



Policy Title:
Student Work and Substitution Policy

Policy Identifier:
A3.02

Prepared by: PA Program Faculty	Creation Date: 01/01/2026
Reviewed by: PA Program Executive Committee	Review Date: 01/01/2026
Approved by: PA Program Executive Committee	Effective Date: 01/01/2026
Category: Academic and Clinical Policies	

ARC-PA Standards

A3.02, A3.03(a–b)

Related Policy

A3.14i

Scope

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

Policy Statement

PA students in the USC SOMC Physician Assistant Program are not required to work for the program and are prohibited from substituting for or functioning as instructional faculty, clinical, or administrative staff. The program maintains this policy to safeguard the educational experience and ensure students engage only in supervised learning appropriate to their level of training.

Reason for Policy

To ensure compliance with ARC-PA Standards A3.02 and A3.03(a–b) by defining the USC School of Medicine Columbia (SOMC) Physician Assistant Program’s policies on student employment, substitution, and role delineation. This policy is designed to maintain the integrity of the educational process, protect student learning time, and uphold professional and accreditation standards.

Definitions

Substitution: Acting in place of instructional faculty, clinical, or administrative staff.

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE): Structured educational experiences designed to provide supervised, hands-on clinical training.



Outside Employment: Paid work undertaken outside of program-related educational activities.

Policy Guidelines

1. Program Employment

PA students are not required to work for the program and may not be employed by the program in any capacity. Students will not function as instructional faculty, nor as clinical or administrative staff.

2. Prohibition on Substitution

PA students may not substitute for or function in the role of:

- a. Instructional faculty
- b. Clinical staff, including practicing physician assistants
- c. Administrative staff

During Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs), students may not provide unsupervised patient care or perform duties typically assigned to licensed or certified providers. All patient care activities must occur under appropriate supervision as part of the educational program.

3. Compensation

Students are not considered employees of the program while enrolled in the PA program. Students may not receive wages, stipends, or any form of compensation for participation in required educational or clinical activities.

4. Use of Prior Credentials

Students who hold other professional licenses or certifications (e.g., RN, EMT, RT) may not function in those roles within the program or at clinical sites while enrolled as PA students.

5. Outside Employment

The PA program is a rigorous, full-time course of study requiring significant academic and clinical engagement. Students are strongly discouraged from engaging in outside employment during enrollment. Outside employment will not be considered a valid justification for academic difficulties, missed assignments, or absence from required program activities.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with program and institutional policies, up to and including probation or dismissal.

Contacts

Program Director
USC School of Medicine Columbia
Physician Assistant Program

History

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