



Area: University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine PA Program, Tulsa
Title: Clinical Supervision of PA Students

The following PA student clinical supervision policy is designed to ensure student and patient safety at all times and applies to all clinical learning settings involving patient care (including required clerkships and other clinical experiences).

For the purpose of this policy, clinical supervision is defined as an oversight activity provided by a supervising health professional to a student in a clinical setting in which the student is participating in patient care activities. Supervision may be provided by physician assistants, physicians or other health care providers. This relationship has the simultaneous purposes of instruction, feedback, summative assessment, student safety, and patient safety. Supervision is exercised through observation, consultation, questioning, corrective feedback, directing the learning of the student, and role modeling. The supervision of PA student clinical learning experiences must ensure patient and student safety and must be provided throughout required clerkships or clinical rotations by College faculty or health professionals supervised by College faculty.

It is expected that a designated supervising health professional is available for supervision during all times that a student is engaged in patient care activities. Residents are authorized to participate in student supervision as delegated by the supervising faculty member.

Supervision may be direct or indirect:

- Direct Supervision: the supervising physician is physically present with the student and patient.
- Indirect Supervision: with direct supervision immediately available – the supervising health professional is physically within the hospital or other site of patient care and is immediately available to provide Direct Supervision.

At health care facilities where patient care and the training of health care professionals occur together, there must be clear delineation of responsibilities to ensure that qualified and appropriately privileged practitioners supervise students engaged in patient care. The primary responsibility for the patient is vested with a teaching attending or medical staff member and may not be delegated to a student. Supervised activities must be within the scope of practice of the supervising health professional . Any supervising health professional must have approved credentials, privileges, and authorization in order to oversee each clinical activity or procedure.

When a student is involved in the care of the patient, the responsible supervising health professional must provide a reasonably appropriate level of supervision. Ultimately, it is the decision of the supervising faculty member as to which activities the student will be allowed to perform. This decision should be based on a variety of factors including the complexity of the patient case or activity, the potential for untoward effects, the student's level of training, and the demonstrated competence, maturity and responsibility of each student in order to ensure the safety and comfort of the patient. The overriding consideration must be both student safety and the safe and effective care of the patient. The student may perform certain activities with indirect supervision by the faculty member or resident (as delegated by the supervising faculty member) such as history and basic physical examination. Intimate examinations and invasive procedures should only be provided by a student with direct supervision by a faculty or resident (i.e. breast or pelvic exam, foley placement, intubation, etc).

Because the College of Medicine considers clinical supervision a time-honored practice of the profession, an essential component of a positive learning environment, and a fundamental expectation of its instructors, any concerns regarding the adequacy and availability of clinical supervision will be reported, evaluated, and resolved using the mechanisms noted in the PA Student Mistreatment Policy.

In addition, the College of Medicine and SCM PA Program will employ methods to regularly evaluate student opinion regarding the appropriateness of clinical supervision.