UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

PRIMARY PRECEPTOR OVERVIEW

Introduction:
This overview provides the information necessary to understand the preceptor's responsibilities and obligations to teach students in the clinical setting. The PA Program is competency-based, and therefore in order to graduate, each student must be able to demonstrate competencies in patient assessment and management. The PA student gains competencies through different teaching modalities on campus (such as classroom activities, case studies, simulations, and practice labs) and through the one-to-one clinical teaching during the clinical rotations. As a preceptor, you play a primary role by providing the appropriate learning environment within the clinical setting. While the curricular model of the UND PA program is somewhat unique, your teaching and supervision of a PA student is similar to teaching a medical student.

The 24-month Physician Assistant Program consists of the following:
- Eight months (2 ½ semesters) of basic science coursework taught with online instruction.
- 15 weeks of primary care didactic instruction on the UND campus conducted on a rotating basis with each didactic session followed by a clinical rotation.
- 46 weeks of clinical rotations; 32 weeks with primary care, including two weeks with a hospitalist, two weeks in an urgent care setting (this may also be with the primary preceptor depending on clinical site), and 14 weeks in specialty clerkship rotations including a recommended return to primary care for two weeks prior to graduation.
- Final two weeks on campus prior to graduation.

The didactic instruction and clinical experiences are conducted on a rotating basis as described in the schematic below. Each didactic session is followed by a clinical phase to provide correlation of didactic instruction and clinical experience.

Please note: There is a pending curricular revision in process which may slightly alter the schedule as printed above.
Summary of Clinical Coursework:

Clinical Medicine - Primary Care I
This primary care experience allows students to apply communication strategies for interviewing and eliciting a medical history, techniques for performing a basic physical examination, and accurate documentation of patient data. Students also begin to focus on analyzing symptoms of disease, formulating differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients across the life span.

Clinical Medicine - Primary Care II
This primary care experience allows students to continue to develop differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients with acute and chronic complex medical disease across the life span. Systems included in this instruction, but not limited to may be cardiovascular, pulmonary, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, endocrine, neurology, reproductive, dermatology, genitourinary/renal and behavioral medicine. Further emphasis is placed on managing patients in emergency settings.

Clinical Medicine - Primary Care III
This primary care experience allows students to continue to develop differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients with acute and chronic complex medical disease across the life span. Systems included in this instruction include reinforcement of all those covered in Clinical Medicine Primary Care II along with hematology, oncology and infectious disease. Further emphasis is placed on managing patients in surgical settings.

Specialty Clerkships
Specialty clerkship settings of the emergency department and surgery are required and other specialties are determined by the evaluation of clinical experiences obtained within the primary care rotations. The responsibility of the primary care preceptor is to assist the student in connecting their learning needs to clinical resources within the primary preceptor’s referral system. It is also recommended that the final clerkship consist of a return to the primary care clinical site to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the student and their readiness to enter their clinical practice prior to graduation.

Initially, preceptor supervision is considerable; however, as the student develops proficiencies in clinical competencies, tasks can be delegated and the supervision time decreases substantially. A site visit usually occurs early in the primary care clinical series. The program will provide a Preceptor Handbook containing information to assist you as a clinical preceptor, including further delineation of your responsibilities. All learning objectives, policies and evaluation forms are provided by the program and liability insurance is provided by the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Student applications are screened and selected applicants are scheduled for interviews. If acceptance is offered, the preceptor will be informed. The preceptor will also be contacted near the start of the student’s clinical experience to discuss program expectations and to answer any questions they may have. Preceptors are offered an appointment of Clinical Assistant Professor within the Department of Physician Assistant Studies through the School of Medicine & Health Sciences.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the PA Program at:

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