



Policy Title:

Student Travel to Clinical Rotation Sites Policy

Policy Identifier:

A3.14j

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Category: Clinical Education Policies	

ARC-PA Standards

A3.14j

Scope

University of South Carolina School of Medicine Columbia (USC SOMC) Physician Assistant (PA) students.

Policy Statement

The USC School of Medicine Columbia (USC SOMC) Physician Assistant (PA) Program assigns clinical rotations to ensure that all students receive diverse, high-quality patient care experiences across multiple healthcare settings.

While every effort is made to place students at clinical sites within a 60-mile radius of the Columbia area, the availability of qualified preceptors, patient populations, and clinical opportunities may necessitate travel to rotation sites outside the immediate region.

Students may be required to complete up to three (3) rotations located more than sixty (60) miles from the program, based on clinical site availability and curricular needs.

Students are responsible for arranging and financing their own transportation, housing, meals, and incidental expenses related to all assigned SCPEs. The University of South Carolina and the PA Program do not provide or fund housing or travel arrangements during the clinical year.

Reason for Policy

To ensure compliance with ARC-PA Standard A3.14j by clearly publishing and applying consistent policies regarding student travel to required clinical rotation sites. This policy ensures transparency, fairness, and informed student expectations regarding travel distance, duration, and financial responsibility associated with clinical education.

Definitions

- **Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE):** A structured clinical rotation designed to provide supervised patient care in primary and specialty medical settings.
- **Clinical Site:** A hospital, clinic, or other healthcare facility affiliated with the PA Program through a formal educational agreement.
- **Director of Clinical Education (DCE):** The program faculty member responsible for assignment, oversight, and evaluation of clinical rotation sites.

Policy Guidelines

1. Assignment of Clinical Sites

- The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) assigns SCPEs based on site availability, educational objectives, and accreditation requirements.
- The program strives to place students at clinical sites within a 60-mile radius of the Columbia area whenever feasible.
- Students may be required to complete up to three (3) SCPEs more than 60 miles from the program to meet curricular and accreditation requirements.
- Site assignments are made without bias and are applied consistently to all students in each cohort.

2. Travel and Distance Expectations

- Students are responsible for travel to all assigned SCPE sites, including those located beyond the Columbia area.
- Travel distances vary depending on site availability and educational needs.
- Students are expected to maintain reliable transportation throughout the clinical year.
- In the event of required travel beyond 60 miles, students must be prepared for possible overnight or extended stays near clinical sites.

3. Housing and Living Arrangements

- The program and university do not provide housing for students during clinical rotations.
- Students must arrange and pay for their own lodging, meals, and related living expenses.
- When possible, the program will share information about potential short-term housing options near clinical sites.

4. Financial Considerations

- Students should budget for travel, fuel, lodging, meals, parking, and incidental expenses associated with required rotations.
- These costs are included in the program's published total cost of attendance, as required by ARC-PA Standard A3.11f.

5. Student-Initiated Travel Requests

- Students may request distant rotations based on personal or professional interests (e.g., future employment goals), but such requests are not guaranteed.
- Student-requested distant rotations do not count toward the three program-placed distant SCPEs.

6. Safety and Professional Expectations

- Students are expected to adhere to all university travel, safety, and conduct policies while



traveling to and from clinical sites.

- Students must arrive on time, maintain professional behavior, and ensure patient safety at all times.

Enforcement and Accountability

- Failure to comply with clinical rotation travel or attendance requirements may result in referral to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC) and possible disciplinary action.
- Refusal of an assigned site based solely on travel distance or cost considerations may result in delayed graduation or extended enrollment.

Contacts

Program Director
USC School of Medicine Columbia
Physician Assistant Program

History

Date of Change	Change
01/01/2026	Policy drafted into new template.