriculum grid in Section 4.1 above (and here).

Students must make satisfactory progress in meeting program milestones and examination requirements, including the pre-clerkship exams, the End of Didactic exam, PACKRAT exams, clerkship End of Rotation exams, and summative activities (End of Curriculum exam, APSA/PRISM, and CPX-P).

6.2.2 TIMELINE FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF COURSEWORK

The MSPA Program is 9 quarters in length. If a student plans to take more than 9 consecutive quarters to complete their degree, exclusive of time spent during an approved Leave of Absence, the student must petition for and receive approval by the Program Director. The student's petition must provide reasons for the requested extension and is subject to review and approval by the Student Progress Committee. Stanford University requires all master's degrees to be completed within three years of matriculation. Any extension beyond three years is subject to approval.

6.2.3 LEADERSHIP TRACK AND THESIS PROJECT

Students must make satisfactory progress in meeting thesis work requirements as outlined in the MSPA Student Handbook. The thesis presentation is considered a summative activity along with the summative exams listed above in Section 6.2.1.

6.2.4 ACADEMIC DEFICIENCIES

All academic deficiencies must be corrected within one year (or otherwise within a time limit specifically set by the Student Progress Committee in the individual case). Pre-clerkship deficiencies must be

corrected before promotion to clerkship. Clerkship deficiencies must be corrected before a student is cleared for graduation.

Note: some deficiencies may be considered to be unable to be remediated and may result in immediate dismissal. Such circumstances may include (but are not limited to) when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Failure of any three required courses during the program (pre-clerkship, clerkship, or a combination of both, whether remediated or not)
- Failure to successfully complete an SPC academic probation plan
- Failure to attend required meetings, comply with Student Progress Committee directives for Academic Support Plans, remediation, or probation, or meet Student Progress Committee deadlines may preclude remediation and result in immediate dismissal from the Stanford MSPA program.

6.2.5 PROFESSIONALISM

Students are required, on an ongoing basis, to satisfy professionalism standards as outlined in the MSPA Student Handbook. A serious breach of professionalism or a failure to complete an SPC professionalism probation plan may result in immediate dismissal from the MSPA program.

6.2.6 TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Students are required, on an ongoing basis, to satisfy the Technical Standards as outlined in Section 1.3 above and in the MSPA Student Handbook. Continued fulfillment of such standards is a requirement for ongoing enrollment in the Stanford School of Medicine.

6.3 POLICIES FOR REMEDIATION AND DECELERATION

6.3.1 POLICIES FOR REMEDIATION

A student who does not successfully pass an exam or course, or a component thereof (e.g., does not show sufficient competency in a learning outcome), must undergo remediation as determined by the course director, Director of Pre-Clerkship Education, and/or Director of Clerkship Education in collaboration with the Student Progress Committee. Remediation will be individualized and may include, but is not limited to, activities/assignments, retaking assessments, and/or repeating a course. In certain cases, deceleration may be required. If multiple courses require remediation, additional measures may be taken, up to and including probation and dismissal.

When a student is assigned remediation by the Student Progress Committee, following a meeting with the Committee they will be provided with a written plan that includes information on the following for the duration of the remediation period: expectations; resources; meeting details for key support faculty and/or staff, including their Academic Advisor; criteria for successfully completing the remediation; information on when the remediation will be evaluated for success; and next steps.

Please refer to Section 6.2.4 ACADEMIC DEFICIENCIES above for additional information pertinent to remediation.

6.3.1 POLICIES FOR DECELERATION

Due to the structure of the MSPA didactic curriculum, failure to meet the passing criteria for a course in a timely fashion may result in deceleration. Students who do not fulfill the standards for promotion to the clerkship phase, or who do not successfully complete remediation, may be recommended for probation, deceleration, or dismissal from the MSPA Program.

Deceleration may also occur for personal reasons, most often in conjunction with a leave of absence. Given the advancing curriculum of the MSPA program, a leave of absence from the program may result in the need for the student to decelerate to another class. The student might need to audit the courses they have successfully completed and begin their coursework where they left off the prior year. A request for modification of the curriculum due to a deceleration or leave of absence is at the discretion of the Program Director and is not automatically granted.

6.4 POLICIES FOR WITHDRAWAL AND DISMISSAL

6.4.1 POLICIES FOR WITHDRAWAL

Students may request to withdraw from the program for medical or personal reasons. Students must make this request in writing to the Program Director and follow all University procedures. If a student withdraws from the program and subsequently wishes to reenroll, they may be required to reapply to the program for consideration of future matriculation.

Provided the student withdraws before the Term Withdrawal deadline, they will be eligible for a prorated tuition refund for the term in which they withdraw.

6.4.2 POLICIES FOR DISMISSAL

A student may be dismissed for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Failure to disclose disciplinary action or felony offenses that took place prior to or during their time in the Program.
- Failure to fulfill the standards for promotion to the clerkship phase, despite remediation.
- Failure of multiple courses.
- Not successfully correcting a failing grade in a course.
- Not successfully correcting a failing grade in a milestone or summative exam.
- Not successfully satisfying the requirements for removal from probation.
- Serious professionalism violations.
- Failing to complete their thesis project and presentation.
- Inability to fulfill the Technical Standards.

A student being considered for dismissal will be informed of their status and will appear before the Student Progress Committee for a dismissal hearing. After the hearing, the Committee will deliberate and the Chair(s) will present the Committee's recommendation in writing to the student and to the Program Director. If the recommendation is for dismissal, the student may submit a written appeal to the Program Director requesting that the recommendation be reconsidered. Following the Program Director's final decision, if desired, the student may file a formal grievance according to Stanford University's Student Academic Grievance Procedure: https://bulletin.stanford.edu/academic-polices/grievances/academic-grievance-procedure.

6.5 POLICIES FOR STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

6.5.1 POLICIES FOR STUDENT GRIEVANCES

If desired, a student may file a formal grievance according to Stanford University's Student Grievance Policy: https://bulletin.stanford.edu/academic-polices/grievances/student-grievances.

6.5.2 POLICIES FOR STUDENT APPEALS

A student who wishes to appeal a dismissal recommendation from the Student Progress Committee may submit a written appeal to the Program Director as described above in Section 6.4.2.

A student who wishes to appeal a final dismissal decision by the Program Director may file a formal grievance according to Stanford University's Student Grievance Policy as described above in Section 6.5.1.