



# Physician Assistant Program

## Summative Evaluation Description

The Northeastern University Physician Assistant Program conducts a Summative Evaluation of all students within the last four months of the program. This Summative Evaluation is multifaceted, incorporating evaluation instruments that correlate with the didactic and clinical components of the program's curriculum and measure if the learner has achieved the necessary knowledge, interpersonal skills, patient care skills, and professionalism to enter clinical practice. The evaluative mechanisms for each of these individual components are as follows:

**Knowledge: 1 component:** Medical knowledge is assessed in a Cumulative Examination delivered during the summer semester of the clinical year. This examination is written, developed, compiled and updated by Core Program faculty. The examination is at least 120 questions and covers all specialty and task areas represented on the PANCE. The Cumulative Examination specifically assesses competency in the following areas:

- evidence-based medicine
- scientific principles related to patient care
- etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic process, and epidemiology for medical conditions
- signs and symptoms of medical and surgical conditions
- appropriate diagnostic studies
- management of general medical and surgical conditions to include pharmacologic and other treatment modalities

- interventions for prevention of disease and health promotion/maintenance
- screening methods to detect conditions in an asymptomatic individual
- history and physical findings and diagnostic studies to formulate differential diagnoses

To pass the Cumulative Examination, each student must receive >70% on this examination. If the examination is not passed, it may be retaken once. If the student fails to pass a second time, the student is referred to the academic standing committee for remedial action. Possible remedial actions include: remediation, deceleration and/or dismissal from the program.

**Interpersonal skills: 1 component:** Interpersonal skills are assessed objectively during the new Summative OSCEs. Independent clinician observers and standardized patients assign percentage grades for interpersonal interactions between the student and the patient, and the student and other providers during the mock-patient encounter. The Interpersonal skills assessment of the Summative OSCE assesses student ability to:

- create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients
- use effective communication skills to elicit and provide information
- adapt communication style and messages to the context of the interaction
- work effectively with physicians

and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group

- demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety
- accurately and adequately document information regarding care for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes

To pass the Interpersonal skills section of the OSCE, each student must receive a score equal to or greater than 2 standard deviations below the graded mean of this section. If this component of the OSCE is not passed, it may be retaken once. If the student fails to pass a second time, the student is referred to the academic standing committee for remedial action. Possible remedial actions include: remediation, deceleration and/or dismissal from the program.

**Patient Care Skills: 1 component:** Patient care skills are assessed objectively during the Summative OSCEs. Independent clinician observers and standardized patients assign percentage grades for student proficiency in eliciting an appropriate medical history and performing a physical examination during the mock-patient encounter. The mean of these metrics is calculated, and serves as the 'Patient Care Skills' score on the Summative Evaluation. The Patient Care Skills assessment of the Summative OSCE assess student ability to:

- work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- demonstrate compassionate and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their

families

- obtain essential and accurate information about their patients
- make decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and informed clinical judgment
- develop and implement patient management plans
- counsel and educate patients and their families
- perform medical and surgical procedures essential to their area of practice
- provide health care services and education aimed at disease prevention and health maintenance

To pass the Patient Care Skills section of the Summative Evaluation, each student must receive a score equal to or greater than 2 standard deviations below the graded mean of this section. If this component is not passed, it may be retaken once. If the student fails to pass a second time, the student is referred to the academic standing committee for remedial action. Possible remedial actions include: remediation, deceleration and/or dismissal from the program.

**Professionalism: 2 components:** Summative Evaluation of Professionalism is conducted in two ways by the Program, each of which must be independently passed to pass the Summative Evaluation. First, Professionalism is assessed objectively during the new Summative OSCEs. Independent clinician observers and standardized patients each assign percentage grades for professionalism as demonstrated in the student's interactions with both the patient and other providers during the mock-patient encounter. The average of these two independent measures is calculated and serves as the Professionalism Score for the Summative OSCE.

Second, Professionalism is scored objectively by the student's advisor and the Program Director on the Summative Professionalism Evaluation Form during the final review of student records prior to graduation. This score is an independent and holistic review of all professional behaviors in the didactic and clinical year. A score of at least 24/30 is required for normal progression to graduation.

Taken together, the professionalism assessment of the Summative OSCE and Advisor Professionalism Evaluation assess student competency in the following areas:

- understanding the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- ability to maintain professional relationships
- demonstration of respect, compassion, and integrity
- demonstration of accountability to patients and the profession
- commitment to excellence.
- commitment to ethical principles including confidentiality of patient information, and informed consent.
- sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and abilities

To pass the Professionalism section of the OSCE, each student must receive a score equal to or greater than two standard deviations below the graded mean of this section. If this component of the OSCE is not passed, it may be retaken once. If the student fails to pass a second time, the student is referred to the academic standing committee for remedial action. Possible remedial actions include: remediation, deceleration and/or dismissal from the program.

**Systems Based Practice and Practice Based Learning and Improvement: 1 component:** Attainment of competence in these areas is assessed by

submitting and successfully scoring >70% on the Capstone Paper which is due within the last four months of the program. The Capstone Paper varies in content for each student, but is designed to assess student's competency in the following abilities:

- analyze practice experience and perform practice-based improvement activities using a systematic methodology in concert with other members of the health care delivery team
- locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health
- apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical literature and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- utilize information technology to manage information, access medical information, and support their own education
- recognize and appropriately address personal biases, gaps in medical knowledge, and physical limitations in themselves and others
- recognize and appropriately address system biases that contribute to health care disparities
- apply the concepts of population health to patient care

Passing all six individual components of the Summative Evaluation is required for normal progression to graduation.

In sum, the Northeastern University Physician Assistant Program Summative Evaluation, delivered over the course of the last four months of the program, comprehensively and effectively measures if the learner has achieved the necessary knowledge, interpersonal skills, patient care skills, and professionalism to enter clinical practice.