

# Primary Preceptor Overview

## Department of Physician Assistant Studies

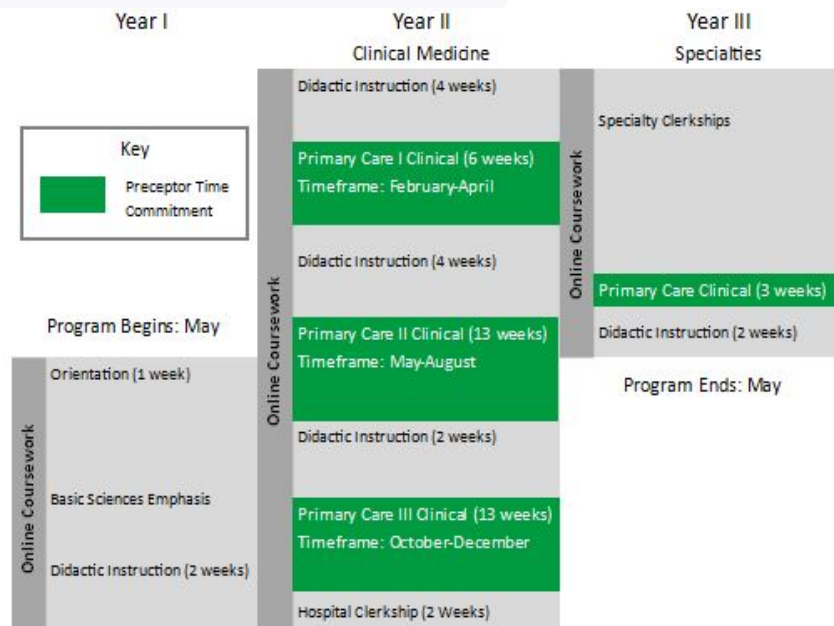
### Introduction

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. The curricular model of the UND PA program is a unique hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous online coursework combined with alternating classroom and clinical experiences. In their second year, students begin learning the most common body systems in the classroom then apply this knowledge in the first clinical clerkship. They continue alternating classroom and clinic in similar fashion to build their knowledge in remaining systems as the curriculum progresses.

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, and 14 weeks in specialty clerkship rotations including a recommended return to primary care for three 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.





## Summary of Clinical Coursework

### ***Clinical Medicine - Primary Care Series (longitudinal primary care experience for a total of 32 weeks)***

This series of three primary care experiences 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. Successively, students focus on analyzing symptoms of disease, formulating differential diagnoses and treatment plans for patients with acute and chronic complex medical diseases across the life span. All body systems are included in the instruction with a family medicine/primary care approach.

The primary care series includes a clinical clerkship in a rural and/or underserved area to meet the UND DPAS mission. Should your site not meet these criteria, the student will be placed in an alternate site for up to 4 weeks of this primary care series.

### ***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 & Health Sciences. 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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