

COMPETENCIES FOR THE PA PROGRAM

(A3.12g) The PA Program is committed to developing competent and compassionate healthcare providers who are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of patients. The following competencies have been designed in support of the Program’s mission and vision, and refined through careful integration of national standards from PAEA and AAPA, and align with the ARC-PA definition of program competencies. These competencies serve as a foundation for students’ education, guiding their development into skilled, knowledgeable, ethical, and caring healthcare providers. Through rigorous training and assessment, the PA Program ensures its graduates are prepared to excel in their careers through the application of these competencies, provide high-quality and patient-centered care to all peoples across the lifespan, and make significant contributions to the health and wellbeing of their communities.

The Idaho State University PA Program’s competencies are organized into five core domains, reflecting the critical areas of expertise required for effective PA practice, and aligning with the PA Program’s learning outcomes.

A. Medical Knowledge (MK)

Encompasses the comprehensive understanding of biomedical and clinical sciences necessary to provide acute, chronic, urgent, and emergent patient-centered care, including women’s health, prenatal care, and behavioral health for care across the lifespan (infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly).

1. **Biology and Medical Science (MK1 | LO5)**
Integrate foundational principles of human biology and clinical science, including anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, and genetics to evaluate and manage patient health across the lifespan in preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent encounters of medical, surgical, and behavioral conditions.
2. **Clinical Science (MK2 | LO1, LO2, LO5)**
Recognize the etiology, risk factors, and epidemiology, and distinguish signs and symptoms of common medical, surgical, and behavioral conditions in the care of healthy and ill patients.
3. **Diagnostic Proficiency (MK3 | LO3)**
Select and interpret laboratory, imaging, diagnostic, and preventative tests and procedures to support informed clinical decision-making.
4. **Differential Diagnosis (MK4 | LO4, LO5)**
Formulate differential diagnoses by integrating clinical science, historical data, physical examination, and diagnostic information.
5. **Therapeutic Management (MK5 | LO5, LO6)**
Utilize pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapeutic treatment strategies to provide education and patient-centered care that incorporates lifestyle modification, treatment adherence, and patient coping mechanisms.

B. Interpersonal Skills (IS)

Focuses on effective communication and relationship building with patients, families,

caregivers, and healthcare team members, incorporating cultural humility and compassion.

1. **Effective Communication (IS1 | LO10, LO11)**
Use effective interpersonal and communication skills with patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare team members that respect culture, emotional state, preferred language, and health literacy, and result in shared decision-making that is compassionate and provides equitable access to care.
2. **Interprofessional Collaboration (IS2 | LO12, LO13)**
Create professional and respectful relationships with all members of the healthcare team that establish collaborative efforts toward patient-centered care.

C. Clinical and Technical Skills (CT)

Involves the practical application of clinical procedures and diagnostic tools required to provide age-appropriate assessment, evaluation, and management of patients.

1. **Holistic Evaluation (CT1 | LO1, LO2)**
Conduct comprehensive and focused physical and behavioral health histories and examinations in various medical settings for patients of all ages across the lifespan.
2. **Medical Procedures (CT2 | LO8, LO9)**
Perform the diagnostic and therapeutic procedures for the management of common medical and minor surgical conditions essential for entry into PA practice safely and competently.
3. **Clinical Documentation (CT3 | LO14, LO15)**
Provide accurate and comprehensive written documentation and oral presentations that correctly reflect the patient's history, physical examination, diagnostic findings, and plan of care.
4. **Practical Application (CT4 | LO1, LO2, LO8, LO9)**
Adapt approach to patient care based on the encounter setting (preventative, acute, chronic, emergent) and patient age (prenatal, infant, child, adolescent, adult, elderly).

D. Professional Behaviors (PB)

Emphasizes ethical practice, professional integrity, and a commitment to lifelong learning and self-improvement, enabling the provision of personalized, high-quality, and equitable care.

1. **Ethical and Professional Conduct (PB1 | LO12, LO15)**
Demonstrate principles of honesty, integrity, accountability, and respect in interactions with patients, families, caregivers, and health professionals, adhering to ethical and professional standards of the PA profession.
2. **Professional Development (PB2 | LO15, LO16)**
Engage in continuous self-assessment and improvement with a commitment to lifelong learning to provide high-quality, equitable care.

3. Health System (PB3 | LO7, LO15)
Understand the influence of structural factors, and societal and psychosocial influences on community health outcomes.
 4. Professional Awareness (PB4 | LO15)
Demonstrate an understanding of the PA profession; its development, trends, and ethics; and its relevant laws and regulations.
- E. Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving Abilities (CS)
- Develops the ability to analyze and synthesize relevant information and make informed clinical decisions to address complex health issues across the lifespan (infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly).
1. Diagnosis and Management (CS1 | LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO6, LO9, LO13)
Analyze information from the patient history, physical exam, and diagnostic workup to synthesize differential diagnoses, reach a conclusive diagnosis, and develop management plans for acute, chronic, and emergent medical conditions across the lifespan.
 2. Integrated Medical Decision-Making (CS2 | LO7, LO16)
Utilize and integrate scientific evidence, research, and clinical guidelines to accurately diagnose health conditions, make informed clinical decisions, and improve patient care.
 3. Health Management (CS3 | LO6, LO7, LO10, LO11)
Formulate personalized health management strategies that integrate pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies and patient education in the prevention and treatment of patients with acute, chronic, and emergent conditions across the lifespan.

