Policy: Professionalism	**Applicability: PAS Program Students, Faculty & Staff**
Policy Owner: MMC PAS Program	**Approved By: Dean, School of Graduate Studies**
Effective Date: August 5, 2025	**Last Reviewed: July 18, 2026**
Next Review: August 5, 2027	**Contact: (615) 321-2933**

PURPOSE: To inform the MMC PA Sciences student learners of the Program's policy on professional behavior and conduct.

POLICY: At the MMC PA Sciences Program, all student learners are expected to always uphold the highest standards of professionalism. The American Academy of Physician Associates has developed Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession which all students are expected to comply. Professionalism is the cornerstone of the Physician Assistant profession and student learners are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and abide by the highest standards of academic honesty, ethics, and professional conduct, including when they are representing themselves as a Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Sciences Student in any activity.

The following are considered essential requirements for PA students. Expectations include, but are not limited to:

Ethical Behavior & Integrity

- Sets appropriate boundaries and makes appropriate value judgments as it relates to interpersonal relationships with peers, faculty, staff, preceptors, and other healthcare professionals.
- Maintains and exhibits respect for the privacy and confidentiality of fellow students.
- Conducts self in an ethical, moral and legally sound manner at all times.
- Respect patient's modesty, religious & cultural preferences, and protect patient privacy.
- Maintain confidentiality of patient information
- Students will be expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty as per the School of Graduate Studies Honor Code

Accountability

- Take responsibility for one's own actions, and recognize and act to correct deficiencies in behaviors, knowledge, and skills.
- Completes all assignments and duties in a timely manner, effectively and to the best of your ability.

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- Be attentive and participate during learning activities, sharing your knowledge and skills with others.
- Complete administrative requirements in a timely manner (e.g., evaluations, remediations)
- Be punctual to all activities

Teamwork & Collaboration

- Allows others to express their opinions
- Communicate in polite tone and manner in all exchanges and encounters
- Remain respectful and open-minded to other perspectives
- Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication to convey concern, pleasantness, compassion and professionalism to others
- Maintain a professional and calm demeanor at all times, including highly stressful situations
- Demonstrates respect for knowledge, skills and expertise of other team members
- Fulfill assigned roles and request assistance and/or education when needed
- Recognize and embrace the role as a member of a team and contribute equally to the work of the team in a cooperative and considerate manner
- Self-regulate your behavior to positively impact the team environment

Communication & Interpersonal Skills

- Displays a positive attitude towards others
- Maintains awareness of own verbal and non-verbal body language in interactions with patients, students and faculty and staff
- Communicate in a polite tone and manner in all exchanges and encounters
- Remains respectful and open-minded to other perspectives
- Uses appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication to convey concern, pleasantness, compass and professionalism to others
- Offers constructive feedback or suggestions in a thoughtful and reasoned manner that fosters respect and trust

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Professional Appearance & Demeanor

- Dress in professional and neat attire and practice good personal hygiene, demonstrating respect for patients and others. Follow dress code expectations.
- Maintains a professional and calm demeanor at all times, including highly stressful situations

Self-Reflection & Continuous Learning

- Recognizes own limitations as a student
- Demonstrates ability to ask for help or express discomfort with performing tasks
- Accepts feedback in a positive manner and makes changes appropriately Patient-Centered Care
- Makes decisions based on factual information and be able to explain the rationale for decisions made.
- Deliver information in a thorough, organized, and concise manner at all times.
- Document accurately in the patient's medical record and healthcare team materials at all times
- Establish appropriate rapport with the patient, family members, or caregivers
- Respond to patient needs in a timely, safe, and effective manner
- Demonstrate openness/responsiveness to the patient's ethnic and cultural background
- Recognize signs of impairment in yourself and others and take appropriate action
- Strive to develop personal habits that promote social, physical, and mental health
- Recognize the importance of self-care and personal wellness and its impact on others as a leader in the community
- Communicate in a manner that is respectful of and sensitive to the patient's and family's age, orientation, culture, and beliefs

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DEFINITIONS

PROCEDURE: Any breach of professionalism, as described above, but not limited to, which may occur during a student learner's didactic or clinical phases within the Program will result in the following:

- Any egregious violation of the professionalism policy must be reported or the MMC PAS Program Department Chair / Program Director and will result in a meeting with the Student Progress and Promotion Committee to determine the need for immediate intervention. If the SPP is not immediately available, the Program Director may remove the student the classroom or clinical rotation pending a meeting with the Student Progress and Promotion Committee.
- A student learner's professional conduct violates MMC Student Code of Conduct, the MMC PAS Program's professionalism policy, state or federal law, or for moral turpitude, unprofessional behavior, criminal activity, or other reasons as defined by the College. will be recommended for dismissal by the Student Progress and Promotion Committee to the Program Director.
- In the event that a student receives three documented professionalism violations, the student will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotion Committee.
- During the clinical year, SCPE preceptors will complete final student evaluation at the conclusion of each rotation which addresses professionalism behaviors. If any professionalism issues are identified the student must meet with the CED and remediation will be at the discretion of the course director.
- If a student has professionalism issues at the conclusion of more than 2 SCPEs the student will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotion Committee.

Professionalism Assessment tool:

- Student's Professionalism will be evaluated at the end of each semester. Student who have not demonstrated any professionalism concerns will meet expectations.

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- Student's who have failed to meet the professionalism standards of the Institution and Program will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotion Committee for remediation and placed on academic probation for the next semester.
- Students who fail to successfully complete the remediation plan or continue to engage in unprofessional behaviors will be referred to the Student Progress and Promotion Committee for dismissal for the MMC PAS Program.

EXHIBITS: RELATED POLICIES: