



Master of Science  
Physician Assistant Studies

### Policy and Guidelines for Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards<sup>1</sup>

<b>Responsible Party</b>	Program Director and Principal Faculty
<b>Minimum Review Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Associated Forms</b>	None
<b>ARC-PA Associated Standards</b>	A3.08a-c
<b>Initial Effective Date</b>	<b>10/29/2018</b>
<b>Last Review Date</b>	<b>11/19/2021</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>09/01/2023</b>

#### Rationale

The Pfeiffer University Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MS-PAS) program considers the health, safety and welfare of its faculty, student body, staff and the community we serve of utmost importance. Therefore; the program has developed the following policy in order to safeguard the wellbeing of all.

#### Infectious/Communicable Disease Training and Post-Exposure

In order to minimize the risk of contracting any infection in the course of their clinical practice activities students must follow the Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Instruction regarding environmental hazards and infectious exposures is provided during the didactic phase of the program and reviewed prior to entering the clinical phase of the program. Upon completion of the module students are expected to consistently and appropriately implement Universal Precautions and other appropriate safety measures thereafter. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies and procedures for employing these precautions at each of the clinical sites to which the student is assigned. All students will participate in the clinical affiliation requirements for safety and quality assurance compliance at the direction of the clinical affiliation personnel.

#### Guidelines for Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards Blood and body fluid exposure (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C)

An "exposure incident" refers to a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that results from the performance of a student's clinical duties. Should a patient's blood or body fluid come into contact with a student or if a patient comes in contact with the blood or body fluid of a student, the student should seek medical treatment IMMEDIATELY and follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Decontamination of exposed site – vigorous flushing of mucous membranes, eyes, and/or thorough hand washing.
2. Immediately report incident to appropriate clinical site personnel, including your preceptor, and follow established protocol for the site.
3. If there is no established protocol, seek treatment at the nearest Emergency Department.
4. Seek medical attention to ensure appropriate medical care relating to the exposure is provided.
  - a. This should occur within 2 hours for a known HIV infected source and 4-6 hours for all other exposures.



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- b. The appropriate initial site to seek medical attention varies based on the clinical site where the incident occurred. It could be an Occupational Health or Emergency Department at the institution or you may need to find the nearest Emergency Department. Students should review site-specific exposure protocol.
- c. Management may include confidential testing of the patient and the student for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV and other infectious agents.
- d. In the event that additional follow-up medical care is necessary, students will need to refer to site specific protocol to discover whether this will continue to be provided by the initial site or if the student should arrange follow-up with their own health care provider.

5. Report the event via e-mail to the Director of Clinical Education or the Program Director within 24 hours of the event.

6. If expert advice is needed refer to the PEpline, 1-888-448-4911 or <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/38856>

### **Other Exposures, Illness, or Injury**

For student and patient safety, students who have been exposed to a contagious disease or are ill with symptoms of contagious diseases may need to avoid contact with patients. In such cases, or in the event of an injury, the student should be evaluated by a health care provider in order to determine need for therapy and clearance for patient care. Students must notify and work with the site preceptor to determine whether the situation requires the student to be evaluated by the site occupational health provider or their own health care provider. Students must report via email such instances to the Director of Clinical Education or the Program Director within 24 hours of the event.

### **Medical Follow-up and Clearance to Return to Clinical Activities**

Initial and subsequent care and follow-up activities including recommendations related to counseling, prophylactic/treatment regimens, and continued or restricted practice activities following a student's exposure incident/illness/injury will be determined by the student's health care provider (in collaboration with the student) and other appropriate health care professionals. The student must obtain a medical attestation form from their healthcare provider clearing the student for participation in patient care.

### **Financial Responsibility**

All students are required to carry medical insurance to cover the expense of such unlikely event and provide coverage for the laboratory testing and treatments that may be required. Costs not covered by insurance are the responsibility of the student.

### **Effects of Exposure/Illness/Injury on Student Learning Activities**

Students may not be able to return to a specific clinical affiliate and/or meet the required technical standards due to effects of clinical exposure to infectious and environmental agents. In such case the Academic and Professional Performance Committee will review the case and make recommendations regarding the student's academic standing.



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Students should refer to the remediation, deceleration and progression policies regarding criteria for academic separation.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed at the annual program retreat.

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<sup>1</sup> ARC-PA Standards of Accreditation for Physician Assistant Education A3.08a-c