Resources:

<https://www.aapa.org/career-central/employer-resources/employing-a-pa/competencies-physician-assistant-profession/>

<https://paeaonline.org/our-work/current-issues/core-competencies>

<https://www.arc-pa.org/postgraduate-accreditation/resources/>

<https://www.arc-pa.org/entry-level-accreditation/accreditation-process/standards-of-accreditation/>

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE PA PROGRAM

The following learning outcomes are the medical, interpersonal, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities a student attains during the PA Program graduate curriculum. Students will apply learning outcomes to patients of all ages across the lifespan (infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly) for all setting encounters (preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent) and any condition including women's health (prenatal and gynecologic), behavioral and mental health, and surgical conditions requiring pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative care. Relevant learning outcomes are included in PAS course syllabi.

1. **History (LO1 | MK2, CT1, CT4, CS1)**
Elicit a complete, interval, or acute medical history for a patient of any age across the lifespan, in any setting including preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent encounters with any condition including surgical, women's health (prenatal and gynecologic), and behavioral and mental health.
2. **Physical Examination (LO2 | MK2, CT1, CT4, CS1)**
Perform a complete and focused physical examination with the use of clinical skills for a patient of any age across the lifespan, for diverse encounters including preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent, and various conditions including surgical, women's health (prenatal and gynecologic), and behavioral and mental health.
3. **Diagnostic Studies (LO3 | MK3, CS1)**
Identify, order, perform, and interpret cost-effective diagnostic procedures based on history and physical examination findings as appropriately indicated.
4. **Differential Diagnosis (LO4 | MK4, CS1)**
Develop a differential diagnosis for medical and behavioral problems common to primary care using clinical reasoning, and subjective and objective data relevant to any age across the lifespan, patient encounter (preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent), and condition including surgical, women's health (prenatal and gynecologic), and behavioral and mental health.
5. **Clinical Knowledge (LO5 | MK1, MK2, MK4, MK5)**
Explain the etiology, diagnosis, and management options of health problems within the scope of PA practice utilizing the principles of human biology.
6. **Therapeutics (LO6 | MK5, CS1, CS3)**
Apply knowledge to order, educate, and perform pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapeutic management strategies appropriate to the age of the patient, setting (preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent), and conditions including surgical, women's health (prenatal and gynecologic), behavioral and mental health, with consideration of patient preference and safety.

7. Health Promotion/Disease Prevention (LO7 | PB3, CS2, CS3)
Implement health maintenance, disease prevention screening, and counseling for patients across the lifespan.
8. Procedures (LO8 | CT2, CT4)
Identify, discuss, order, and perform therapeutic procedures, technical skills, and treatment modalities for the management of common primary care medical and minor surgical conditions including applying pre-operative, intra-operative, and post-operative surgical care principles.
9. Emergency Skills (LO9 | CT2, CT4, CS1)
Recognize and manage life-threatening conditions across the lifespan within the scope of entry level PA practice in the presentation of acute, chronic, and emergent encounters.
10. Communication/Patient Education (LO10 | IS1, IS2, CS3)
Communicate professionally in both oral and written forms with a variety of patients, caregivers, families, and health professionals, providing personalized patient education and counseling with compassion, and at the patient's level of comprehension.
11. Cultural Competence (LO11 | IS1, CS3)
Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of cultural and socioeconomic dimensions on health, illness, and medical care.
12. Professionalism (LO12 | IS2, PB1)
Demonstrate teamwork and collegiality by working effectively with members of the healthcare team to provide collaborative care for patients.
13. Consultation and Referral (LO13 | IS2, CS1)
Recognize when consultation is needed, including conditions requiring surgical management; identify the appropriate professional for referral and ensure continuity of care.
14. Documentation (LO14 | CT3)
Provide appropriate written documentation, coding, and billing for the medical record of a patient of any age across the lifespan, encounter (preventative, acute, chronic, and emergent), and condition including surgical, women's health (prenatal and gynecologic), behavioral and mental health.
15. Ethics (LO15 | CT3, PB1, PB3, PB4)
Adhere to legal requirements and demonstrate ethical behavior, professional integrity, and commitment to lifelong learning and self-improvement.
16. Research (LO16 | PB2, CS2)
Apply evidence-based medical research methodologies to clinical practice.