

Applies To: Students

Date of Revision: April 7, 2023

BACKGROUND:

Students enrolled in the PA program may present with a myriad of medical issues. The Central Michigan University Physician Assistant Program want to accommodate to the best of our ability all medical issues and disabilities. As a result, some students may be prescribed controlled substances as a treatment modality. Students must attend courses and clinicals in a sober state. At no time can a controlled substance of any kind create a state of altered mental status that jeopardizes learning and patients. We at CMU strive to not only serve and protect our students, but their future patients as well. Students who take a prescribed controlled substance must therefore not be impaired in the classroom or clinical setting.

PURPOSE:

The Central Michigan University Physician Assistant Program is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of its students, staff, and patients. To carry out this commitment, the PA Program seeks to assure that a drug-free workplace is maintained and that students perform their duties unimpaired by the effects of alcohol and controlled substances, including cannabis.

A critical part of Physician Assistant education involves the learning experience in hospitals and other health care facilities. Use of these facilities for training is essential, and students must be able to complete their assigned rotations. Hospitals and health care facilities have their own policies regarding substance use and require that the Physician Assistant Program have all students complete an annual drug screen prior to allowing them to rotate at their facilities.

DEFINITIONS:

Controlled Substance: any substance controlled by the DEA requiring special licensure to prescribe. Controlled substances can be legitimate (legal and prescribed) and illegitimate (illegal and non-prescribed).

POLICY:

The CMU Physician Assistant Program may require substance use testing of students at any time, including testing of students by affiliates, as a condition of participation with the affiliate and continued enrollment in the Physician Assistant Program, consistent with Physician Assistant Program Technical Standards of Professionalism, sobriety is expected in all academic and clinical environments.

PROCEDURE:

The Physician Assistant Program recognizes that PA students may exhibit patterns and behaviors suggestive of a substance use disorder. The Physician Assistant Program is committed to assisting students struggling with substance use to regain their health while protecting the well-being of patients, classmates, faculty, and staff. Educational programs and resource information will be posted and made available through the Office of Student Conduct. Students with any specific concerns are encouraged to meet with the Office of Student Conduct. Students may be tested for psychoactive substances or alcohol at any time based upon a reasonable cause as determined solely by the CMU PA Program including but not limited to:

- a. Any concern about student conduct that is consistent with alcohol or substance use
- b. Any concern about student academic performance, including but not limited to, a failing grade in any course or clerkship



Substance Use Policy

- c. Administrative evaluation such as when any student returns from a leave of absence or extended rotation away from the PA Program
- d. Information provided by other students, faculty, staff, or police and deemed credible by the Physician Assistant Program
- e. Any student who self-reports a concern or problem that is consistent with substance use

Students shall be notified of the required testing for controlled substances. Students who test positive on the initial test may request a second test using the same specimen. Students who refuse to be tested will be considered to have a positive result for the test. Any students who's initial and second test results are positive (either through an actual test or refusal to undergo a test) and who do not have a prescription for the substance for which they have tested positive, are in violation of this policy. The Student Affairs Committee will review the report, in collaboration with the Office of Student Conduct, and allow the student an opportunity to address the results. The student may have an opportunity to provide a written response to the findings. If the Student Affairs Committee and Office of Student Conduct find sufficient evidence to suggest a violation of this policy, this will result in the recommendation for treatment and/or disciplinary action, including potential dismissal from the CMU PA Program.

Approved by Faculty Executive Committee on April 7, 2023

Signature

Date

Debra Kimball-Christie, M.S., PA-C
CMU PA Program Director